

# An Ancient Disease: Who Am I?

## Summary

Students research the causes and cures of various diseases and acknowledge the challenges facing early scientists who studied these diseases and the benefits derived from finding their cures.

## Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

## Group Size

Small Groups

## Materials

- Various reference materials which provide information about diseases, such as encyclopedias
- Microbe Hunters  
by Paul Dekruif if available
- Globe or map of the world

## Background for Teachers

Some microorganisms are harmful and cause disease. Viruses cause the common cold, measles, smallpox, "fever blisters," influenza (the flu), and poliomyelitis; protozoa cause amoebic dysentery; fungi cause athlete's foot and ringworm; and bacteria cause pneumonia, legionnaire's disease, strep throat, and tetanus.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

- Know and explain science information.
- Use reference sources to obtain information.
- Cite examples of how science affects life.
- Science findings are based on evidence.

## Instructional Procedures

### **Day #1:**

Discuss the following questions as a whole group and list student ideas on the board:

How can someone catch a cold?

What are some remedies used to cure a cold?

Discuss the common terms "catch an illness" and "cure an illness."

After students demonstrate an awareness of disease, its causes, and treatment, read the story, "An Ancient Disease: Who am I?" attached below. (Leprosy is the answer.)

If students do not arrive at the correct answer through class discussion, have them locate the answer using reference materials.

After their reading, discuss the history of the disease and locate the areas on the globe where leprosy (now referred to as Hansen's disease) has been found.

Have students select a disease they would like to know more about. You may want to provide them with a list from which to choose. Consider including such diseases as polio, small pox, Bubonic plague, measles, mumps, rubella, etc.

### **Day #2:**

Have students research the history of a disease and write a report including:

First person account of the history of the disease.

The challenges scientists faced as its cause and cure were found.

The benefits of such discoveries to the student's life today.

(Note: You may want to use Microbe Hunters, by Paul Dekruif, as a useful reference.)

**Day #3:**

Have students share their writings in small groups and have each group choose one to read to the rest of the class.

Challenge the students to discover the disease described in each story.

Summarize what they have learned through a class discussion.

Assessment Plan

Use the Writing Rubric below to assess student writing of their selected diseases.

Rubrics

[Writing Rubric](#)

Bibliography

Dekruif, Paul Microbe Hunters (Harcourt Brace, June 1, 1996)

Authors

[Teresa Hislop](#)

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