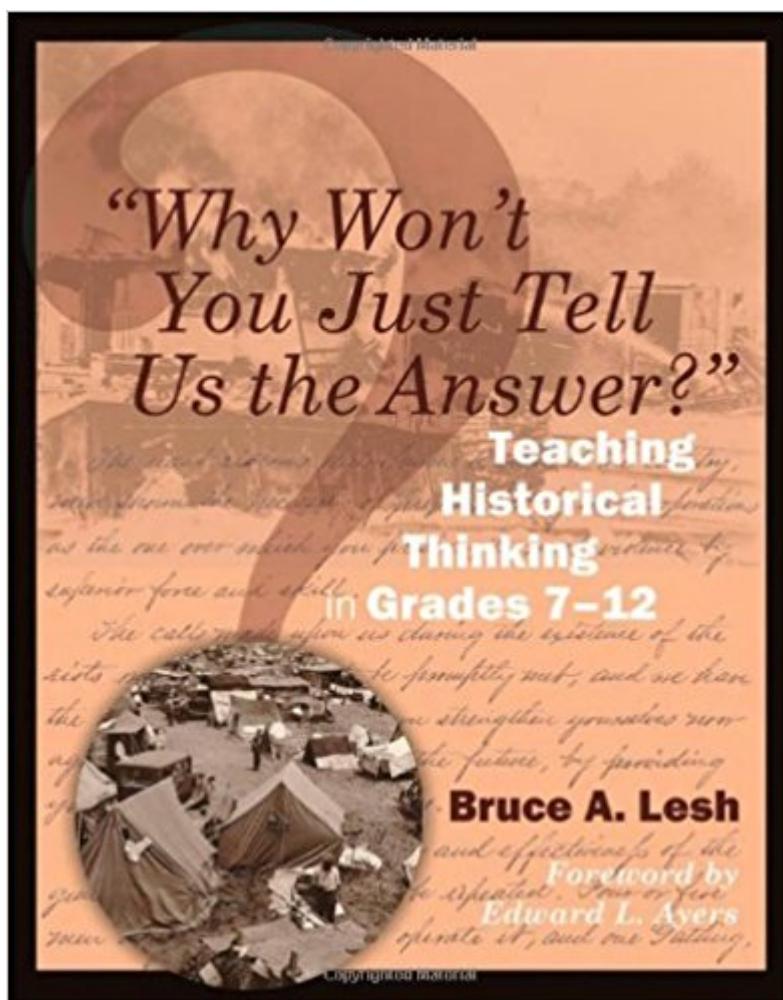


The book was found

"Why Won't You Just Tell Us The Answer?": Teaching Historical Thinking In Grades 7-12



Synopsis

Every major measure of students' historical understanding since 1917 has demonstrated that students do not retain, understand, or enjoy their school experiences with history. Bruce Lesh believes that this is due to the way we teach history—lecture and memorization. Over the last fifteen years, Bruce has refined a method of teaching history that mirrors the process used by historians, where students are taught to ask questions of evidence and develop historical explanations. And now in his new book *Why Won't You Just Tell Us the Answer?* he shows teachers how to successfully implement his methods in the classroom. Students may think they want to be given the answer. Yet, when they are actively engaged in investigating the past—the way professional historians do—they find that history class is not about the boring memorization of names, dates, and facts. Instead, it's challenging fun. Historical study that centers on a question, where students gather a variety of historical sources and then develop and defend their answers to that question, allows students to become actual historians immersed in an interpretive study of the past. Each chapter focuses on a key concept in understanding history and then offers a sample unit on how the concept can be taught. Readers will learn about the following:

- Exploring Text, Subtext, and Context: President Theodore Roosevelt and the Panama Canal
- Chronological Thinking and Causality: The Rail Strike of 1877
- Multiple Perspectives: The Bonus March of 1932
- Continuity and Change Over Time: Custer's Last Stand
- Historical Significance: The Civil Rights Movement
- Historical Empathy: The Truman-MacArthur Debate

By the end of the book, teachers will have learned how to teach history via a lens of interpretive questions and interrogative evidence that allows both student and teacher to develop evidence-based answers to history's greatest questions.

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Customer Reviews

"What the book intends to do, and what it does well, is provide a 'road map' for those who wish to teach historical thinking skills in the secondary classroom. Lesh has written a valuable book for history teachers at the secondary level." - The History Teacher "Teachers are shown how to teach history using interpretive questions and interrogative evidence in this exciting alternative to traditional history paths, recommended for any educator's collection." - Midwest Book Review

Every major measure of students' historical understanding since 1917 has demonstrated that students do not retain, understand, or enjoy their school experiences with history. Bruce Lesh believes that this is due to the way we teach history—lecture and memorization. Over the last fifteen years, Bruce has refined a method of teaching history that mirrors the process used by historians, where students are taught to ask questions of evidence and develop historical explanations. And now in his new book "Why Won't You Just Tell Us the Answer?" he shows teachers how to successfully implement his methods in the classroom. Students may think they want to be given the answer. Yet, when they are actively engaged in investigating the past—the way professional historians do—they find that history class is not about the boring memorization of names, dates, and facts. Instead, it's challenging fun. Historical study that centers on a question, where students gather a variety of historical sources and then develop and defend their answers to that question, allows students to become actual historians immersed in an interpretive study of the past. Each chapter focuses on a key concept in understanding history and then offers a sample unit on how the concept can be taught. Readers will learn about the following: Exploring Text, Subtext, and Context: President Theodore Roosevelt and the Panama Canal Chronological Thinking and Causality: The Rail Strike of 1877 Multiple Perspectives: The Bonus March of 1932 Continuity and Change Over Time: Custer's Last Stand Historical Significance: The Civil Rights Movement Historical Empathy: The Truman-MacArthur Debate By the end of the book, teachers will have learned how to teach history via a lens of interpretive questions and interrogative evidence that allows both student and

teacher to develop evidence-based answers to history's greatest questions.

I have taught middle and high school history for fifteen years before picking up this book last summer. This book helped transform how I taught. My students are now more than hearers of information, but rather thinkers about matters pertaining to history. The book gives clear direction how to continue to include content and to engage students in critical thinking lessons regarding that content by using primary sources.

Over my 20+ year teaching career, I have been shifting from copy the notes and regurgitate on a test to a much greater emphasis on primary sources and thinking skills. Lesh's book has articulated and affirmed what I've been doing and given me ideas on how to help my students think like historians. The book isn't full of ready to use lessons, but he walks through some of his lessons, sharing what he's learned and tweaked over the years. This book is more of a template for creating these lessons for the units I teach.

Mr. Lesh goes beyond what other historical thinking books do- it gives a real-life teacher perspective! In the past, I have read many books about historical thinking and how to incorporate them into the classroom, but very few of the authors have actually taught the lessons and ideas incorporated within their texts. Just talk/lecture and no examples; no proof! Mr. Lesh has not only taught the lessons, he shares his thoughts, concerns, highs, and lows in teaching the lessons and having the students work through them. These insights and student examples help the everyday teacher understand his thinking but also prepares them for similar reactions in his/her own classroom. I also appreciate that he understands this is a work in progress; trial and error. Overall, very helpful and informative.

I am always looking to find ways that help me to present information to kids in a manner that is relevant to their lives. The ideas presented in the book are helpful. I have not yet made my way through the entire book. However, it is filled with thoughtfully presented ideas which I believe are worth your time and effort to go through.

As a HS history teacher, this is a great book to help you get to students to think on their own and form their own opinions rather than just memorizing facts.

If you teach history: buy this book right now! Studying history is about investigation, critical thinking, and analyzing. Lesh helps educators create an investigative atmosphere in the classroom. Works great for a flipped classroom.

This is the best book on teaching history I've read since *Lies My Teacher Told Me*. Unlike many authors on this subject, Lesh has a vision for what should replace the rote form of learning employed in so many history classrooms. I plan on making use of many of these ideas when I meet with my fellow history teachers tomorrow to design our Common Core aligned curriculum for next year.

A organized approach and strategy for Social Science teachers that supports Common Core Standards and Literacy. A Good addition to your teaching toolbox.

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