

Fillmore: Utah's First Capital

Summary

Salt Lake City was not the first capital of Utah. Since Fillmore is near the center of the state, early Utahns thought it would make a better site for the capital. This lesson will ask students to consider why the capital was moved to Salt Lake City. Students will use map skills to identify mileage from their community to Fillmore.

Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

Materials

Obtain background information on your own city or town. You may find this information from a city home page, the local Chamber of Commerce, or the official website of the [State of Utah](#)

Handout: "[Welcome to Fillmore City!](#)" (pdf) excerpted from Fillmore's home page

Handout: "[Fillmore vs. Salt Lake City](#)" (pdf)

Handout: "[Utah State Capitol Building](#)" (pdf)

Debate form: "[Utah State Capital](#)" (pdf)

Utah maps (to be furnished by the school or teacher)

Teachers may be interested in any of the following groups for presentations: [Utah League of Cities and Towns](#), [Envision Utah](#), [National Energy Foundation](#)

Background for Teachers

Enduring Understanding

Students will understand that thoughtful discussion and debate provide insight into the decision-making process. Students will understand that community planning in Utah has adapted to changing times, technology, and needs.

Essential Questions

Why did Utah officials select Fillmore as the capital of Utah, and why was this decision changed?

How might debate, discussion, and planning benefit the future of Utah municipalities?

Objectives

Students will study the city of Fillmore. Students will discuss how needs and decisions change over time and demonstrate the sharing of ideas through a debate.

Students will discuss factors that influence community growth such as environment, economy, and technology and show what they have learned by creating an imaginary community.

Instructional Procedures

Setting the Stage

Ask students: "What is the capital city of Utah? Has Salt Lake City always been the capital of Utah?" Discuss student responses and explain that Fillmore, Utah, was the first capital of Utah.

Explain that as the first capitol of Utah, the historic Statehouse, is still a popular tourist attraction.

Activity: Fillmore - To Be or Not To Be the Capital City

Distribute and read: "[Welcome to Fillmore City!](#)" (pdf) Discuss the reading and ask students to share what they learned about Fillmore, Utah.

Ask students to brainstorm reasons why Fillmore was selected as the first capital city. (It is centrally located; they wanted to encourage more people to move to central Utah, etc.) Ask students to brainstorm why leaders decided to change the capital of the state to Salt Lake City.

(The large population centers were near Salt Lake City; it was a long trip to Fillmore; more visitors

traveled through Salt Lake City.)

Explain that government and community planning takes a lot of time and discussion. There were probably many people who wanted state government to remain in Fillmore, but sometimes people must make new decisions as the times and the needs of a community change.

Distribute "[Fillmore vs. Salt Lake City](#)" (pdf) and "[Utah State Capitol Building](#)" (pdf) handouts.

Ask students: "Is it good to express different opinions?"

Explain that today's city planners ask for input from citizens, government officials, businesses, and other interested groups. Differing opinions are expressed through public meetings or sometimes during debates.

Activity: Capital Debate

Distribute "[Utah State Capital](#)" debate form (pdf) and divide students into two teams.

Instruct students that one team will present reasons and examples as to why the capital of Utah should return to Fillmore. The other side will present reasons and examples for keeping the capital in Salt Lake City.

Allow students to present their debate speeches.

NOTE TO TEACHERS: *After hearing both sides, students might wish to argue their opponents' views.*

Remind students that debate is not an argument, but is an orderly way to present different views.

Students may address their opponent and say: "I heard my opponent say _____ but have you considered _____?"

Activity: Take a Road Trip to Fillmore

Distribute Utah maps.

Ask students to locate their own city on the map.

Study the map key or legend to understand the symbols for roads, interstate freeways, and scale, etc.

Find the best route from your home to Fillmore and Salt Lake City, and answer the following questions: How many miles will you drive? How long will it take if you travel an average of 60 miles an hour? Compare the distances between the drive from your city to Fillmore, the drive from your city to Salt Lake City, and the drive from Salt Lake City to Fillmore.

Bibliography

This lesson plan is part of the Utah League of Cities and Towns [This Must be Utah! A Teacher's Guide to Utah Cities and Towns](#)

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