

Assessing with Primary Sources

Grade Level: High School (Grades 9-10)

Standard(s) or Objectives: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3
Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6
Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

Library of Congress Resources:



“The laying of the cable - John and Jonathan joining hands”
<https://www.loc.gov/item/2004665357/>

Topic Background:

The first transatlantic telegraph cable was successfully laid in August of 1858. Until this occurred, the fastest communication between Great Britain and the United States took at least one week. The American ship “*Niagara*” and the British ship “*Agamemnon*” were large naval vessels utilized to complete this task. On August 5, 1858, the ships completed their tasks of laying the cable and successfully connected two continents together, between Ireland and Newfoundland. The first message was transmitted on August 17, 1858. The United States and Great Britain would soon be able to communicate with each other almost instantaneously.

Source(s) Used:

The source used for this assessment is a drawing created in 1858, following the successful completion of the transatlantic cable. The image celebrates the goodwill between Great Britain and the United States that was generated by the successful completion of this Atlantic telegraph cable. The artist shows Brother Jonathan (left) shaking hands with John Bull. The two figures stand on opposite shores, set against a stormy, lightning-streaked sky over a choppy sea. Brother Jonathan is a fictional character created to personify the United States, prior to the creation of ‘Uncle Sam’. John Bull is a fictional character created to personify Great Britain. The American steamer “*Niagara*” and British steamer “*Agamemnon*” appear in the background of the drawing.

Excerpted from: <https://www.loc.gov/item/2004665357/>

Answer Key:

Question 1 – B
Question 2 – B

The Laying of the Cable – John and Jonathan Joining Hands

Brother Jonathan (left): "Glad to grasp your hand, uncle John! I almost feel like calling you Father, and will if you improve upon acquaintance! May the feeling of Friendship . . . be like the electric current which now unites our lands, and links our destiny with yours! May our hearts always beat together; and with one pulse--one Purpose, of Peace and Good-Will, we yet shall see ALL NATIONS speaking our Language, blessed with our Liberty, and led by that spirit of Love and Justice which leads to the only true happiness and Glory of Nations!"



John Bull (right): "Happy to see and greet you, Jonathan! You feel like 'bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh!' You have grown to be a tall and sturdy man--quite as big as your Father! Great times these, my boy! We won't think of quarreling any more. I have grown too wise for that; and I hope we will both agree to let by-gones be by-gones! Henceforth we treat each other as equals, and only strive which shall do most in making 'all the world and the rest of Mankind' (as one of your good old Presidents once said) realize 'How good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'"

Questions:

- Which of the following parts of the dialogue between Great Britain and the United States did the artist also include in the details of the drawing? (CCSS.ELA.RI.9-10.3)
 - Brother Jonathan: "I almost feel like calling you Father..."
 - John Bull: "We won't think of quarreling any more..."
 - Brother Johnathan: "May our hearts always beat together..."
 - John Bull: "Henceforth we treat each other as equals..."
- Which of the following statements best summarizes the author's point of view? (CCSS.ELA.RI.9-10.6)
 - Despite their sometimes "turbulent" relationship of the past, Great Britain and the United States are cheerfully putting all of that behind them in order to unite together and assume their roles as leaders for all of the other nations.
 - Although the rest of the world is observing the celebratory greeting between the two countries, each is quick to assume a patronizing and domineering tone when speaking to the other.
 - Leaders of both countries have agreed to come together in celebration of this great victory for mankind and hope to influence other countries to do the same.
 - The United States wants to look good to the rest of world, but at the same time is quick to give an almost immediate condition to Great Britain for their future relationship, establishing right away that we are superior to Great Britain.