

# Get a Clue!



All detectives use clues to solve mysteries. Detectives study their clues and check their sources. Asking questions is an important part of studying clues. When looking at history clues, these are some good questions to ask.

Another thing to remember is that many clues are biased in some way. Bias means that a clue includes the creator's opinions and beliefs, or point of view. For this reason, clues should always be compared to other clues about the same event. This helps historians write the most accurate story that includes different points of view.

For example, you are given an assignment to write a story about a soccer game. How would you write the story if you were on the winning team? How would the story be different if you were on the losing team? What would you write if you were the referee? Everyone was part of the same soccer game but all have different points of view. Your point of view creates bias in the way you write your story about the game.

## QUESTIONS ...

1. Who created this clue?
2. Why was it created?
3. What do I already know about this clue?
4. What don't I know?
5. What do I want to know?



# A 100-year-old History Mystery

Are you ready to test your skills at being a history detective? Your assignment is to solve the mystery of what it was like to be a child in Kansas in the early 1900s. Below are some drawings, or clues, that were found in a notebook at an antique store. Within the notebook the artist wrote "Belleville, Kansas." Begin with these clues, study them, and see where the clues take you.



Miss Lomis on Tuesday, May 8, 1906.



Drawn by Alice Dawson or Miss Celia Munchers, my play name.



In the school room.

The mystery continues ...



Feeding the chickens.



Playing Drop the Handkerchief.

## QUESTIONS ...

1. Who created these clues? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why were they created? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What do I know from these clues?
  - a. The artist's play name is \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - b. She liked to play \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - c. One of her chores was \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - d. She lived in Belleville, Kansas, in what year? \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - e. She attended school and her teacher was named \_\_\_\_\_ .

*Compare Alice's drawings with other items from the same time period. Look closely at these two photographs from the early 1900s. Notice the style of dress and hats. Do they look similar to Alice's drawings?*



4. What more do I need to know about Alice Dawson's life? Here are some questions to solve the mystery of what life was like in the early 1900s. Use the census information on the next page to answer the questions. Can you think of others?
  - a. How old was Alice when she drew these pictures? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Who were Alice's parents? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. What did they do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_

Census records can be found on websites such as [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com), or through your local library. The 1900 census for Belleville is shown here. Look who is listed!

Township or other division of county		Belleville City		Enumerated by me on the		twenty-fifth		day of June, 1900,		William R. Wells		Enumerator	
Dwelling - houses numbered in the order of visitation	Families numbered in the order of visitation	The Name of every Person whose place of abode on the first day of June, 1900, was in this family.	Age at last birth-day, if under 1 year, give months in fractions, thus 3/12	Sex - Male (M), Female (F)	Color - White (W), Black (B), Mulatto (M), Chinese (C), Indian (I)	Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each Male Person over 15 years of age	Education				Place of Birth Naming the State, Territory, or County		
							Attended school (in months)	Can read	Can write	Can speak English			
415	425	Dawson, James	33	M	W	Book Seller	0	Y	Y	Y	Ohio		
		, Valencia Wills	31	F	W	Book Seller	0	Y	Y	Y	Kansas		
		, Alice V	5	F	W						Kansas		
		Boles, Eugene L.	25	M	W	Postal Clerk	0	Y	Y	Y	Kansas		
		Thomas, Robert	24	M	W	Tailor	0	Y	Y	Y	Kansas		

5. What do I want to know more about to finish my assignment? You have learned a lot about Alice Dawson. But where would you look for information about other children in the 1900s? Think about different points of view. Some suggestions of other primary sources, or clues, are listed below. Can you think of others?
- A boy's diary
  - A diary of a child living in a big city
  - Photographs of new immigrant children to Kansas

## What is a census?

Every 10 years, in years ending in "0," the government makes a record of all the people living in the United States. The first census was taken in 1790 .

States, including Kansas, take a census on years ending in "5." The first Kansas census was in 1855 .



Alice Dawson's diary helps us learn what her life was like as a child in Kansas in 1906. With the other clues, we would be able to solve the mystery of what it was like to be a child in Kansas in the early 1900s. Do you think Alice had any idea that her diary would be a clue about her life?

How does Alice's life compare to yours? Do you keep a diary? Draw a picture or have someone take a photograph of you playing a favorite game or in your classroom at school. Congratulations! You just created a primary source. What would you want your picture to teach people about your life 100 years from now?