

# Tompkins indians



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Learning History As far as this essay is going to deal with Linda Simon 's " The Naked Source" and Jane Tompkins 's " Indians", first I will introduce you to Simon 's opinions about history and how she thinks people learn and should learn history. " It is true that my students do not know history' (Simon 1). With this sentence Simon introduces her " The Naked Source" and already tells her reader what the text is about and what she thinks about her students. She describes the process of learning history as students have to do.

That meaner learning dates, reading long texts or even whole books and answering some pointless questions. She also describes the process of learning history as historians do, which is much more complex. To let the reader know what she thinks, she quotes A. L. Rouse 's " The Use of History'. Rouse tells us people do not need " a library of books", at least not to start learning history. She says one should only get a pen and a notebook and start walking. One should see places where history took place and just try to see as much as possible in order to get a feeling for what happened in the past and more what people were like back then.

Simon thinks students should rather read the first sources to be able to get to know who the people in the past were, because every secondary text contains the author's opinions are not necessarily the original point of view. She wants the students to get a sense of " what it is that historians do" (322, 25) and she thinks to understand the literature historians write, you must know what kind of person this historian is whose book you are reading. The question to this essay is to compare Simon to Tompkins. Therefore I have to introduce Tompkins.

She grew up in New York and was always interested in history of Indians and Indians themselves. She is also very convinced that personal opinions of historians affect their work and they cannot write objective at all. So the two of them have much in common; they both think students have no idea about real history and what it means to be a historian. Tompkins points out that however gives information about an event, no matter if the person is a primary or secondary source, it is only what this person wants to tell you and what this person knows and remembers.

Also many people would not tell you everything about an event if these details would have bad consequences for however talks to you. From this point I think Simon and Tompkins are right. I am very sure that what students learn in school or by reading history books is a whole different thing to what real historians do. Historians travel a lot and try to see all the places where something happened in order to make their own picture of those places and happenings. Of course nobody can see everything or sometimes the places are not anymore like how they were back then.

Also, in most cases there are no people alive to interview as a primary source. And at that point the historians start working. They have to find old letters or diaries or something else from that time. Simon writes about that process as the only way to really find out what happened in the past. But I think it is possible to learn history from books, because in most of the history books is more than one text about one event. Usually there are about three different sources for one happening. That way they make sure that the students get to know more than one opinion.

And the students can figure out something about the person who wrote the historical text by comparing the different ones and figuring out the differences between them. That way you cannot learn something new, but you do not have to travel around and still can learn most of the history. For learning new things you have to do some research and travel around and interview people or read diaries. At all I am sure that Simon and Tompkins know what they are saying, but they wrote their essays a couple of years ago and maybe the way history books are made up has changed in that time.