

NEW

SPRING 2026

YORK

archives Jr!

Dive Deep into History and Win!

Rural school No. 7 in Princeton, NY

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THE CHODOS
FAMILY FUND

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Rutledge

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Additional
Resources and
Activities can
be found at:



ConsidertheSourceNY.org

The New York State Archives Student Research Awards

Hello there! I'm Archie the Jr! Archivist, and I LOVE history! Do you enjoy learning about history? I really enjoy diving into a topic, digging up some facts, and then gnawing on them until I really understand. Then I like to share what I have learned with others. I like to be creative in how I share what I learn—sometimes I might make a picture book with my friends or create a video and dress up and speak as if I were a famous person from history.

If this sounds fun to you, keep reading! I want to tell you about the **New York State Archives Student Research Awards**. You can take your interest in historical research and turn it into a project to submit to our contest. If you enter the contest, I'll get to see your project, and I love seeing projects! Also, the winners of the contest receive a prize!

To enter the contest, you must choose a topic. You will need a big question you will answer with your research. Your work must use primary sources, though some secondary sources are okay too.

While you are researching, you will need to keep track of all of your sources so that you can create an annotated bibliography. What? You don't know what that is? That's okay, I'll tell you! A bibliography is a list of all the sources you used. You must write the information in a special way. Ask an adult to help you learn how to do this. Underneath each source, you will need to write a few sentences that explain how the source helped you to complete your research project.

You will need an adult to sponsor you in the contest. This can be a teacher, librarian, or parent if you are homeschooled. Your sponsor can help you with things like finding resources, using technology, or contacting other adults for information, but **you** must do the work!

Once your research is done, you have to decide how you will present your information. There are so many ways to do this, including writing a paper or creating a performance, documentary, website, exhibit, historic marker, or slide show.



ONLINE EXTRAS

To get you started,
I have put resources
here:



To brush up on your primary source skills, go to **Take a Closer Look** on page three. Then, when you are ready to start your project, go to the **Learning Activity** on page four.



Take a Closer Look

Student Name _____

Learning how to read a primary source might seem challenging, but with a little practice you'll be able to gnaw on history like I do! To help you, I have put my best note catchers in the online extras.

NEW YORK & ERIE RAILROAD.

TRAINS PASS SALAMANCA.

GOING WEST :

Night Express,	11 05 A M
Mail,	5 47 P M
Way Freight,	4 00 P M
No. 21,	2 27 A M

GOING EAST :

Night Express,	6 27 P M
No. 6,	9 32 A M
No. 8,	2 03 P M
Way Freight,	11 05 A M
No. 22,	4 08 P M

Trains 8 and 22 run every day.

The distance from Salamanca to Dunkirk is 45 miles; to New York 415 miles. The broad track, and the roominess of the cars and seats, make this road specially pleasant to travelers. The directness of the road to New York City and the prompt transmissions of freight and stock, make it the great freight avenue of the Country.

(HAS. MINOT, Gen'l Supt.

C. L. ROBINSON, Division Supt.
Nov. 17, 1862.

This is a document I am using to help answer my BIG QUESTION: "How did the Erie Railroad change the towns it ran through?" I found this at NYS Historic Newspapers online.

When I create a project for the Student Research Awards, I use a note catcher for each document I include. You can print one out and practice using this document.

What newspaper is this clipping from?

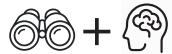
When was it published? _____

The Jamestown Journal, Feb. 20, 1863, page 4

Underline the title of this clipping.



Observe: What information is available in this clipping?



Infer: Why do you think this information was published in the newspaper in 1863?

How would this information help Archie with his research on the impact of the Erie Railroad on the towns between Salamanca and Horseheads?



Learning Activity



Step 1: Brainstorm.

To help get your brain going, I've put brainstorming pages in the online extras. Start by thinking about your community or region of New York. What might be interesting to research near you? Maybe you've driven by a building or site and wanted to know more about it. Maybe someone famous was born in your town. Or maybe a historic event happened nearby. There are stories everywhere to learn about and tell.

Step 2: Topic.

Look at the ideas on your brainstorm pages. Circle your top three choices. Pick topics that interest you, and that you think other people would be interested in too. Before deciding on a final topic, you should make sure there are research resources available. Start with your teacher or the library. You can also contact a local historian or historical society. The brainstorming page has links to help you find those people in your community.

Step 3: Research Question.

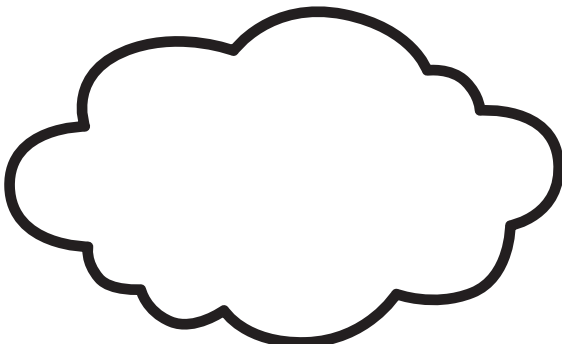
A good research project must answer a research question. Coming up with your **BIG QUESTION** will help you take your topic from a broad topic to a more focused one. It will also help you to stay on track while you are researching.

I LOVE learning about trains! I have picked trains as my topic. I need to come up with my BIG QUESTION to help me take the broad topic of trains down to something more specific and manageable.

The BIG QUESTION can be tricky, but it can't be too big. For example, "What is the history of trains in New York State?" is too big a question. It covers **everything** about trains—when they started, how they grew, every railroad line, every change over time. That's way too much for one project. At the same time, the BIG QUESTION can't be too specific, for example, "What was the price of a train ticket between Salamanca and Horseheads?" This is much too specific and will not make a good research project. Like Goldilocks, I must find a BIG QUESTION that is *just right*.

Since I know that I want to learn about the Erie Railroad, a good question might be "How did the Erie Railroad change the towns it ran through?" This question is *just right*. I am not going to research how trains work or the history of railroads, just how the one railroad (the Erie) changed the towns it went through. You can think of your BIG QUESTION as a tree made of many branches. To answer my BIG QUESTION, I will need many smaller more specific questions (the branches). These more detailed questions will help me to have good information in my project. You will find a page in our online extras that will help you develop your BIG QUESTION and your more detailed (branch) questions.

Whew ... that was a lot of information!
Once you are done brainstorming and checking for resources, pick your topic and write it here.



After you have developed your
BIG QUESTION, write it here.

