

Teaching American History

Lesson Plan Template

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Subject: US History
Grade Level: 8th
Class Time Required: 3 periods
Lesson Title: Using Journalism to Define Life in North Carolina During the Civil War

Essential Question:

**What was life like for the majority of North Carolinians before, during, and after the Civil War?
How did the culture of journalism shape opinions during this period and does that still happen today?**

Brief Description of Lesson:

Students will use archived historical North Carolina based newspapers during the period as a primary source document to examine life in North Carolina during the antebellum, civil war, and reconstruction periods for the average North Carolinian. During their research they should analyze the personal attitudes, real-life episodes on the home-front, and some of the economic issues that North Carolinians were faced with. Students may also choose to identify how newspapers presented and sometimes influenced politics, and how some newspaper editors used their publications to shape public opinion during this volatile period in our state's history.

Lesson Plan Objectives:

State Competency Goals (# and description)

Competency Goal 4	The learner will examine the causes, course, and character of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and their impact on North Carolina and the nation.
	Objectives 4.01 Identify and analyze the significance of the causes of secession from the Union, and compare reactions in North Carolina to reactions in other regions of the nation. 4.02 Describe the political and military developments of the Civil War and analyze their effect on the outcome of the war. 4.03 Assess North Carolina's role in the Civil War and analyze the social and economic impact of the war on the state. 4.04 Evaluate the importance of the roles played by individuals at the state and national levels during the Civil War and Reconstruction Period. 4.05 Analyze the political, economic, and social impact of Reconstruction on the state and identify the reasons why Reconstruction came to an end.

Teacher Designed Objectives (At the end of this lesson students should be able to...) Students should be able to recognize, evaluate, and determine how life in North Carolina was different compared to images often portrayed in modern day adaptations to the time period. At the core of this lesson should be an understanding that all North Carolinians did not own slaves or benefit from the practice of slavery. Students will get a first-hand look at life at North Carolina as reported by the newspapers of the day.

Materials Needed: (Print and Non-Print)

Primary Sources: North Carolina based newspaper articles from the period (1860-1880) *Note: see link below.*

Secondary Sources: NC History text book, research materials on the Civil War, the home-front during the Civil War.

Technology: If the newspaper article and research materials will be accessed online, the instructor will need to make arrangements to have computers available for individual students or small groups.

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

Anticipatory Set (Jump-Starter Activity) Students should be familiar with the southern economy in the antebellum period and the experiences, roles and expectations for men and women in the Old South. To help students better understand this period in North Carolina history teachers could guide students through **“TheHomeFront”** http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/exhibits/civilwar/about_section4.html Part of an online exhibit on North Carolina and the Civil War from the North Carolina Museum of History. If possible and actual field trip to the North Carolina Museum of History would be great.

Teacher led instruction: “Idea Wave” post answers on the board. Ask students what they think life would have been like for most North Carolinians before the Civil War. Ask what they think it would have been like for families left on the home-front when husbands and fathers went off to the Civil War. Ask how they think the Civil War changed life in North Carolina and was North Carolina better or worse for it.

Guided Practice: Day One

1. Divide students into groups of two to five (depending on the teacher’s preference) to first read the learners’ guides and then analyze a North Carolina newspaper article of their choice in greater depth. The instructor may wish to create a unique handout that students can use to analyze this document.
2. Allow students to spend 20–30 minutes analyzing this document and taking notes. Each student should have his or her own notes. The instructor should circulate among the groups to answer questions, make sure all of the groups are on-task, and to raise additional questions for groups that seem to be working quickly and may be able to explore the resource in even greater depth.
3. Close the day with a whole-class discussion of the articles that students found.

Independent Practice: Day Two

Students will again converge into their assigned groups to create a skit that depicts an event that they found particularly interesting from their primary source. The skit should show an event that accurately depicts some aspect of life in North Carolina for an average individual during this time period.

Closure: Day Three

Students will present their skits to the entire class. Students should be ready to answer questions about their choice in article, the event, and how this event was covered by the local newspaper. Students should also be prepared to show how this event was shaped by either the surrounding culture of the time or the reporting by the journalist who wrote about it.

Evaluation of Student Comprehension:

Assessment will be based on the student’s body of work from throughout the lesson, taking into account students’ participation in discussions, analysis of documents, and contributions to group-based activities. Teachers can determine how much to weight each part of the lesson and what specific rubric to use based on their own priorities and classroom practices. The following questions will help you think about how to assess students’ work for various parts of the lesson.

Discussions and classroom activities

- Did students contribute frequently and thoughtfully to class discussion?
- When group work was a part of the lesson, did students cooperate and do their fair share of the work? If you wish, you can incorporate a peer-review or self-assessment to allow students to comment on the contributions of group members or on their own contributions to group work and class discussion.

Primary source analysis (newspaper article)

- Did students identify significant information about this source and its main ideas?
- Did students summarize the content of this source thoughtfully?
- Did students draw reasonable conclusions when analyzing this source?
- Did students write down their observations carefully and in detail for later analysis?

Assessment of the Lesson:

This is for teachers using the plan to reflect on what worked and what needs modification.

Supplemental Information for Teachers:

Internet Resources:

This plan relies heavily on primary sources. The following resources can help students learn to analyze primary sources like the ones used in this lesson plan more effectively.

1. **The North Carolina Newspaper Digitization Project.** Digital copies of North Carolina's earliest newspaper as compiled by the North Carolina State Archives. <http://www.archives.ncdcr.gov/newspaper/about2.html>
2. **Learner guide: Reading newspapers: Factual reporting** this learner's guide introduces students to the use of historical newspapers as primary sources and provides key questions for reading them. <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4132>
3. **Learner guide: Reading newspapers: Reader contributions** a learner's guide to reading letters to the editor and other reader contributions in historical newspapers. <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4183>
4. **Learner guide: Reading newspapers: Editorial and opinion pieces** a learner's guide to identifying, reading, and understanding editorial and opinion pieces in historical newspapers. <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4184>
5. **Learner guide: Reading primary sources: An introduction for students** a step-by-step guide for students examining primary sources, with specific questions divided into five layers of questioning. <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/745>
6. **"Scholars in Action: Analyze a Colonial Newspaper"** from *History Matters* at George Mason University. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/sia/newspaper.htm>

Attachments:

Resources to complete this lesson were found at LearnNC
<http://www.learnnc.org/search?area=&phrase=Newspaper>