QFT Lesson Planning Workbook:
Design your own QFT-primary source lesson

*Note: while the word "lesson" is used throughout this resource, the planning process is similar and this tool can be adapted for other purposes, including a workshop, meeting, or professional learning session.

I. Context and Purpose

1. What is the topic of the lesson? Think about your existing curriculum and brainstorm a few topics that you might be likely to find primary sources about. Consider what you explored in the Library of Congress collections.

2. What are your teaching objectives for the lesson? This may include skills and/or content.

3. Why are you using the QFT in this lesson? How will it help you achieve your objectives?

II. Lesson Procedure

1. At what point in the lesson will you use the QFT? What do you envision doing before and after? Consider particularly if you'd like students to spend some time observing a primary source or gaining basic context.

III. Design a Question Focus

The Question Focus (QFocus) is a stimulus for jumpstarting student questions. The QFocus may be anything—a primary source, a statement, an image, a video clip, a math equation, an experience--as long **as it is not a question**. An effective QFocus is: simple and clear (without any further explanation required), *directly* aligned to your lesson objectives, provocative to students, and open to divergent thinking.

1. Brainstorm several primary source QFocus possibilities that are related to what you need to teach/what the students need to learn. Browse the 2-3 related collections at the Library of Congress.

2. Choose one of the primary source QFocus options above. Quickly test it by naming some questions students might ask. Better yet, enlist someone else (a family member, friend, colleague, neighbor, etc.) to ask a few questions that immediately come to mind. Are those the questions you're hoping for from students?

3. In addition to selecting the right primary source, a second component to primary source QFocus design is *deciding if, when, and how much additional context you'd like to share with students*.

   It is perfectly fine not to add anything beyond one primary source and in fact, it is good to be cautious of over-complicating the process. Consider your objectives and decide if one (or more) of the small additions or tweaks to QFocus design below is likely to elicit student questions that are better aligned with your objectives or not:

   - Adding a caption
   - Adding an anchoring word or phrase
   - Cropping a primary source
   - Zooming in and out on different parts of a primary source
   - Layering in one piece of the QFocus at a time
   - Juxtaposing two very different primary sources
   - Offering typed/transcribed text for a primary source that is difficult to read
   - Other:

4. Troubleshoot your QFocus by filling out this chart.

	Yes	No	Unsure
1) Will students know what they are asking questions about without additional information?			
2) Does the QFocus offer many different paths for divergent thinking and questioning?			
3) Is the QFocus likely to be provocative to students?			
4) Is there a word or phrase that might distract students (that you don't *want* them to wonder about)?			
5) Will the students perceive the QFocus as just another way of presenting the teacher's message or ideas?			
6) Is the QFocus making an *implicit* (rather than direct, explicit) connection to the topic/objectives that students might miss?			
7) Is the QFocus a question?			

If you answer "no" to questions #1-3 or "yes" to questions #4-7, what are some ways you might change your QFocus to sharpen it?

5. Revise your QFocus based on your troubleshooting. In Session 3, you will share your QFocus on a discussion board and will receive feedback from peers in the form of questions. Use these questions to help you make further revisions as needed.

IV. Consider how students' questions will be used

It is important to plan how students' questions will be used <u>before</u> the QFT and to communicate this plan to students, even if the plan ends up changing a bit based on the questions you receive.

Students' questions may be used immediately, within 1-2 self-contained lesson(s); for example, students' questions could lead to a class discussion right after the QFT. Or, students' questions may be used gradually, over many lessons; for example, questions may be checked off over the course of an entire unit.

1. How will students' questions be used? (Check all that apply)

- ■ To engage students at the start of a new topic
- ■ To launch a research paper or project
- ■ To spark class discussion about questions
- ■ Formative assessment
- ■ Summative assessment
- ■ To lead into further primary source analysis using the TPS Analysis tool
- ■ To refine, hone and add questions *after* completing the TPS Analysis tool

- ■ To launch an inquiry process or process
- ■ Community expert or guest speaker interviews
- ■ Video, lecture, or reading guide questions
- ■ To form overarching essential questions for an entire unit
- ■ To guide close reading or textual analysis
- ■ To give peer feedback
- ■ Students will create their own action plans
- ■ Other:

2. How well does your QFocus now align to both your objectives and your anticipated next steps?

V. QFT Tailoring
There are a couple key areas that can be helpful for tailoring your lesson for your learners or objectives. It is also perfectly fine not to stick with the standard QFT instructions.

1. Categorization instructions give students the opportunity to recognize and work strategically with their language by revising and transforming questions. Standard instructions are to label questions as close-ended or open-ended, discuss advantages and disadvantages, and then change one open-ended to closed and one close-ended question to open. You could condense this step if students are proficient at open and close-ended questions and familiar with the QFT (for ex: skip labelling and go straight to transforming open to closed and vice versa). You might have students change multiple questions from type to type.

You might choose alternative or additional categories (beyond open and closed) but be careful that they are as simple as possible with observable, explicit criteria that don't weigh down the process or close off divergent thinking. Calling attention to specific words or language patterns is preferable to complex criteria that would require more debate/discussion, which is more suited to the prioritization step.

→ What categorization instructions will you give your students?

2. Prioritization instructions should bring students back to your teaching objectives and the plan for using student questions. Standard instructions are to choose 3 questions that you are most curious about.*

Often, teachers vary the instructions to be more targeted to a specific objective, for example:
- Choose 3 questions that you feel help us learn about [content or topic].
- Choose 3 questions that we could research.
- Choose 3 questions that you think we could test using the lab materials in this room.
- Choose 3 questions that may help you identify search keywords or establish historical context.
- Choose 3 questions you'd like to discuss further.

*There are many benefits to allowing students to initially narrow it down to *three* priority questions rather than just one. We often need multiple questions to solve a problem or to learn more about a topic. Three also allows for some divergent thinking, without becoming too broad. For students working in a group, it is often easier to come to consensus about three rather than one.

→ What prioritization instructions will you give to your students?

3. Reflection questions are an essential element of the QFT. Reflection helps students name, reinforce, and replicate what they have learned. Students get to do something they rarely have done before: practice metacognition. Students may reflect on process and/or content.

Examples of process reflection questions:
- What do you understand differently now about asking questions?
- How can you use what you learned about asking questions?
- How do you feel about asking questions?
- What did you notice about your group's process?
- What was different or new for you this time?
- What did you learn from someone else's question?

Examples of content reflection questions:
- How did the QFT help you think about… (a key concept, an overarching topic, a theme in the unit, a chapter you just read)?
- What do you understand differently now about [topic, content, QFocus]?
- What's a new question you're taking away from today?

→ What questions will you use to guide student reflection?

VI. Finalize facilitation logistics

It is important to consider what groupings may work best for your class. You may decide to group students differently as you move through the steps of the QFT. Just remember to try your best to observe the 4 principles of QFT facilitation!

1. How will the students do their work?

	Individually	Small Groups	Whole Class	Other
Discussing the rules				
Producing questions				
Categorizing and improving questions				
Prioritizing questions				
Discussing next steps				
Reflection				

2. Are there any other logistical adjustments that you would like to consider? (For example, who is recording questions, use of technology or virtual learning platforms, etc.) It may be helpful to reference this resource from Emerging America on Universal Design principles and cultural considerations, RQI's Tips for Making the QFT Work Well For All Learners, or RQI's virtual learning resources).