

SOCIAL STUDIES THEMATIC UNIT: MOTIVATION TO EXPLORE

INTRODUCTION

Goals and Aims

People explore for both individual and national reasons. Understanding what motivates people to explore helps us to understand who we are as a people and how we have arrived at our current place in history. Our goal as teachers is to help guide students through these learning experiences to discover what motivated people to explore new territories or new lands.

Maps are reflections of beliefs and knowledge of times and people. They are dynamic and changing documents which reflect the developments of historical periods. Therefore, we want students to develop basic timeline and map skills, becoming proficient in analyzing them for information.

This unit is designed to give my students a foundation that will assist them in answering the essential question “What motivates people to explore?”

Rationale

Studying explorers and exploration is a key part of the fourth grade curriculum in Alaska. This unit starts with an essential question and set standards and works backwards to the learning activities, keeping the big picture in mind; the forces that shaped that influences explorers and discoveries of the New World.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The overarching goal of this unit is to enable students to better understand explorers and what motivates them to explore. We plan to include how historians get their information, maps change over time, the use of timelines as an organizational tool for dates and events, and ways of using primary documents to gather information on multiple perspectives.

National History Standards

1. Chronological Thinking
 - D. Measure and calculate calendar time
 - E. Interpret data presented in timelines and create timelines
2. Historical Comprehension
 - A. Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.
3. Historical Analysis and Interpretation
 - B. Consider multiple perspectives.
 - C. Analyze cause and effect relationships.
 - F. Compare competing historical inevitability.
 - H. Hold interpretations of history as tentative.
4. Historical Research Capabilities
 - A. Formulate historical questions.
 - C. Interrogate historical data.
5. Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making
 - A. Identify issues and problems in the past.

Alaska State Content Standards

Geography

- A. A student should be able to make and use maps, globes, and graphs to gather, analyze, and report spatial (geographic) information.
 - 1. Use maps and globes to locate places and regions.
 - 2. Make maps, globes, and graphs.
 - 3. Understand how and why maps are changing documents.
- D. A student should understand and be able to interpret spatial (geographic) characteristics of human systems, including migration, movement, interactions of cultures, economic activities, settlement patterns, and political units in the state, nation, and world.
 - 4. Analyze how changes in technology, transportation, and communication impact social, cultural, economic, and political activity.
- E. A student should understand and be able to evaluate how humans and physical environments interact.
 - 1. Understand how resources have been developed and used.

History

- A. A student should understand that history is a record of human experiences that links the past to the present and the future.
 - 1. Understand chronological frameworks for organizing historical thought and place significant ideas, institutions, people, and events within time sequences.
 - 2. Know that the interpretation of history may change as new evidence is discovered.
 - 4. Understand that history relies on the interpretation of evidence.
 - 5. Understand that history is a narrative told in many voices and expresses various perspectives of historical experience.
 - 6. Know that cultural elements, including language, literature, the arts, customs, and belief systems, reflect the ideas and attitudes of a specific time and know how the cultural elements influence human interactions.
 - 7. Understand that history is dynamic and composed of key turning points.
- B. A student should understand historical themes through factual knowledge of time, places, ideas, institutions, cultures, people, and events.
 - 2. Understand the people and the political, geographic, economic, cultural, social, and environmental events that have shaped the history of the state, the United States, and the world.
 - 4. Students will be able recognize the importance of time, ideas, institutions, people, places, cultures, and events in understanding large historical patterns.
- C. A student should develop the skills and processes of historical inquiry.
 - 2. Use historical data from a variety of primary resources, including letters, diaries, oral accounts, archeological sites and artifacts, art, maps, photos, historical sites, documents, and secondary research materials, including almanacs, books, indices, and newspapers.
 - 3. Apply thinking skills, including classifying, interpreting, analyzing, summarizing, synthesizing, and evaluating, to understand the historical record.
 - 4. Use historical perspective to solve problems, make decisions, and understand other traditions.

- D. A student should be able to integrate historical knowledge with historical skill to effectively participate as a citizen and as a lifelong learner.
1. Students will be able to understand that the student is important in history.

Alaska State Performance Standards

Reading

E.B.3 Restate and summarize information or ideas from a text and connect new information or ideas to prior knowledge and experience.

INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Enduring Understandings

- Students will understand that people explore for both individual and national reasons, i.e. money, trade, knowledge, theories, power, and to claim land.
- Students will understand that more than one person could be credited with exploring/discovering a new area.
- Students will understand that maps are changing documents.
- Students will understand that historians gather their information from a variety of sources including archaeology, literature, zoology, and oral retellings.

Essential Question

- What motivates people to explore?

Expected Learning Outcomes

At the end of this unit students will be able to:

1. Use basic map skills.
2. Understand the divisions of a timeline and locate key events on a timeline.
3. Explain where historians get their information.
4. Understand and appreciate the changes in knowledge of the world and maps that were used in 13th and early 14th centuries.
5. Explain the reasons that Columbus wanted to explore and understand which were the most powerful reasons.
6. Use an astrolabe.
7. Identify different perspectives on exploration (native vs. explorer).

At the end of this unit students will know:

1. Basic map skills.
2. Understand the divisions of a timeline and locate key events on a timeline.
3. Who Leif Eriksson, Christopher Columbus, Marco Polo, Prince Henry, Magellan, Cortes, De Soto, Pizarro, and Coronado were.
4. Why Leif Eriksson and the Vikings explored.
5. Identify who Magellan is and know some of his contributions, as well as, what motivated him to explore.
6. What motivate Spanish Explores such as Cortes, De Soto, Pizarro, and Coronado to explore and some of the similarities and differences between the Spanish explores.

Social Studies Content, Concepts, and Skills

Core Concepts

What motivates explorers?

How historians gather information?

Knowledge of the maps that existed at the time of Marco Polo

Timelines

Chronology

Astrolabes

Perspective

Content

Vikings

Skraelings

Astrolabe

Primary Sources

Leif Eriksson & the Vikings

Marco Polo & Trade Routes

Prince Henry the Navigator

Christopher Columbus

Magellan

Spanish Explorers- Coronado, De Soto, Cortes, and Pizarro

Social Studies Knowledge, Skills, Dispositions:

Thinking Skills:

- Draw inferences from factual information
- Sense relationship between items of factual information
- Classify information
- Analyze information
- Recognize the value dimension of interpreting factual material
- Recognize instances in which more than one interpretation of factual material is valid
- Combine critical concepts into a statement of conclusions based on information
- Restate major ideas of a complex topic in concise form
- Communicate orally and in writing
- Identify relevant factual material
- Place in proper sequence
- Form simple organization of key ideas related to a topic
- Present visually information extracted from print

Reading Skills:

- Make Timelines
- Use picture clues and picture captions to aid comprehension
- Use literature to enrich meaning
- Read for a variety of purposes: critically, analytically, ...to answer a question, ...to skim for facts
- Recognize and understand an increasing number of social studies terms

Technical Skills Unique to Electronic Devices:

- Operate a computer using prepared instructional or reference programs

Cooperative Skills Addressed:

- Communicate own beliefs, feelings, and convictions
- Contribute to the development of a supportive climate in groups
- Discussion-pair share, small group, large group

Technology Inclusion

- Use the Internet to view online exhibits

THE WHERE

Where are we headed?

Using Explorer Source Book entries, primary and reference documents, and an ongoing personal timeline, students will learn about specific explorers and discover the answer to the question, “What motivates people to explore?”

Hook ~ Engaging Activities

- KWL Chart,
- Questions at the beginning of lessons designed to provoke student thought
- Building and learning how to use an astrolabe,
- Using interactive Internet exhibits from both the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and the Metropolitan Museum.

Explore, enable, equip ~ learning activities

- Read a primary source, a Norwegian saga about the Vikings, to gather information
- Read an interesting article, “Looking North” about the Vikings, and to answer the question, “How do historians get their information?”
- Read a “newspaper” about Prince Henry the Navigator,
- Read an excerpt of

Reflect, rethink ~ Refine, and review

- Students share their previous and learned knowledge
- Continually refer back to previous knowledge posters, correcting and updating facts and ideas
- Explorer Source Book entries and reflections
- Relate explorer specific ideas to “big picture” concepts

Exhibit and Evaluate

- Explorer Source Books: personal, prompt, and reading responses and reflections
- Explorer timeline
- Oral discussions

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

We will be assessing for understanding throughout the unit. Most assessment will be informal and constructive in nature. This will be accomplished by teacher notes, observations, work samples, and monitored entries in the Explorer Sourcebook. These assessments are formative and will guide the teacher in curriculum decisions. The culminating assessment will be comprised of 4 pieces: Pre/Post Questions, Completion of Explorer Sourcebook, Timeline,

and Selected Specific Explorer Sourcebook Entry will show the students growth regarding the enduring understandings.

LESSONS INCLUDED:

1. Introduction to Exploration
2. Leif Eriksson and How we get our information
3. Did Marco Polo Have Maps to Follow?
4. Henry the Navigator and the astrolabe
5. What Made Columbus Determined to Explore?
6. Magellan's Voyage Around the World: 1519
7. Spanish Explorers

Materials/Websites Used

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Baicker, Karen. Primary Sources Teaching Kit, Explorers. New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 2002. ISBN 0-590-37865-1

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieska

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Conrad, Pam. Pedro's Journey. New York: Scholastic Inc., 1991.

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