

MOHAI [Introductions to Primary Source Analysis](#) are a great way to introduce students to the different ways they can use primary sources (objects, documents, photos, or other materials from the time period you are studying) when learning about history. By looking closely at historic photos we can get a glimpse at the past through the eyes of people who experienced it. Our Photograph Analysis Worksheet is a helpful tool for looking at historic photos. It encourages close looking by breaking down the various parts and kinds of information in a photo asking questions about what you see, think, and wonder. Here is how you could use the [Photograph Analysis Worksheet](#) to explore objects in the [MOHAI online collection](#).



Property of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

<https://digitalcollections.lib.washington.edu/digital/collection/imismohai/id/5445/rec/1>

We've been thinking a lot about what it takes to keep a city going in times of crisis, so we chose a photo from the Seattle General Strike of 1919. During the strike, over 65,000 people refused to report to work to protest for better wages. Businesses and stores were closed, and streetcars didn't run. Union members met the city's basic and emergency needs, though. They set up food lines, delivered milk to babies, and brought drugs to hospitals. They also maintained the city's electrical power and kept ambulances running. We chose this photo from our online collection to explore what this looked like.

After taking a first look at the photo, use the starter questions in the Photograph Analysis Worksheet to make detailed observations. For example:

- *What is the setting?* In front of an open door to a brick building with glass windows. There's a number above the entry that looks like "600".
- *Who do you see in this photo?* A crowd of men, mostly middle-aged wearing suits, buttoned jackets, and hats (mostly bowler hats, fedoras, and newsboy caps). A boy stands at the front, and his coat looks dusty.
- *What is happening?* People in the background are waving their hands, while some people are carrying boxes and bags on their shoulders. The boy is holding what looks like a flour sack. People are looking at the camera and many are smiling.

Next, what questions do you have about what you see? Come up with as many as you can!

- What are these people carrying? Why are only some people carrying things?
- What brought these people together? Why are they gathering?
- Why are they all men?
- Where are they bringing these goods?
- What are they excited about?

What Seattle history questions does it inspire?

- When and where was this photo taken? Take a look at the collection record!
- What was going on at the time/place this photo was taken?
- What other photos of this event exist? Where can I find them?

What does it make you want to know about the world around you?

- Who is still working right now? How have their jobs changed in the past few weeks?
- What do people in a city need? What work do different people consider "essential"?

### Suggested extension activities

Once you've made as many observations and asked as many questions, what to do next?

- Try to research some of the questions you can't figure out by observation alone! What other resources can you use to find answers?
- Use these questions to look at a photo your family has chosen to keep or preserve. What parts of this photo's story can you figure out through observation? Who can you ask to find out more about where this photo came from? Why is it important to them?
- What everyday activities is your family doing now that future historians might be interested in? Take a photo or draw a picture of your family doing a routine task that has been affected by the recent changes to our communities.
- Write a thank-you letter to local food service, medical, waste management, and transit workers!
- What are all the tasks that people do in your household to keep it running smoothly? Make a list of all of the tasks you can think of that people do in your home. Who does most of them? What would happen if people stopped doing these tasks?