

Media Literacy Mini-Lesson #4

EYEWITNESSES

An eyewitness is a person who observed what happened at the scene of an important event.

**AN
EYEWITNESS
ACCOUNT...**

- is a record of an event told by someone who observed it
- is often recorded in or based on a journalist's notes from speaking to an eyewitness
- can be a source of evidence



Eyewitness accounts aren't always accurate:

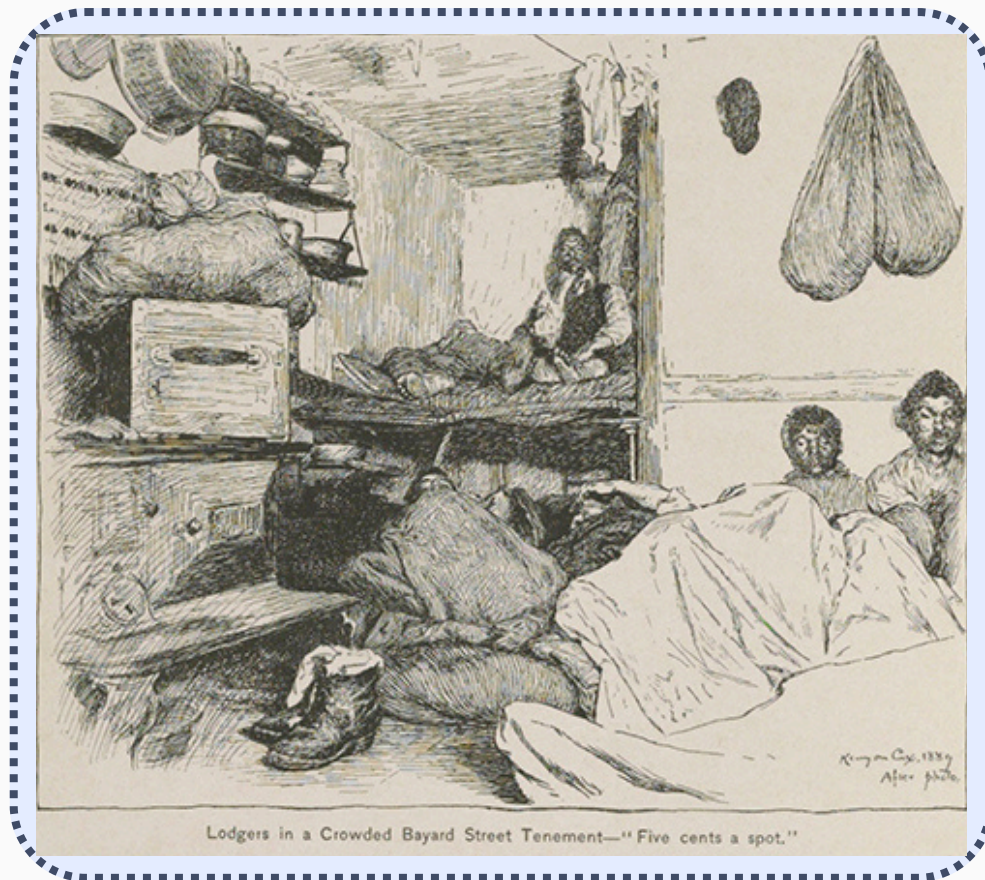
An eyewitness may have heard or seen only part of the story. Sometimes their memories fail them. Some eyewitnesses may have a particular *perspective or bias*. That's why it's important for reliable journalists to seek out multiple sources to confirm what happened.

Some eyewitnesses choose to remain anonymous:

They may fear that revealing information with their name might get them into trouble. Still, readers should be skeptical of stories that rely only on anonymous sources, especially without other evidence to help verify the story.



The following source was created by the 19th century photojournalist Jacob Riis. Riis used his camera to communicate the poor living conditions in New York's tenement housing.



Source: "How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements" by Jacob Riis. *Scribner's Magazine*, Dec. 1889. One of twenty wood engravings based on Riis's photographs. Library of Congress.

Describe what's happening in the photo. What do you notice or wonder about?

What makes this image an eyewitness account?
