

**Title of Session:** Social Studies Forum - PBS History Detectives

**Moderator:** Michael Hutchison

**Guest Speakers:** Abby Jenkins, Jess Ludwig, and Sheila Higginson

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Room: Social Studies Forum Group

**MichaelH:** Welcome to tonight's Social Studies Forum

**MichaelH:** As many of you know, we have a super cool topic tonight...

**MichaelH:** This summer, I sort of became a "History Detectives" junkie... and I thought it would be a great opportunity if we could introduce the series in the forum tonight.

**MichaelH:** We have several guests who were kind to join us tonight...

**MichaelH:** I'll give a bit of introduction for History Detectives in a bit, but first, let's start with introductions, and then I'll give you the rules of the road, about how to DETACH, etc.

**MichaelH:** would you all like to tell us who you are, where you're located (geographically), and what you teach?

**AmyGst1:** I work with National History Day in middle schools here in Montgomery County, Maryland

**MichaelH** is a social studies teacher in southwestern Indiana

**JamieET:** Jamie, Houston, TX, 6th grade social studies, World Cultures and Geography

**AnnA:** I am chair of the division of teacher education at Spring Hill College, a Jesuit liberal arts college in Mobile, Alabama.

**DavidWe:** I'm David Weksler and I'm in northern New Jersey, not far from New York City. I help teachers learn more about technology. I lead a math and technology discussion in Tapped In

**JudiF:** I am one of Tapped In staff members. I am excited about this session.

**TimF:** Tim 2nd grade in Morgan City LA

**JimBe:** Hello, I'm Jim Beeghley. I work for the Pa Department of Education and I am a doctoral student researching the uses of technology to teach the American Civil War.

**SheilaHi:** Hi all! Sheila Higginson, Brooklyn, New York. I've worked in educational publishing for the past 17 years, and taught at the high school level.

**DanettaS:** I am a graduate student at SHC in Elementary Education

**MichaelH:** Jim, I'll want to get with you at the end of the session, ok?

**VickiLM:** Vicki, Technology Trainer and Education Technology Adjunct, Franklin College, Franklin, IN

**AbbyJ:** Hi, Abby Jenkins, Asst. Director, PBS KIDS Interactive, Washington, DC

**MichaelH** looks around to see if anyone else would like to sign in and say hello

**JimBe:** ok

**JessLu:** I'm the PBS Interactive content manager of the History Detectives site.

**MichaelH** . o O ( want to talk about Civil War with you )

**MichaelH:** anyone else?

**JamieCo:** I'm Jamie I am an Early childhood student at Lesley College in Cambridge MA

**MeiraS:** Hi, I'm Meira from Boston, Massachusetts I go to Lesley College in Cambridge, MA.

**AnnA:** I'm glad to see that you Lesley students are here, too

**MaryMi:** Hi all. Special hello to Liana, Meira, Jamie.

**MichaelH:** don't forget to come right back here though soon, or you'll miss out on the other sites (remember all the sites they share will be in the transcript, and you can go any time)

**MichaelH:** Here's a short blurb about History Detectives that Jess gave me to share....

**MichaelH:** History Detectives is a joint production of Oregon Public Broadcasting (OPB) and Lion TV in London, England. The program's four hosts are a high-energy quartet of renowned experts in the world of historical investigations. Their collective range of expertise includes architecture, popular culture, sociology, archeology, collectibles and genealogy. Each hour-long episode of History Detectives features three investigations that delve into family legends, local folklore and stories behind potentially extraordinary objects in everyday American homes, cities and small towns. The program recently concluded its fourth season, and in each of the last two seasons 75% of the

stories profiled on-air have been contributed by viewers. In preparation for the program's fourth season, the site was completely redesigned with an educator audience in mind. The site features a video library of clips, lesson plans, and a catalogue of all the investigations from the program organized by eras, a categorization modeled on the National Standards for History, grades 5-12.

**DavidWe** . o O ( that's a chunk of text! )

**MichaelH**: and there's a quiz after, David!

**MichaelH**: Jess, Sheila do you want to start the discussion with an introduction of the series or website?

**AbbyJ**: I have a question before we chat. Has anyone else, besides Michael H watched History Detectives before?

**VickiLM**: YES!

**AbbyJ**: very cool. anyone else?

**KarenLL**: We love the program. I'm excited to learn more about it.

**AmyGst1**: Yes

**JamieET**: I've never seen it before

**MaryMi**: Sorry to say I have not watched history detectives.

**JamieCo**: nope, can not say I have seen it before

**MeiraS**: neither have I

**StephaniDa**: me either

**MaryMi**: Great, Stephanie. I am glad you are here.

**AnnA**: No, but I suspect that I will after tonight.

**MichaelH**: you guys are in for a real treat, then!

**JamieET**: Yay!

**DanettaS**: would love to get to watch it

**AbbyJ**: History Detectives airs on PBS, primetime, during the summer

**SheilaHi:** I think what's great about the show from an educator's standpoint is how thrilling it makes history. My first-grade age son got so excited about learning about World War II after watching an episode with me he interviewed everyone in the family who was alive at the time.

**MichaelH:** that's what I love about the series, too, Sheila, the idea that it explains and goes into detail about what might be more abstract historical events

**AbbyJ:** Yes, and the great thing about the program is that the stories come from viewers, like you. In our third season 75% of stories came from viewers.

**JudiF:** Interesting... How do the viewers share?

**MichaelH:** That's a cool aspect of the show, Abby, that viewers can suggest things...

**AbbyJ:** Well, you can submit your stories online!

**LianaM:** what is the website?

**JamieCo:** Sorry, I just don't know much about the show... do they kind of act things out on the show how do they go about explaining things

**AnnA:** So, viewers submit stories, you edit and add graphics, sound effects, etc.?

**MichaelH:** Abby, Sheila, Jess, would one of you like to give the web address and the audience could take a quick look at the web page?

**MeiraS:** what kind of things do they investigate?

**AbbyJ:** <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/>

**KarenLL:** I appreciate how they locate resources to track down the information and details. It always amazes me how much they find out about the objects or whatever.

**MichaelH:** remember, just click on the link to go to the site, but it will cover this window... come right back to keep with the discussion

**SheilaHi:** <http://pbskids.org/historydetectives/>

**SheilaHi:** For a younger audience

**MichaelH:** Sheila is showing you the PBS Kids site (for elementary grades)

**JamieCo:** those 4 characters tell the "story"

**AbbyJ:** The detectives investigate everything from every day objects to architecture to famous events in history

**AnnA:** Were any of you in the picture on the website?

**AbbyJ:** You can learn more about the Detective team here:  
<http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/about/team.html>

**SheilaHi:** Viewers can offer ideas for the show, but individuals and whole classes can participate by posting their own treasures online.

**StephaniDa:** It looks like there have been some interesting episodes

**JamieCo:** and are these things you can link in with a lesson?

**MichaelH:** and it is unbelievable all the research they do

**TimF:** For my second graders!!! Yay!

**JamieCo:** that's really fun

**MichaelH:** Sheila, we have a lot of pre-service teachers with us tonight...

**AbbyJ:** Sheila or Jess, before we get into KIDS would you be able to speak to Teacher resources on the main site

**AmandaMB:** I love this site

**StephaniDa:** I like the idea of the detective kit

**MichaelH:** could you give some strategies on how we could use the series in the classroom?

**SheilaHi:** Sure, this is geared to upper grades

**MichaelH:** for example, I'm a US History teacher... what sorts of strategies could you suggest for me?

**JessLu:** You can find History Detectives materials for educators, including lesson plans, an intro to the materials and video clips here:  
<http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/educators/index.html>

**SheilaHi:** You could use the clips from the show to supplement a unit you were doing by searching the site

**DanettaS:** when you say upper grades do mean high school? or can this be used for elementary school students?

**SheilaHi:** yes, but more information for those grades are featured on the kids website.

**JamieET:** Lesson plans, great!

**SheilaHi:** the educator's information on the general audience site is intended for 7-12 grades

**AbbyJ:** thanks!

**SheilaHi:** Jamie, you're one step ahead of me.

**JamieET:** Opps, sorry, I won't read ahead anymore

**MichaelH:** I could definitely see this being a great site to get students who might not be excited by history very interested in the subject

**MeiraS:** what ages are included on the kid's website?

**SheilaHi:** And there are lesson plans that relate to specific episodes

**JamieCo:** thank you

**SheilaHi:** the kid's website was geared to ages 8-12

**AbbyJ:** Yes, grades 3-6

**LianaM:** where is the kids site? on the one already listed?

**SusanHan:** I am impressed with the "games" offered on the kids site such as "How Old is this House". I think it really helps to pique a child's interest in their surroundings.

**CarolBa:** Fabulous. That's just right for my guys

**AmandaMB:** I am an early childhood major and am gearing towards younger children, I feel that the wed site is great, but do you think that the younger kids would be able to work with the computer and follow all the steps? or is there a way that they can be adapted for younger children?

**AbbyJ** pulls on the reigns

**MichaelH:** the kids site is at <http://pbskids.org/historydetectives/>

**AmandaMB:** ohh thanks!

**MichaelH:** Abby's right... we have plenty of time... so maybe slow down just a bit

**MichaelH:** Bet you didn't know you guys would be so popular tonight, Abby, Jess, Sheila

**AmandaMB:** ohh great! thanks.

**MichaelH:** and it looks like these lessons and activities work great in a one computer classroom as well

**CarolBa:** I cannot seem to get out to the website right now and I don't want to risk getting lost again. Could you describe some of these games or should I just wait to check them out tomorrow?

**AbbyJ:** Sheila or Jess, do you want to speak more to the general audiences site before moving to KIDS

**TimF:** Amanda, use a projector or TV connected to your PC... that would work.

**MichaelH:** Carol, you will get a transcript of the session, and the links will be "live".

**CarolBa:** Thx

**SheilaHi:** absolutely, Michael, individuals or small groups could work at one computer and get really excited about history, as well as learning a thing or two

**SusanHan:** I love the golden super sleuth rules because they really fit into most other curricular areas.

**MichaelH:** I admit, I'm a relative latecomer to History Detectives.... any chance that the first season shows will be re-aired, or are they available through Shop PBS for Teachers?

**MichaelH** . o O ( first seasons )

**DavidWe** . o O ( or online? )

**JimBe:** Civil War POW Photos

**JimBe:**

**SheilaHi:** I don't really have much more to add to the general audience site, unless there are any specific questions

**AbbyJ:** For those of you scratching your heads, the KIDS site is designed to help kids develop their analytical and problem solving skills. the plans and activities build upon the Golden Sleuthing Rules: Analyze It, Investigate It, Understand It, Test It

**MichaelH:** as a side note... I thought one of the most poignant clips I saw last summer was the one of the man whose mother had a Yankees ticket that they thought was signed by Lou Gehrig

**CarolBa:** I saw that one. It was pretty great

**MichaelH:** turned out that the detective determined that he couldn't have signed it because he was too ill by that point, and that his wife probably did

**MichaelH:** Abby, I'm not an elementary teacher

**MichaelH:** but I do like the idea of teaching critical thinking skills and analysis skills to young historians

**AbbyJ:** The games and activities are less about teaching history facts and more about the process of investigation and critical thinking.

**JessLu:** Do you often use online games in the classroom to illustrate concepts? I'd love to hear any thoughts about what works best in the classroom. Just wanted to emphasize the tips for building your own lesson around an episode or segment (mentioned earlier):  
[http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/educators/building\\_lesson.html](http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/educators/building_lesson.html)

**SheilaHi:** If we're moving back to the KIDS site, I'd like to point out:  
<http://pbskids.org/historydetectives/parentsteachers/teachHSI.html>

**MichaelH:** Jess, I know that viewers submit a large number of story ideas, but do teachers send in requests for the HD's to investigate something of interest to their classes?

**SheilaHi:** For every location featured in the new game, there is background information for teachers as well as lesson extension ideas

**CarolBa:** I have found that my 3rd graders are always ready to engage in a game, especially one on-line. There is something about the medium that grabs them perhaps more than many other means.

**JimBe:** Having students "do history" engages them at a higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy

**MichaelH:** I really like the idea of having a "lesson builder" for teachers to develop their own activities that match the show segments

**AbbyJ:** Sheila is pointing out our newest game, History Scene Investigators, which uses Google Maps to show famous events in history . You can find the game here:  
<http://pbskids.org/historydetectives/games/hsi/>

**JessLu:** We would \*love\* to receive more requests from educators and classrooms like the kind you mention Michael. I don't know of any stories that have been generated in that way. Thanks Carol

**MichaelH** is looking at the Scene investigation site... very, very cool!

**AnnA:** History Scene Investigators sounds like something you could use in your unit, Danetta.

**AbbyJ:** You can click and drag on the map to investigate the scene, then read the clues to guess what happened there

**DanettaS:** yeah I was jus thinking about that myself

**AbbyJ:** Does anyone use interactive maps in the classroom?

**MichaelH:** I use maps, but not online interactive ones, Abby

**CarolBa:** Abby, is this click and drag for 3rd grade?

**MichaelH:** this might be a good way to start using them

**SusanHan:** Yes I have used Google Earth with 4th graders learning longitude and latitude.

**CarolBa:** I use maps and Google Earth, especially for our region

**JamieET:** Interactive maps? Hmmmm....never even heard of it...

**JimBe:** I have heard of teachers using some of the Civil War maps in class

**JimBe:** to show troop movements

**JamieET:** Ooh Google Earth, totally forgot about that

**AbbyJ:** Also, teachers, you can submit your own history scene with your class - go to the link Sheila sent. We will continue to build out the clue content:

**CarolBa:** Has there been anything about Washington at Valley Forge (I know a song that starts like that) or Washington crossing the Delaware?

**MichaelH:** Abby, would a teacher's "history scene" be saved for retrieval later?

**DavidWe** 's sister lives 5 miles from Washington Crossing

**AbbyJ:** Actually, this is the link to submit your own clues:  
<http://pbskids.org/historydetectives/parentsteachers/hsi.html>

**MichaelH:** just wondered if a teacher could log in and "save" a location or lesson?

**DavidWe:** There's a re-enactment almost every December 24th at Washington's Crossing, PA

**CarolBa:** I know. We hike there and at VF

**AbbyJ:** No, we do not have a save feature.

**DavidWe** smiles

**MaryMi:** Do the history detectives deal only with American history?

**MichaelH:** But a teacher could still set the locations up before school, and then have them available as needed

**AbbyJ:** Yes, that's the focus.

**SheilaHi:** The Guess the Year game also has some fun classroom applications:  
[http://pbskids.org/historydetectives/games/capsule\\_index.html](http://pbskids.org/historydetectives/games/capsule_index.html)

**SheilaHi:** After playing the game, students could create their own mock time capsules based on any unit you're currently working on

**JimBe:** Michael, I must go and put kids to bed. Will try to be back. Can you email me and we can perhaps meet and talk?

**MichaelH:** sure Jim.... e-mail for me is [mhutch@charter.net](mailto:mhutch@charter.net)

**MichaelH:** want to talk about Civil War and multimedia

**BobGst8:** Hello, 8th grade teacher here. I was wondering if your site had any information or interactive material regarding John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry? I'm currently working on a lesson plan and would like to integrate some interactive content.

**JimBe:** great me too

**JessLu:** (Michael, to your question about re-airing episodes--local stations might be re-airing older episodes. There are currently no Shop products available for History

Detectives, but that might change next season. The fourth season has one year of ed. taping rights.)

**SheilaHi:**

[http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigations/106\\_johnbrownletters.html](http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigations/106_johnbrownletters.html)

**MichaelH:** One thing that would be super about earlier seasons is that they aren't "time sensitive", and could easily be used year after year

**DavidWe:** What are the issues about making all/parts of the episodes available on the PBS web site, Jess?

**CarolBa:** Does that mean that we just have to catch what we can and record?

**AnnA:** Good question, Carol

**MichaelH:** Jess, if I can interject here... you might want to direct Carol on how to subscribe to PBS Teacher Previews

**AbbyJ:** No Harpers Ferry on the KIDS site.

**JessLu:** civil war resources:

[http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigations/era\\_civilwar.html](http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigations/era_civilwar.html)

**JessLu:** John Brown segment from our first season--hope these links are helpful:

[http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigations/106\\_johnbrownletters.html](http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigations/106_johnbrownletters.html)

**MaryMi:** Suppose I wanted to find out how parents in colonial times disciplined their children. Could I use the history detectives to investigate this topic?

**SheilaHi:** I think you would use the History Detectives technique to help your students investigate the topic.

**JessLu:** David, rights clearances are the primary reason full video or extended clips aren't available from the site. Great question.

**CarolBa:** Piggybacking on Mary, is there anything about chores that colonial kids did? How about colonial crafts

**SheilaHi:** sorry, techniques

**DavidWe:** Thanks, Jess

**DanettaS:** Is there a list of episodes that a person could perhaps request the local PBS to air?

**SusanHan:** It seems that most if not all of the history detective super sleuth rules are also really good techniques for research of any kind.

**SheilaHi:** Absolutely, they definitely have cross-curricular applications

**MaryMi:** I am a bit confused. What is the connection between the PBS website and the PBS TV programs?

**JessLu:** Thanks, Michael, Carol, and everyone, you can subscribe to the Teacher Previews weekly newsletter, a weekly newsletter for K-12 educators (or just find out more about it) here: <http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/previews/previews.shtm>

**MichaelH:** Hi, Mary, I'll try and answer that and let Jess and Abby chime in... most PBS programming have related websites. For example, teachers, parents, and PBS patrons could look on the website and see information related to the show, as well as lesson plans and other resources... they're still under the PBS umbrella

**AbbyJ:** The PBS program producers also produce site content, so that there is a direct correlation between the program on air and related online content

**SheilaHi:** Also, while there is a lot of amazing information about different historical periods featured on the show, I wouldn't think of the show as a comprehensive source material for a particular time period...

**SheilaHi:** but rather as a way to show students why history is important and how it really comes alive and has modern-day use

**MaryMi:** Can teachers use the website without viewing the TV show?

**MichaelH:** But it is a great way to pique students' interest in a particular period or event!

**CarolBa:** Sometimes a window or glimpse can be as effective as a longer survey

**AbbyJ:** That's right pbs.org has an abundance of history material and lesson plans, in addition to the History Detectives materials

**AbbyJ:** Yes, a teacher can use the website without having viewed the program.

**JessLu:** yes, I think you could certainly integrate some of the materials in the "Do It Yourself" or Investigative Techniques areas into the classroom without seeing the program.

**MichaelH:** Abby, if I can interject for a second, they might want to check PBS TeacherSource ( <http://www.pbs.org/teachersource/> )

**AbbyJ:** TeacherSource has over 3000 lesson plans and learning activities for preK-12 educators on all subjects. Along with having great, fully-vetted content, our resources are searchable by both state and national standards.

**JamieET:** Wow, that's awesome

**AbbyJ:** OK, that's the plug for TeacherSource. What you don't find on History Detectives, try a search for plans there.

**StephaniDa:** Cool, good to know

**JessLu:** (To the John Brown fan (go Harper's Ferry!), another PBS resource but one unrelated to History Detectives: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/brown/>)

**CarolBa:** Does it also link to places such as Library of Congress?

**AbbyJ:** Yes, on the KIDS side you will find additional History Resources. Such as <http://pbskids.org/wayback/>

**SheilaHi:** Backtracking a bit...Absolutely, Michael and Carol, I think the glimpse History Detectives can be incredibly effective because it motivates students to do their own investigations

**AbbyJ:** American History Wayback for KIDS.

**AbbyJ:** My favorite resources here are the secrets about the Presidents

**MichaelH:** that is a cool topic

**JessLu:** Pages for each History Detectives segment include related links--some to PBS sites and some to other sites like the LOC (you can usually find these links in the left nav or at the end of a related essay about the segment).

**AbbyJ:** And the section on family history: <http://pbskids.org/wayback/family/index.html>

**AbbyJ:** Investigation ones own personal history. I love the interactive family tree tool here.

**MichaelH:** Jess, before I forget... when does the next season begin for HD?

**CarolBa:** Great! My teaching partner does a unit on family history!!!

**JessLu:** HDV should begin next June! The program's season is June-early September. Local stations may still be running season IV episodes.

**JamieET:** June...so far away!

**MichaelH:** so everyone should check their local PBS listings to find out if and when HD is airing now

**CarolBa:** It'll be here before you know it

**JessLu:** Yes...check your local stations for reruns!

**MichaelH:** BTW: You can also go to PBS.org and personalize it for your own local station and listings

**DanettaS:** thanks that is helpful.

**DanettaS:** I was just wondering how I was going to figure out when it is on

**CarolBa:** Gotta go. Still at school. Too late for me. Thanks for all of your help

**DanettaS:** I am excited and would like to see an episode

**TimF:** me too

**AbbyJ:** Personalized settings will soon be a feature on TeacherSource. Check back in the next few months for that update!

**KarenLL:** I'm curious about how long it actually takes for the HD to complete an average investigation for the program. Can you give an estimate on that? I imagine it varies according to the objects.

**MichaelH:** Jess, Abby, Sheila, we've been here for about an hour; any closing thoughts, information, etc. you'd like to give the group?

**MichaelH:** whoops, I'll defer to Karen's question first

**MaryMi:** Michael, I think people planned to attend the session until 9:00 p.m. and probably have other commitments.

**MichaelH:** that's fine, Mary... just wanted to check to see if our guests had anything they wanted to say in closing, but Karen asked an excellent question

**AbbyJ:** For all your KIDS history inquires, visit a number of our PBS KIDS GO sites here in this list: <http://pbskids.org/go/figure.html>

**AbbyJ:** As to Karen's question...

**SheilaHi:** I would just stress that the show and both sites really clearly show kids how problem solving and inquiry are used in history investigations, and inspire that detective spirit in all of us.

**MaryMi:** Special thank you, Michael, Jess, Abby and Sheila, and all who helped to organize this event. It has been very informative.

**JamieCo:** Thank You

**SheilaHi:** Thank you for inviting me.

**MeiraS:** Thank you

**AbbyJ:** Jess, it seems like it takes a few months from the time of the submission to the taping.

**DavidWe:** Good job, folks!

**MichaelH:** we are certainly glad that everyone could join us, and a very special thanks to Jess, Abby, and Sheila for taking time from their evening to join us...

**SusanHan:** Thanks for sponsoring this discussion and thanks to our guests. Great show and web site.

**MichaelH:** they're working overtime tonight

**StephaniDa:** Thank you

**AnnA:** Thank you for including us in a very interesting and informative forum.

**VickiLM:** Can't wait to dig through all the info you've presented. Thanks

**MichaelH:** Please tell everyone at HD there are a lot of fans in TAPPED IN.

**SusanHan** left the room (signed off).

**AbbyJ:** Thanks everyone!

**JessLu:** I know that they're beginning production for the next season, so it really is a year-round effort. Time spent on each program varies with the amount of research needed and tracking down of experts and information--each case is very different. Good question.

**JessLu:** I know the HD production team is already working, so it really is a year-round effort. Time spent on each story varies because the amount of research and tracking down experts is different for each case. Good q.

**JamieET:** Thanks for such a great session, so many resources!

**AmandaMB:** Yes thank you so much my lil future kiddies will love it

**JessLu:** I know the producers are working on the next season already so it really is a year-round effort. The amount of time spent on each investigation varies depending on the story. Good question Sorry I'm slow in responding.

**DanettaS:** thank you for the great information to help with lesson plans

**KarenLL:** Thanks to everyone involved in this. It was great.

**MichaelH:** Abby, sometime I hope you'll be able to do a session focusing on some of the other PBS Kids resources... I think a lot of elementary teachers would enjoy that

**DavidWe** agrees

**AbbyJ:** sure, there's a lot left to be shared!

**DavidWe** waves goodnight

**DavidWe:** Ciao, folks

**MichaelH** waves goodnight to David

**JamieET:** Y'all have a great night. Again, thanks a lot!!