

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

ANCHORAGE: MAPS AND PLACE NAMES

PRIMARY SOURCES LESSON PLAN

Through a set of primary sources, students will learn how maps and photographs record and convey distinct ways of understanding information about a place. Students will learn about various features and functions of a map, think about how a place can change over time through examination of photographs, and consider how place names shape experiences of the Northern landscape by local Indigenous peoples, colonizers, and newcomers.

STUDENTS WILL

- Demonstrate visual literacy to interpret maps and photographs
- Understand the various uses, purposes and features of maps and foster map-making skills
- Think critically about the relationship of place names and how people experience and impact their landscape

MATERIALS

- Alberta Pyatt, Pyatt Negative Collection; Anchorage Museum, B2009.057.3
- Plat Anchorage Townsite 1915; Anchorage Museum
- McCutcheon Collection; Anchorage Museum, B1990.014.5.ANC.AIR.26.7.21
- McCutcheon Collection; Anchorage Museum, B1990.014.5.ANC.AIR.26.7.28
- **20 Questions Deck**
- Paper, ruler, and coloring supplies

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVEL

- Second grade and up

INQUIRY BASED METHODS AT THE ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

The Anchorage Museum uses an expanded inquiry-based approach based in constructivism (constructivist learning theory). Through facilitated conversations which may begin much like Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), students are encouraged to bring their knowledge to look closely at an object or image. In addition to the VTS methodology, educators at the Anchorage Museum provide context and content. This may include information about an object's artist or maker, examination of materials, processes, or uses of an object as well as relevant cultural or historical information.

Examinations of objects create an open-ended dialogue. In dialogue, learner-driven questions and observations, and facilitator provided content drive the process of meaning making between all participants.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is a learning theory referring to the idea that knowledge is individually and socially constructed by the learners themselves. The learner actively constructs meaning using sensory input rather than passively accept knowledge.

VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES

Visual Thinking Strategies, or VTS, is an approach to teaching from visual materials, typically paintings, drawings and photographs. Developed by museum educators Philip Yenawine and Abigail Housen, this approach to teaching and learning is a learner-centered methodology that seeks to support close looking and communication skills.



The VTS teaching methodology centers around three questions:

What's going on in this picture?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What more can we find?

Educators use these open-ended questions to engage students in examination of images. Content or 'answers' are not provided, rather learners construct meaning individually and together. Educators reflect back what students respond and help facilitate the conversation moving forward.

VTS has been applied across disciplines. Extensive research on the strategy has demonstrated that students participating in multi-visit programs to museums using VTS techniques generated significantly more instances of critical thinking skills, said more, and were more likely to provide evidence for their thinking.

LEARN MORE vtshome.org

WHAT IS VISUAL LITERACY?

We live in an increasingly visual world and fostering skills to decode today's visual world is more critical than ever. By looking closely at visual sources and works of art, students develop visual literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills.

Visual literacy is a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media. Visual literacy skills equip a learner to understand and analyze the contextual, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, and technical components involved in the production and use of visual materials. A visually literate individual is both a critical consumer of visual media and a competent contributor to a body of shared knowledge and culture.

- Association of College and Research Libraries

TIPS FOR OBJECT-BASED TEACHING

LOOK CLOSELY

Invite students to look closely for several minutes before sharing observations or beginning discussion. Take different perspectives: encourage getting up close and stepping back. Sketching or writing about what students see invites close looking and engages the students directly with the object.

ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Invite students to share observations and what they notice from initial observations. In lieu of asking questions that have a right/wrong answer (ex *What color is it? When was this made? or How was this used?*) ask questions that allow students to bring critical and creative thinking to bear (ex *What colors do you notice? What materials do you see have been used to make this object? or What clues to how this object might be used to you observe?*).

PROVIDE CONTENT

As questions or observations about an object arise in conversation, provide students with historical and cultural context or other relevant information. For example, if a student observes that a painting looks unfinished, you might share information that a painter was unable to complete his unfinished painting of Denali because his paints froze while painting *en plein air*.

GET HANDS-ON

Drawing and writing support students in looking closely and thinking creatively and critically. Prompts might include:

- *Sketch a detail. Sketch the object from multiple perspectives.*
- [For paintings, drawings and photographs] *Sketch what you might imagine happened before this image. Sketch what you imagine might happen after.*
- [For objects] *Where do you imagine finding this object? Sketch an environment where this object might feel 'at home.' Sketch an environment where this object might feel 'out of place.'*
- *Write down a phrase that captures your emotion when you look at this work. Share with a partner. Are your reactions similar or different?*
- *Imagine the story behind the painting or photograph tells, or the story of how this object traveled from its original maker to the museum. Write a brief short story to capture your imaginings.*



ANCHORAGE: PLACE NAMES

CREATE

10 mins

Invite students to draw a map of where they live. This map will be personal and based on memory. Use this open-ended prompt to allow student's individual, creative map styles.

10 mins

In groups of four, students will share and compare their personal maps. *What do you see and notice about your teammates' maps? Consider the individual scale and design of the maps. What is included and excluded in each map?*

15 mins

Invite all students to place their maps together as a larger map—arranging each map in the general physical location relative to each other. *What do you notice about the class map? Ask students to share if there are locations they recognize. Reflect together. What did you think of organizing the group map together? Where do you see maps and when do you use them?*

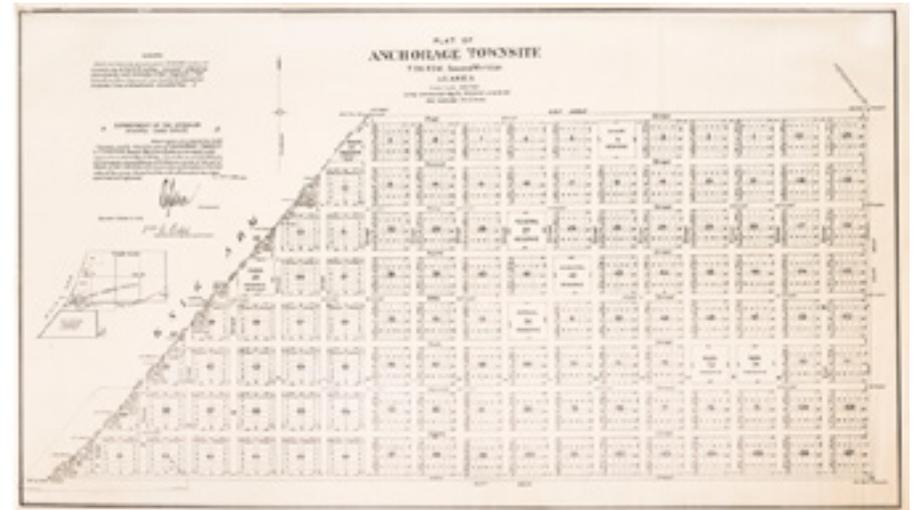


Aug. 10th 1915 Anchorage Alaska 5th Street
Alberta Pyatt, Pyatt Negative Collection; Anchorage Museum, B2009.057.3

OBSERVE

Introduce the objects: *1915 Anchorage Alaska 5th Street* photograph and *Plat Anchorage Townsite 1915*— taking time to look closely.

The photograph and plat map were created in August and June of 1915, respectively. Both primary sources show two different views of the Indigenous lands of the Eklutna Dena'ina (Athabascan/Dene) and how European-American settlers were beginning to develop the land as Anchorage.¹ The landscape was dramatically transformed: trees were razed, tent camps established, and Eklutna Dena'ina families were displaced and marginalized. In both primary sources, the presence of the Eklutna Dena'ina are notably absent. Look closely at *Plat Anchorage Townsite 1915* and notice the planned street names.



Plat Map; Survey commenced May 26, completed June 26, 1915
Plat Anchorage Townsite 1915; Anchorage Museum

¹ The largest Indigenous language family in North America is the Dene language family, which is commonly identified as 'Athabascan' — a word that is not native to any of the Indigenous languages to which it refers.



4 mins

Invite students to describe what they see with a partner. With each object: **ASK** *What do you see? What do you notice first? What details do you observe?*

30+ mins

USE [20 Questions Deck](#) for more group discussion questions about the two objects. Share observations with the class. *What makes you say that? Why does that stand out to you?* Paraphrase student observations.

PROMPT students to compare and contrast the information they see. *What is the purpose of the Plat Anchorage Townsite 1915 map? Who would use the map? What wouldn't you use this map for? What information does it show and omit? Why is it important to consider what is absent?*

ASK FURTHER *What makes you say that? Why does that stand out to you?*

QUESTION *What other purposes can maps have?* Introduce examples of various types of special purposes maps such as topographic, geologic, political, thematic, physical, road, etc.

15 mins

Use the *Plat Anchorage Townsite 1915* to provide vocabulary to the map features:

Map	a representation of an area of land or sea
Title	the name of the map or kind of map
Legend	an area of the map that tells what the symbols mean on a map
Compass Rose	the circle (a symbol) showing directions that is printed on a map
Cardinal Directions	North (N); South (S); East (East); West (W)
Map Scale	measures distance on a map
Labels	words printed on the map to name particular places or objects
Symbols	a mark that represents real objects and characteristics in the real world

5 mins

Invite students to orient themselves on the *Plat Anchorage Townsite 1915*. Practice using the scale.

25 mins

Direct students to work together in pairs. Provide each group a starting point and a destination on the map. Using the *Plat Anchorage Townsite 1915*, students will navigate together and write a clear set of directions to reach their final destination. Invite each group to exchange their finalized written directions with another group. Each group should follow the new directions.

SHARE Invite students to share their initial reactions. *How was your experience of navigating a map manually, writing your own directions and following another group's?*

CONTEXT

Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska, is on the traditional homeland of the Eklutna Dena'ina people.

LEARN ABOUT [land acknowledgments](#).

READ Dene elder and historian Shem Pete's story about Captain Cook and the origins of English names 'Fire Island' and 'Turnagain Arm': [Nutul'iy ch'u Tut'uh- Fire Island and Turnagain Arm](#).²

LEARN more about contact-era history of the Dena'ina people: [Since the Arrival of the Underwater People](#).

How does a place name impact how we experience and know a place?

Place names reveal how people refer to, relate to, and know a landscape. As signposts, place names often serve as a valuable tool in order to reach a destination. Yet place names are also a critical and profound expression of cultural identity and cultural memory—how people identify and express their memories, stories, and history of a place. And as much as place names are experiential, they are also an undeniable expression of power. Only certain individuals or groups have the authority to name, or re-name a place. As well, naming demonstrates what and

² For more of Shem Pete's Dena'ina oral stories and place names, see *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina*.



where is valued by a dominant power. Alaska Native place names are highly descriptive and communicate observed characteristics of the land and its inhabitants with succinct insight. The first place names in the Eklutna Dena'ina land were spoken—once an enduring and widespread testimony to honor the history of its peoples in their language. In the early 20th century, settlers began to arrive and establish their presence in Anchorage. These settlers consequently displaced and marginalized the Eklutna Dena'ina. New language and new place names served as means to dominance. Throughout Alaska today, place names often celebrate individuals or founders. Present-day neighborhood of Spenard is named after resort operator Joe Spenard. Romig Middle School is named after 'Dog-Team Doctor' Joseph Herman Romig, a Moravian Church Medical Missionary who served as a school superintendent, chief railroad surgeon for the Alaska Railroad, and Mayor of Anchorage from 1937-1938. A. J. Dimond High School and Dimond Boulevard is named after Anthony Joseph Dimond, an Alaska Territory Delegate in the United State House of Representatives and an early advocate of Alaska statehood. Looking closely at place names and the histories of language used to describe a place invites questions. How does cultural and political power and dominance shape understanding of place, how it is named, and even how it is mapped?

The largest Indigenous language family in North America is the Dene language family, which is commonly identified as 'Athabascan'—a word that is not native to any of the Indigenous languages to which it refers. Dene place names, like the place names used by many Indigenous groups throughout North America, were supplanted by the new languages of Russian and American colonizers and new settlers arriving in the area.

The Dena'ina people have been living in *Dena'ina Etnena*, 'Dena'ina Country,' as the Indigenous people of *Tikahtnu*, 'ocean river,' which has been renamed as 'Cook Inlet' by European colonizers and continue to be referred as so on today's maps. 'Knik River,' the northern boundary of the Anchorage Municipality where the Dena'ina people traditionally hunted moose and sheep, was called *Skitnu*, 'Brush River.' *Ch'atanhtnu*, 'trail comes out river,' was renamed as the 'Matanuska River' and *Tutl'uh*, 'backwater,' was renamed as 'Turnagain Arm' by British explorer and Royal Navy Captain James Cook. 'Knik Arm' was traditionally called *Nuti*, 'salt water.' Traditionally from spring to summer, the Dena'ina people would set base in what is now known as downtown Anchorage for their traditional fishing and hunting camps.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY Read and discuss Dena'ina literary artist and scholar Peter Kalifornsky's transcribed oral story about Dena'ina life ways before Russian and American colonization: *How the Dena'ina Supported Themselves*.³

REFLECT *What information did you find about the relationship between the Eklutna Dena'ina people and the early settlers? How was the landscape changing as the Anchorage townsite was being built? What places carry a Dena'ina place name in Anchorage? What Dena'ina words do you know?*

Today, there are only four Dena'ina place names in Anchorage.

In 2005, *Nat'uh*, 'our special place,' Service Center of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council opened as the first building with a Dena'ina name in Anchorage.

In 2006, Aaron Leggett, Anchorage Museum Curator of Alaska History and Culture, testified as a witness to a public hearing in support of recommending for the new civic and convention center in downtown Anchorage to be named as the 'Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center.' The Anchorage assembly voted 11-0 in favor of the name 'Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center,' which opened in late September 2008.

Tikahtnu Commons, an Anchorage retail and entertainment center in Muldoon area, was named in 2006 and opened in the fall of 2008. It is now 900,000 square feet.

Chanshtnu Muldoon Park, a 26.74 acre community use park located at the southeast corner of the Muldoon and DeBarr Road intersection, was named in the spring of 2018 and opened in September 2018. *Chanshtnu* refers to the Dena'ina place name 'Chester Creek.' 'Muldoon' is prominently utilized as a place name in Anchorage after the early Anchorage homesteader.

Where does the name Anchorage originate?

On March 12, 1914, Congress passed the Alaska Railroad Act, which led to the urban development of present-day Anchorage. On April 10, 1915, President Woodrow Wilson determined the Seward-Fairbanks route for the Alaska Railroad. That same spring, the Alaskan Engineering Commission (AEC) set up a

³ See page 208 of *A Dena'ina Legacy K'tl'egh'l Sukdu: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky*.



construction site at Ship Creek for the Alaska Railroad. More than 2,000 non-Native prospective workers began living in temporary tents and wooden buildings in ‘Tent City,’ present-day Anchorage. Although ‘Tent City’ was re-named as ‘Ship Creek’ by AEC, the U.S. Post Office Department nevertheless referred to the area as ‘Anchorage.’ The name *Anchorage* was adopted on all mail, maps, and news. An election was held on August 9, 1915 to determine the official name of the town with nine potential names: *Alaska City, Anchorage, Gateway, Homestead, Lane, Matanuska, Ship Creek, Terminal, and Winalaska*. Out of the 538 votes casted, 146 was for Alaska City. Lane was second with 129 votes and Anchorage was third with 101 votes. Although Matanuska was also favored by the Alaska Governor J.F.A. Strong, the U.S. Post Office Department maintained Anchorage as the official place name.

Alaska Native peoples chose place names as traditional guideposts for survival. Starting in the mid-1700s, places were re-named with personal names by Russian and American colonizers and newcomers to identify the landscape. The tallest mountain in North America has been known as *Denali*, ‘the tall one,’ by Koyukon Dene for thousands of years. In 1896, Denali was renamed Mount McKinley for President William McKinley, who championed the Gold Standard Act of the United States in 1900. President McKinley, however, never visited Alaska. The name was returned to Denali in 2015 by President Barack Obama.

LEARN MORE [Mount McKinley Will Again Be Called Denali](#)

MODERN ANCHORAGE

Anchorage is the largest city in Alaska with about 300,000 people in its city boundaries and 100,000 more in the nearby Matanuska-Susitna Borough today. There are 20 officially recognized Alaska Native languages in Alaska. In the Anchorage School District (ASD), 99 languages other than English are spoken at home. The top 5 languages spoken in the city after English are: Spanish, Samoan, Hmong, Filipino, and Yup’ik. The nineteen most diverse schools in the nation are also found in Anchorage. Since 2014, Anchorage has been part of the Welcoming Cities project—supporting the initiative for the city to be more equitable, inclusive and diverse. In the spring of 2019, the Anchorage Museum became an institutional member of Welcoming America.

OBSERVE

20 mins

Introduce the two aerial photographs of Anchorage taken on September 28, 1975. Look closely together. **ASK** *What do you see? What do you notice first?*



[left] Steve McCutcheon, McCutcheon Collection; Anchorage Museum, B1990.014.5.ANC.AIR.26.7.21
[right] Steve McCutcheon, McCutcheon Collection; Anchorage Museum, B1990.014.5.ANC.AIR.26.7.28

USE 20 Questions Deck for more discussion questions about the object. Share observations with the class. *What makes you say that? Why does that stand out to you?* Paraphrase student observations.

ENCOURAGE MORE CLOSE-LOOKING What more can we find?

INVITE students to share the changes they see in downtown Anchorage based on the *1915 Plat Anchorage Townsite* and the two aerial photographs of Anchorage taken on September 28, 1975.



ASK *What changes do you notice from downtown Anchorage today compared to the 1975 photographs?* Encourage students to discuss the social, economic, technological, etc. circumstances in 1970s.

SHOW the Satellite time-lapse of the Anchorage Area on the Google Earth Engine: earthengine.google.com/timelapse **ASK** *What changes do you notice?*

QUESTION

What memories, ideas, and experiences do you immediately recall when you think of Anchorage?

Invite students to write their reflections down.

What more do you want to know about Anchorage?

FINAL PROJECTS

MAP RE-DESIGN: SECOND GRADE AND UP

1. Students will create a second map of where they live—utilizing their knowledge of maps they have learned and practiced in class. Students will decide their map type and include map features (ex legend, symbols, etc.).

INVITE students to consider what details they choose to include and exclude. *Through the map's symbols and legends: visually represent what your place looks, feels, smells, tastes, and sounds like.* Students will reflect and write about their neighborhood.

ASK *What place names did you include in your map? Why?* Describe this place in writing.

Student will present the second map and its place names, and writing to the class.

FUTURE ANCHORAGE DESIGN: SECOND GRADE AND UP

2. Invite students to imagine what Anchorage's urban, suburban, and ecological environment will look like 200 years from now. Prompt students to reflect on the relationship of these future environments and their place names.

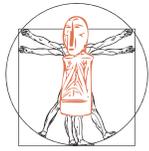
- *What resources and features do you hope Anchorage will have?*
- *How does the environment and climate conditions affect the city?*
- *How do you want the city to transform?*

Students will design a map of their ideal future-Anchorage on 11x17" paper and may determine the place names. Challenge students to think critically about ways to improve Anchorage's existing infrastructure, transportation, and environmental conditions in relation to the residents and their lifestyles. Consider the local resident's everyday life and how they interact with their community.

- *What place names appear in your future Anchorage map? Why?*
- *What do people do, and how are they able to do so?*
- *How do people engage together as a community?*



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ALASKA
HUMANITIES
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ATWOOD
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HEARST *foundations*

This lesson plan was inspired by Daniel Greenwood and Lesa Morrison's project for the 2018 ASD Summer Academy workshop: Engaging Primary Sources for Alaska Studies at the Anchorage Museum, and written by Marion Gajonera, Education Interpretation Manager.

For more teaching resources, visit anchagemuseum.org/teachingresources

WEB RESOURCES

alaska.si.edu

Smithsonian Alaska Native Collections

denaina.anchagemuseum.org

Dena'inaq' Huch'ulyeshi: The Dena'ina Way of Living - Anchorage Museum

[Engaging Students with Primary Sources](#)

Smithsonian National Museum of American History

usdac.us/nativeland

Honor Native Land - U.S. Department of Arts and Culture

vilda.alaska.edu/digital

Vilda Database - Alaska's Digital Database

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RELATED CONTENT AREAS

ALASKA STANDARDS FOR CULTURALLY-RESPONSIVE STUDENTS

- B. 1. acquire insights from other cultures without diminishing the integrity of their own;
- B. 2. make effective use of the knowledge, skills and ways of knowing from their own cultural traditions to learn about the larger world in which they live
- E. 7. determine how cultural values and beliefs influence the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds;
- E. 8. Identify and appreciate who they are and their place in the world.

ALASKA CONTENT STANDARDS GEOGRAPHY

- A. A student should be able to make and use maps, globes, and graphs to gather, analyze, and report spatial (geographic) information.
 - a. Use maps and globes to locate places and regions.
 - b. Make maps, globes, and graphs.
 - c. Understand how and why maps are changing documents.
- B. A student should be able to utilize, analyze, and explain information about the human and physical features of places and regions.
 - a. Know that places have distinctive geographic characteristics.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & LITERACY SPEAKING AND LISTENING 2

- 1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- 3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.
- 4. Tell a story or retell an experience with relevant facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

WRITING 2

- 3. Write narratives in which they recount a well elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.
- 8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING 3-5

- 1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3-5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - c. Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.
 - d. Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
- 2. Determine/Paraphrase/Summarize the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- 4. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

WRITING 3-5

- 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using elective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- 7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING 6-8

- 1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- 2. Interpret/Analyze information/main ideas/purpose of information presented in diverse media (included but not limited to podcasts) and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively/ data-related, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study
- 4. Present claims and findings, sequencing/emphasizing salient focus ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes

WRITING 6-12

- 3. Use narrative writing to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well structured event sequences
 - a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
 - b. Use narrative techniques.



- c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
 - d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to advance the action and convey experiences and events.
 - e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.
7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING 9-12

- 1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9- 10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- 4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

ALASKA STANDARDS FOR HISTORY 9-12

- Hist.A5 understand that history is a narrative told in many voices and expresses various perspectives of historical experience
- Hist.A6 know that cultural elements reflect the ideas and attitudes of a specific time and know how the cultural elements influence human interaction
- Hist.A8 know that history is a bridge to understanding groups of people and an individual's relationship to society
- Hist.A9 understand that history is a fundamental connection that unifies all fields of human understanding and endeavor

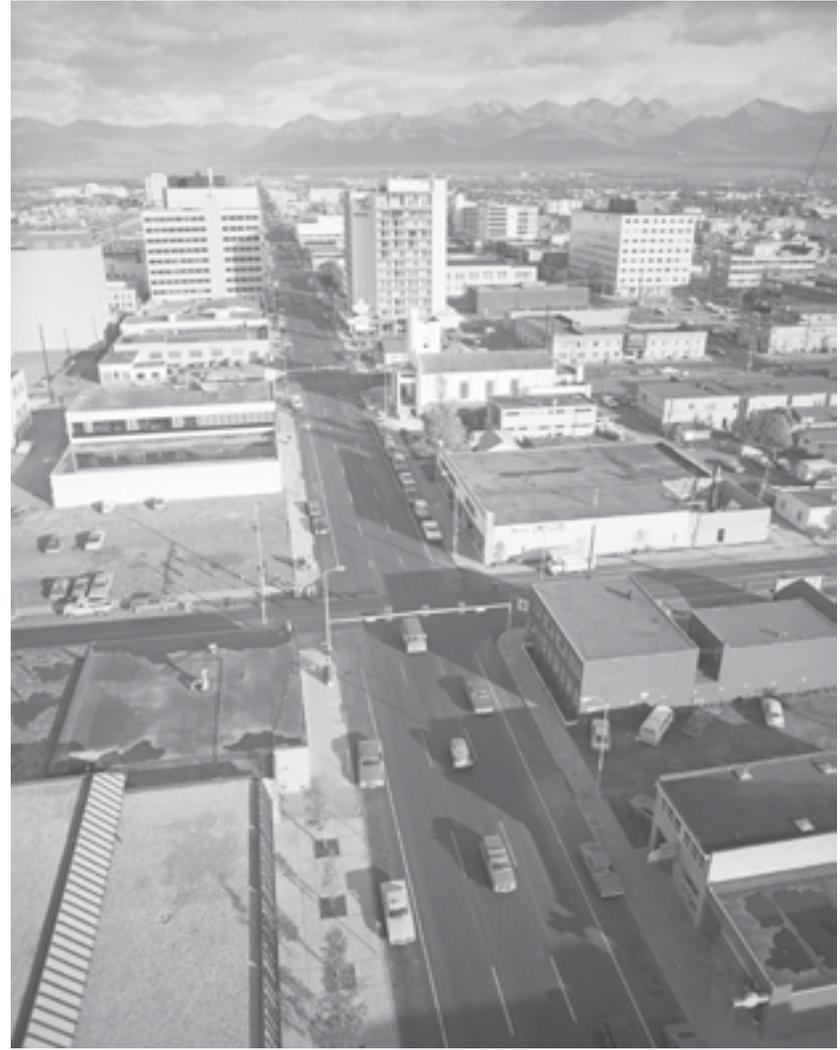
ALASKA STANDARDS FOR VISUAL ARTS 9-12

- VA:RE7a-HSP a. Speculate and analyze ways in which art impacts people's perception and understanding of human experiences.
- VA:RE7b-HSAD b. Identify commonalities in visual images made in the same era or culture.





Aug. 10th 1915 Anchorage Alaska 5th Street. Pyatt
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