

Teaching American History

Lesson Plan Template

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Subject: Social Studies
Grade Level: 8
Class Time Required: about 3 one-hour classes from start to finish
Lesson Title: Analyzing the Lewis and Clark Journals

Essential Question:

What is a historians job and how do they get their information?

How did the journals of Lewis and Clark impact the way we understand this period of history?

Brief Description of Lesson:

Students will take on the role of historians writing and reporting from their findings in the Lewis and Clark journals. Students will understand the importance of using primary sources when documenting historical information. Once students have reported on a particular journal entry, they will get in groups and compare their findings to other students with the same entry. Reports will be given by each group to the entire class.

Lesson Plan Objectives:

Access the Table of Contents for the North Carolina Social Studies Curriculum at:

<http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/curriculum/socialstudies/scos/>

State Competency Goals (# and description)

3.08 Examine the impact of national events such as the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the War with Mexico, and the California Gold Rush, and technological advances on North Carolina.

Teacher Designed Objectives (At the end of this lesson students should be able to...)

1. Examine and interpret Lewis and Clark journal entries as primary documents/sources providing insight into the expedition's journey.
2. Learn what a historian does to gather his/her information.
3. Think, write, and report like a historian.

Materials Needed: (Print and Non-Print)

Primary Sources:

http://www.pbs.org/lewisandclark/archive/idx_jou.html

Secondary Sources:

History Detectives

http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/diy/printed_items.html

Netserf: Historical Journals

<http://www.netserf.org/Research/Journals/Historical/>

Technology: computers/internet could be used, but are not necessary

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

Anticipatory Set (Jump-Starter Activity)

1. Ask the students to think about how a historian gathers their information. What do they use to find out their information? Explain that historians have to piece together the story of a particular event or time period by looking at artifacts, primary source documents, and other evidence from the past. Explain that when historians do not have enough information to tell the whole story, they have to make logical inferences based on evidence that does exist. Tell students they will assume a historian's role to report on events that occurred during the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Teacher led instruction

2. Pass out several copies of different entries of the journals. Be sure to have multiple copies of each entry you choose. (as many multiple copies as you would like to have in each group) Tell students that, as mock historians, they will review journal entries, important primary documents that offer great insight into expedition, and document their findings and thoughts. (Students may view online or printed versions of the journals.) Explain that they are encouraged to supplement their findings with other historic information previously learned in class.

Guided Practice

It may be necessary, depending on the level of your students, to model the note taking and narrative writing process for the class. Go through your thinking process out loud as you decide what is important information for you as a historian. Once you get started, have the class offer information as well, until you feel they understand your expectations for the assignment.

Independent Practice

The students will independently read their assigned journal entry and report their findings and understandings of the events that occurred in the form of a written historical narrative. Students will then meet with the other students who were reporting on the same entry. Each student should present his or her version of the journal entry's contents to group members—it is likely that each will have a slightly different story to tell. Instruct the groups to discuss the various findings and interpretations. How could these variations impact the way we understand history?

Closure

Instruct groups to come to some consensus on the information provided in the journal entries and then present their perspective on the specific event to the class. Allow the groups creative freedom in the way they would like to present their information. They could prepare a short skit, make a poster, prepare a short monologue, make a power point, etc. Invite students to pose questions to each group for additional information and/or to clarify what they have presented.

Evaluation of Student Comprehension:

Provide a plan to assess student progress toward meeting the objective(s) of the lesson.

Students could be assessed based on the completion of their independent written narrative. A rubric could be created to assess the oral presentations by the groups.

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:***

For each source provide...

Web address:

Author and Title:

Brief synopsis of the source:

Attachments: