

Social Studies Thematic Unit: Who Are You?

Introduction

Goals and Aims:

The primary goal of this unit is to expand the student's view of what is history and culture, and see his/her own participation in it, and the corresponding link to the history of America. It is also important that the student sees himself/herself as a creator of history and part of the American story. At the same time, students can start using the vocabulary that will help them become historians. To accomplish this, students will find out more about themselves by writing an autobiography to explore their own histories and culture. *Any student, who might be uncomfortable about his/her circumstances, may write an alternative biography under the guidance of the teacher.*

Note: This ninth grade unit is designed specifically to coordinate with the tenth grade Unit, Who are We?

Rational:

The purpose of this unit is to introduce students to the discipline of history and some of the complex issues of historical inquiry. At the same time, the class will be introduced to basic concepts and definitions of historians. Through the guided writing of an autobiography, the student will begin to conduct historical inquiry, learn more about historical significance, and reliability of sources. They will also uncover cultural universals. The unit is designed to encourage students to develop critical thinking skills that will be utilized throughout the year.

Curriculum Framework

National Council for the Social Studies Standards

Time, Continuity, and Change
Individual Development and Identity

Alaska State Content Standards

History:

A1, A2, A6, A8, A9, B3, C2, D1.

English:

A5, B3, C4, E1.

Skills for a Healthy Life:

A6.

Technology:

A1.

Instructional Framework

Enduring Understandings:

1. The student is a part of history.
2. All people have history.
3. There are a multitude of perspectives in history.
4. Culture is important.
5. Historians make judgments about what to include/exclude in history.
6. The past is linked to the present and the future.

Essential Questions:

1. What is history?
2. What is my place in history?
3. What is meant by historical significance?
4. What is culture and why is it important?
5. Why are people's perspectives different?
6. What are the universals that all cultures share?

Expected Learning Outcomes:

Chronology is a framework for history but it is not history itself.

There are different interpretations and perspectives of history.

Culture influences how one sees history.

Understand that everyone has history, and everyone has culture.

People are connected by history.

A person who understands history is a more aware participant and a better citizen.

Historical data comes from a variety of sources.

History links the past to the present and the future.

The student is important in history.

Conduct an historical inquiry and author an historical narrative.

Reflect on how knowledge of history will benefit them in understanding themselves and others better.

Social Studies Skills and Dispositions

Data Gathering Skills

>complete, organize and evaluate information

Intellectual Skills

>compare things on the basis of similarities and differences

>draw conclusions or inferences from reasoning and analysis

Social Studies Content and Skills

>continuity and change

Interpersonal Skills

>see things from the point of view of others

>understand one's own perspective

>understand that differing perspectives can all be right

>work effectively with others as a group member

Instructional Design

Calendar:

Day 1. Use the attached small group questions, "Who are You" to get small group discussion going. Set up some group rules for working in groups- such as everyone participates, no ideas are bad ideas, share the writing responsibility, and at the end, everyone talks during the classroom presentation. Pose some examples of is this history? Is that History? Then assign random small groups or 3 ñ 3 at the most and have everyone discuss and answer the first three questions, and then assign one or two of the other questions to each small group. Everyone should bullet their main ideas/answers and have a couple of sentences ready as the explanation for each. **Give them a time limit and save the last 20 ñ 25 minutes for the class presentations.** The group that has the two culture questions will present their answers to the first three questions only and then their other questions will be presented on Day 3.

Recommendation: Have students bring a spiral bound composition notebook or a bound composition notebook to use exclusively for this class. The sooner, the better.

Day 2. Review the previous day's events and vocabulary from the discussion questions. Have the students take notes on these in their notebooks. Remind them about the unit exam and how doing a good job on these today will help them on the unit exam. Put the essential questions on the wall for reference. If you're not using a notebook, paper would be fine.

Recommendation: Use the rest of the class to explain classroom rules.

Day 3. Talk about culture. Start with the small group from Day 1. How did they answer the culture questions? Share cultures in class. Talk about obvious cultures all around us. What makes a culture? How do we obtain it? How do we pass it on? How are cultures different? Try to identify some cultural universals. Is history colored by culture? Add these notes to your notebook.

Recommendation: Use the rest of class to explain the syllabus, notebook, go over homework policy, etc.

Day 4. Spend the whole period discussing the Who are You? Project and starting to think about what they're going to write about.. The first part is prewriting, but explain the whole project and how its an historical inquiry with each student writing an historical narrative. Show them some examples from previous students. Discuss historical significance again and how to find the events in their lives. Today they are actually going to do a Family Tree in their notebooks, identify the people they can name and remember and showing them and their immediate family, then back from that. Always allow students a comfort zone. Anything they don't wish to share is fine, especially in regards to split families, etc. One good way to do this is for the teacher to model on the board his/her own family tree and what she would like to share with the class. If they can't fill it in very much, they may wish to take it home and have a conversation with their family to try to fill in the missing pieces. Its not really graded, so if they can't fill it in, just do as much as possible.

Recommendation: Parents love this assignment because it gets them all talking.

Day 5. Today is timelines. These timelines should have significant family events, but also 6 or more historical events to get some history in there. So they may have to do research either at home, at the library, asking mom or dad, etc. Talk with them about who are good sources for information and artifacts. What is an artifact? Discuss reliability of sources and the idea of perspective. Give them the rest of the period for their timelines. They should be able to come up with 20 ñ 25 events. Yes, they'll have to dig. Yes, they'll have to ask people in their lives to help them fill in the gaps. They can look at home for old records, old report cards for teacher names, old pictures to remember old friends and hobbies. This is usually fun research.

Day 6. Rough drafts. If you are allowing time, develop a writing rubric for the autobiographies. If you don't wish to do this, you are welcome to the one attached. Rough drafts must be finished before by hand before student is allowed to use the computer for this assignment. Final drafts should be about 4 pages typed, double spaced, in 14 point New York, Geneva, Times or Helvetica. This is probably about 6 ñ 8 pages hand written, depending on the size of the writing.

Day 7. Complete rough drafts. Today is the last day in class for working on this. Artifacts that are NOT valuable and copies of photographs are encourage, but nothing should be brought in that would be tragic if it was lost.

Day 8. Word processing in the computer lab. Show students how to develop/access their own files. Anyone who finished may start to edit. They only have two days in the lab to do this, so it is crucial they have enough material. Add detail. Tell why this date is significant. Don't just it was important because it was the year I learned how to swim. Discuss how swimming in your life now and it began that summer at Grandma's in an outside pool and you are now a top-rated swimmer on the South High team because of that one summer you learned how to swim.

Day 9. Last day to finish rough drafts. If you finish early and teacher allows, start peer editing.

Day 10. Peer editing. Again, there is an easy two sided form attached if you wish to use it. Otherwise, make one of your own. Have each student read and peer edit at least 3 ñ 4 other papers than his or her own. The big key here is to have students make real comments that are feedback to the writer and not just as in Yeah, its great. See Peer Review Worksheet (double-sided) attached.

I would probably give them something else to do for a day so the slower writers have a chance to catch up here.

Day 11. Final drafts. When students are finished, they should assess themselves using the form attached, author Writing Evaluation Formic or one the teacher created. After they turn in the piece, they need to reflect on the whole process in their notebooks. This form, rough draft, and peer edit worksheets are all handed into the teacher in a packet at the same time.

Days 12 ñ 15. Some teachers will want to have students present (talk about their events ñ NOT read the autobiography to the class). Artifacts would go good with this but it is a time consuming project. The good part is both you and the other students will form a group and get to know each more quickly than classes who haven't done something like this. Anyone who is not comfortable in front of the class sharing for any reason may come in at lunch or after school and get their presentation points by presenting just to the teacher.

Day 15. Unit Exam. See attached document, Who are You?

Assessment Framework

The first assessment is an informal reflection to be written in the student's history notebook. Ongoing assessment happens when the teacher asks the class to define some of the concepts discussed previously. If there is lack of understanding, the teacher might ask for definitions to be written in the notebook. The attached questions, Who are You are meant to lead the initial small group activity and also the Unit Exam. The attached unit exam will ask the student to put into their own words some of the ideas presented here. They will self-assess, as well a peer review and peer edit, their autobiographies, as well as get an assessment score from the instructor. Documents to help you do that are attached, but the teacher might wish to develop their own rubrics with the class for better buy in with what is acceptable and what is not.

Who are You?

Small group project

For everyone- 1. What is history? Make a definition and explain.
Answer on butcher paper.2. Are you a part of history? Explain.
3. Why should people study history? Explain.

For groups, as assigned. 4. Whose history is it? Explain.

5. Does it matter who writes the history book?

Explain.

6. Is all history a chronology? Explain.

Groups of 3 or 4 7. Explain why and how historical accounts may tell conflicting stories and yet both may be

1 person ñ on task, truthful.

In charge. 8. What is meant by historical significance?

1 person ñ timekeeper. Explain.

2 people=2 scribes. 9. Explain why some sources of information may be better than others.

10. Is there a difference between storytelling and history? Explain.

11. Does it matter who writes the history book?

Explain.

12. Should students question the history thatís presented? Explain.

13. What is culture?

14. What does it have to do with history?

15. Are there cultural universals? Explain.

Peer Review Worksheet

Name_____Period_____

Name of author _____

The key to making peer review useful is to be very specific. Don't say, I liked it. Say exactly what you liked, I loved the part where you talked about your grandmother's attic. You had great description and I really like some of the description..like spider den, archaeological dig, broken furniture and broken dreams. Don't say, You need more Punctuation, say, put commas in the list of cousins.

List at least 3 ñ 5 things/parts/phrases/words you specifically liked about the piece:

A few (3 things) that could use revision:

signature of person evaluating (get at least 3 ñ one may be a parent)
Turn these in with the rough draft. See other side

Peer Review Worksheet continued

Scoring scale: 1 poor 2 3 average 4 5 excellent

Score Comments and Suggestions

1 ñ 5

Rough draft:

1. Did the writer use a well-defined introduction?
2. Were the ideas developed and interesting?
3. Were supporting details and examples used?
4. Was word choice engaging?
5. Was the conclusion effective?
6. Were the paragraph topic sentences related to the thesis?
7. Did the paragraph order reinforce the content?
8. Were the transitions effective and varied?
9. Was sentence structure varied and interesting?
10. Was punctuation/spelling free of errors?
11. Was the author's voiced clearly evident and appropriate?

5. Explain why and how historical accounts may tell conflicting stories and yet both may be truthful.

6. What is meant by historical significance? Explain.

7. Explain why some sources of information may be better than others.

8. Is there a difference between storytelling and history? Explain.

9. What is culture?

10. What does it have to do with history?

11. Extension: Are there any cultural universals? Explain. Use the back if you need to.

Author's Writing Evaluation Form

Author _____ Period _____

Student author Teacher Points
Assessment

1. First draft completed on time.
- 2, Helpful suggestions given in Peer Editing Group to other Writers.
3. Revision notes made on first draft.
4. Revisions incorporated into final draft.

5. Careful editing of final draft for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.
6. Final draft completed on time.
7. Historical information used correctly.
8. Ideas supported with detail.
9. Sentences clear and understandable.
10. Appropriate format and organization.

Student author comments:

Teacher comments:

This is where the writing rubric would go ñ but it is in landscape layout and needs to be added manually.