GETTING STARTED

How do I help new users get started in the TPS Teachers Network?

Many TPS Consortium members like to start with an overview of the Network homepage, either leading a tour or scheduling time for a self-guided tour.

- ❏ Do a visual scan of the homepage, identifying features and clicking on available links.
- ❏ Scan the feed of public group activity on the main part of the homepage.
- ❏ Skim the latest *Insider* post.
- ❏ Explore the Trending feature for an overview of recent activity with icons:

  Best of the Month 🔥 Most Likes 👍 Most Viewed 👁 Most Discussed 💬

- ❏ Try one or two beginning keyword searches 🔍 Search **SEARCH** . (Keyword ideas: *immigration, literacy, voting, posters, kindergarten, school library*)
- ❏ Make note of additional homepage features in the right column, such as the calendar, recent content icons, members, groups, and the latest *Teaching with the Library of Congress* blog post.

PROFILES

How should new users fill out their profiles?

New users typically fill out their profiles when registering (see <u>New User Registration Steps</u>, Appendix p. 28). Three profile fields may need your guidance - avatars, "About Me," and Facilitating Partner/TPS program.

- ❏ To personalize the Network experience and build community, encourage participants to upload avatars. To upload an avatar, click on PROFILE>Manage Avatar 😊 , and drag an image from your device or Choose File from your device. Click ⬆ SAVE NEW AVATAR .
- ❏ Ask participants to fill in the "About Me" section of their profiles with information about teaching situations, student populations, professional interests, personal hobbies, and anything else that helps other users connect with them. To complete the "About Me" section, click on PROFILE>Edit Preferences ⚙ >Edit Profile. Please advise participants not to enter their mailing addresses! It may help to look at a few other member profiles as models.
- ❏ Ask participants to select the correct Facilitating Partner/TPS program from the alphabetical dropdown list of TPS Consortium members.
- ❏ Whenever editing profiles, be sure to 💾 SAVE CHANGES .

GROUPS

What's the best way to introduce the concept of groups in the TPS Teachers Network?

- ❑ Explain that the Network has dozens of groups, some private and some public.
- ❑ Click on GROUPS>All Groups in the top menu or the All Groups link just below the GROUPS module in the right-hand column.
- ❑ To filter to public groups only, deselect Private and Hidden from Group Types and click Reload `⟳ RELOAD`.
- ❑ Give participants a few minutes to explore groups of interest. How are group pages organized? What can you learn from the ⓘ icon?
- ❑ Note that each group's activity feed is unique to that group.
- ❑ For a quick look at typical posts in any single group, explore a few items from the module RECENT CONTENT IN THIS GROUP. 💬 📢 🗂 🔗 🖼 📷 🎥
- ❑ If participants find groups of interest to them, encourage them to join by clicking 👤+.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE NETWORK

BEGINNING SKILLS

What skills do new users need to start sharing their own ideas and resources with professional educators across the country?

A few basic activities can help build just enough confidence to ensure that your participants will continue as active contributors to the TPS Teachers Network.

- ❑ **Likes.** Begin with a simple 👍 of a discussion or other post of interest.
- ❑ **Comments.** Add a comment after clicking on the title of any post (discussion, link, video, album, file) to open it. Below the post, click on `💬 ADD COMMENT`, enter your comment, use editing tools as desired, and click `💬 SUBMIT COMMENT`.
- ❑ **Replies.** You can also reply to individual comments by clicking `💬 REPLY` and following the procedure above.
- ❑ **Original Posts.** To start an original post, go to a group first. Click on the `Add Discussion` tab, enter a title, enter text in the text box, and click `💬 ADD DISCUSSION` to publish the post.
- ❑ **URLs.** If you wish to include a URL within a post or comment, be sure to hit the space bar after the URL to activate it. You can also embed a URL by highlighting words,

clicking on the 🔗 icon in the editing tools above the text box, pasting the URL in the space provided, and clicking Ok .

INTERMEDIATE SKILLS

What skills will help new users gain confidence in contributing to the TPS Teachers Network?

After participants have mastered a basic comment or discussion post, you can encourage them to try more tools, such as adding links, videos, and files. (Albums are covered in a separate section.) Other useful intermediate skills include adding user references and tags to posts and favoriting groups and content.

- ❏ **Links**. LInks are used most often for sharing Library of Congress collections, blog posts, educational journal articles, and websites. In any group, click on the 🔗 icon in the group header, then on the Add Link tab. Enter a title, paste the link in the appropriate box, enter your link description, and click ADD LINK to publish.
- ❏ **Videos**. Videos require only a URL and the choice of a category from a dropdown menu. They must be in either a YouTube or a Vimeo format. Begin by clicking on the 🎥 icon in the group header. Information about the video comes directly from the source. To upload the video, click on ADD VIDEO . If you wish to start a discussion about the video, you can add a comment on your own uploaded video.
- ❏ **Files**. Files most often take the form of lesson plans, although users can share other types of documents. TPS Consortium members typically upload files only after editing them for consistency and quality. Click on the 📑 icon in the group header, then the Upload File tab, fill in the title line, choose the file on your computer, enter text as desired, and click UPLOAD FILE to publish it. File types accepted include PDF, DOCX, DOC, TXT, XLS, XLSX, PPT, and PPTX, with a 10MB limit.
- ❏ **User References**. To credit another member of the TPS Teachers Network for a meaningful contribution, you can insert a link to that person's profile by clicking on the ADD USER REFERENCE button at the bottom of most text boxes. A search box allows you to find, select, and insert any member's name (or names) in your post or comment. The member will also receive an email notification of the mention.
- ❏ **Tags**. Tags allow users to find useful posts - a vital service as content expands in the TPS Teachers Network. Like user references, the tagging option is located at the bottom of text boxes. After clicking on # ADD TAG , users will be able to select from a list of predefined tags for grade level and subject. Next to these is a custom Add Your Own Tag option # Add You   ADD TAG . Add as many as you like, but definitely add tags!

ADVANCED SKILLS

What skills do users need to become experts?

TPS Teachers Network members should feel no pressure to attain expert level. Skills build over time, and in a complex and growing Network, there is always much to discover. The list below includes some advanced skills that you and your most eager participants may wish to explore. If you are training TPS Coaches, they may also wish to explore these more advanced skills.

- ❑ **Favorites**. Favoriting is a little used but convenient feature of the TPS Teachers Network. You can favorite a group to make it easy to locate, and you can also build a list of favorite posts. To favorite a group, click on the ⭐ icon in the group header. To favorite a single post, click on the smaller ⭐ icon just below that post. All favorites are stored in your PROFILE>My Favorites area, with an icon showing the type of content (group, discussion, link, album, etc.).
- ❑ **Follows**. How to follow an individual member. When you identify Network members who frequently post items of interest, you can follow them by clicking on their user names or their avatars, then the ✔ FOLLOW button. To view their latest contributions, click on FOLLOWERS>Following in the top menu bar, select the name of the person you are following, and view their personal activity feed from their profile page.
- ❑ **Badges**. What badges mean and how to achieve them. Click on PROFILE, then 🏆 , to view your total badge score, your current rank, all the badges you have earned and the date you obtained them, plus all that you may yet earn.
- ❑ **Image Inserts**. How to insert an image in a post or comment. Copy and paste an image's URL into the text box of a post, and the Network will automatically insert the image for you. Simply right click on the image, click "Copy image address," paste the copied address into the text box, and the image will appear along with the URL below it. If the URL does not display, paste the image again, undo it with ctrl+z, and URL will appear. Resize the image by selecting it, then clicking and holding the corner of the image to change it to the desired size.
- ❑ **Voice and Tone**. The TPS Teachers Network thrives when members welcome, connect, and engage one another by using a professional, but friendly, voice and tone. Because the Network is based on peer-to-peer interactions, it has no real hierarchy. Members value connection, and they are seeking creative teaching ideas no matter what their level of expertise in teaching with primary sources. They enjoy fresh, relevant, and engaging content offered without arrogance or professional snobbery. They return when their experiences are positive and personal. Soft skills matter!
- ❑ **Choosing Where to Post**. New users often worry that they are not posting in the right group or using the right tool. Hint: There is no correct answer. If content is of general interest, the TPS Commons might be the best choice. If content is specific - i.e. civil rights, English Language Learners, teaching with maps, integrating the arts - there may be a group whose members are looking for exactly that content. Users can also post the same content in two or more groups.

❏ **Attachments**. As a service to Network members, original authors of discussions can attach related content that they have authored and posted earlier. The attachment feature is located below the text box, and it includes a list of all previous posts from which to select. A user can filter the display by specific content types - discussions, links, albums, etc.

Attach your previously submitted content to this discussion.

Only your own materials from the current group or any public groups can be used.

CONTENT ▾		✕
	Content List	Selected Content
☐ 💬 WWI and its impact on coal mining at Ludlow and elsewhere		
✓ 💬 You could be here! The Main Reading Room at the Library of Congress		
☐ 💬 You know who and you know what		
☐ 🖼 Community Helpers		
Selected Attachments 2	Max allowed attachments 5	

No matter where you fall on the continuum of skills, you are welcome to schedule a time with Mary Johnson for a personalized tour of the TPS Teachers Network that meets your level and needs. Many TPS Consortium members new to the program have taken advantage of this offer and found it useful. In addition, the Network staff at TPS@MSU Denver is always willing to walk you through technical issues and answer your questions.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

What other suggestions have TPS Consortium members shared about embedding the TPS Teachers Network into TPS presentations, workshops, and courses?

As stated in the introduction, each TPS Consortium professional development experience is unique. We hope the TPS Teachers Network will be conducive to your program delivery no matter how much time you have available. Below is a list of additional suggestions and organizational ideas shared by your TPS Consortium colleagues:

❏ Plan a few easily achievable tasks. Try not to overwhelm with details. One successful comment is as good as five.
❏ Help participants find useful, practical ideas and resources for their teaching situations.
❏ Encourage teachers to work in pairs to develop Network skills if that is their preference.
❏ In a multi-day TPS event, try posting an exit prompt at the end of each day. Participants can comment before leaving, or they can comment before arriving for the next day.
❏ Keep in mind that the TPS Teachers Network is not a course management system. Instead, it is a social media network with typical social media functionality. This means that discussions and comments display in reverse chronological order and compete for screen space in all activity feeds.
❏ When teaching online courses, try to provide detailed instructions, naming conventions, and other organizational supports to participants.
❏ Consider inviting one or more of the thirteen trained TPS Teachers Network Mentors to share their teaching Network expertise with your participants.
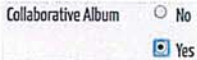
THE ALBUM TOOL

The album tool has become a popular and heavily used feature for new users as well as experienced users of the TPS Teachers Network. We have dedicated significant time and resources to continuously improving its capabilities and ease of use, from making the import process more intuitive to adding an export function to social media.

Note that the Album Instructions (see Appendix p. 30-33) will require updating after the current round of development and testing. Future developments will include automatic recognition of image file types and the capacity to import non-image files (newspaper articles from Chronicling America, sound files, film, and video) from the Library of Congress.

BEGINNING SKILLS - COLLECTION

The album tool offers a place for new users and those new to TPS professional development experiences to collect and store primary sources. TPS Consortium facilitators report that teachers are often thrilled at the availability of an all-in-one collection tool, especially one that allows them to identify and collect primary sources for their own classroom use.

- ❑ Inform TPS event participants that they will be collecting resources in an album while learning to search the Library of Congress website.
- ❑ Demonstrate one or two existing albums to give new users an idea of their potential.
- ❑ Remind participants that it is best to select a group in the TPS Teachers Network as a host group before creating an album.
- ❑ Select a group, click on the Album 🖼 icon in the group header, and choose the Add Album tab [Add Album].
- ❑ Enter a title, add a description of the intended content or use of the album, and add tags [# ADD TAG] to help other users find each album in the future.
- ❑ Click [🖼 ADD ALBUM] to publish it before adding images.
- ❑ Focus first on importing sources from loc.gov [IMPORT LOC.GOV IMAGE] rather than uploading images from other sources [⬆ UPLOAD IMAGE].
- ❑ Follow the steps indicated for importing an loc.gov image. When directed to paste in a URL, use the "About this Item" URL rather than an enlarged image.

Note that some TPS Consortium facilitators like to introduce the album tool by creating a group practice album prior to their TPS event. They set it as a collaborative album

Collaborative Album   ○ No   ⦿ Yes

and ask participants to contribute to a shared primary source set. This approach works especially well with TPS workshops that focus on a specific topic, content area, or grade level. These practice albums can be preserved or deleted later depending on their long-term value.

INTERMEDIATE SKILLS - CURATION

As participants begin to understand the potential of building their own albums, they typically wish to create albums related to their own content area specialties and their student populations. In other words, they begin to curate albums of primary sources for the purpose of teaching. The album tool gives them a space not only to collect resources, but to develop learning products.

- ❏ Choose album titles that clearly communicate the content. Avoid education jargon and lengthy workshop names or PhD dissertation length titles. There is no need to use personal names such as "Penny's Album." What title would make another Network member want to open an album?
- ❏ When adding a description of the album, explain how you intend to curate resources for your specific classroom setting.
- ❏ Add tags ` # ADD TAG ` to the album for grade level and subject area, as well as custom tags, to help other users find the album in the future. Tags can also be added to individual images to make them easier to find.
- ❏ Even though loc.gov materials pull in bibliographic data along with each album item, album creators can edit, simplify, and even delete all but the basic data (title, creator, date, source collection, etc.). Sometimes it may be more useful to add teaching ideas to the text accompanying individual items.
- ❏ The TPS Teachers Network also supports the uploading of non-loc.gov images to albums. Please see Album Instructions (Appendix p. 30-33) for more details.
- ❏ When practical, add teaching ideas to album and individual item text box descriptions. This curation step is helpful to teachers across the TPS Teachers Network.

ADVANCED SKILLS - DISSEMINATION

Teachers can disseminate the albums of primary sources they create in the TPS Teachers Network in two basic ways - internally for members of the Network only and externally using one of several export options.

Every album includes discussion and comments areas that allow album creators to solicit feedback and invite collaboration with other members of the Network.
- ❏ When carefully tagged and described, albums are made discoverable through the search tool on all Network pages and also through the TAGS search in the top menu of

all pages. A filter in the TAGS search allows users to enter a tag, then deselect all non-album or image content **Filter** [**▼ FILTER RESULTS ▾**] [Sort by] [Type ▾] [**⟳ FILTER**] such as files and links.

❏ Users can also go to any group and click on the album [🖼] icon in the group header to view all albums created in that group.

❏ When viewing an album, users can click on [**⬇ EXPORT ALBUM**] to export the album as either an editable Word document or as a PDF file. They may click on individual images or select all images for export, proceed to the next step, give the export a title, and change the order of images if desired. After previewing the result, again choose [**⬇ EXPORT ALBUM**] . The exported album will download to the user's downloads folder.

❏ Another option is to export an album to social media - Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest. Below each album is a line to COPY SHAREABLE URL [f] [🐦] [⊙] [**⊕ COPY SHAREABLE URL**] . Users can click on their preferred social media service or copy the URL to be used in emails, websites, and other services. For privacy reasons, the shareable social media export strips all personally identifiable information (PII) from the exported album display.

Few educational networks include tools for creating primary source sets and disseminating teacher-created learning products beyond those networks. The TPS Teachers Network makes it possible for members to engage in deep conversations about albums as instruments of learning. Network members use exported albums in classrooms, in curriculum development, and in professional presentations and publications.