This high school level lesson assigns students thematic topics related to the “closing” of the American frontier. Working in groups students select five photographs that relate to their topic, use a graphic organizer to analyze the photographs, and formulate captions to illustrate how their choice illustrates the topic.

Using primary sources to create Document-Based Questions:

Using photos to supplement or challenge the text.

Assignment: Students will choose photographs from the assigned themes about the “Closing of the Frontier.” They will use the “Photo analysis sheet“ (from the National Archives), write a caption for each of their choices, and present, as a group, to the class.

1. Students will work in groups of four or five. In the Computer Lab, they will find five photographs from their assigned theme at Calisphere.

   a. [http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/](http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/)

2. Students will choose from the topic: 1870 – 1900: The Closing of the Frontier

   a. [http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/themed_collections/topics2.html](http://www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu/themed_collections/topics2.html)

   b. Choices include:

      i. Chinese Exclusion Act

      ii. The Transcontinental Railroad

      iii. Native Americans and Contact

      iv. Preservation of the West

      v. The Letters of John Muir

      vi. Everyday Life and People

3. Students have already learned how to use the Photo Analysis sheets, and have already read the chapters on The Western Frontiers. They will choose (as a group) five photos (or drawings, or art, or other primary source), write a caption for the material explaining why they chose this source, and explain how it supplements or challenges the text. Students will present their choices to the class.

4. NOTE: CALISPHERE ALSO INCLUDES LESSON PLANS,” QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER”, AND STATE STANDARDS (FOR CALIFORNIA).