

History Detectives 5th Grade Standard IV Object. 4

Summary

Students will use primary source materials to investigate significant events in Post-Civil War American History of the 19th Century.

Main Core Tie

Social Studies - 5th Grade

[Standard 4 Objective 4](#)

Time Frame

2 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Materials

6 folders [labeled with the 6 general topics of this lesson](#)

Each folder will contain copies of primary source materials for its specific topic. (Some sample resources are provided or the teacher may wish to use their own primary sources.)

1. [Steamboats](#)
 2. [Erie Canal](#)
 3. [Railroads](#)
 4. [Immigration, Ellis Islands and Angel Island](#)
 5. [The Free Market System](#)
 6. [Telegraph](#)
3. [Historian's Investigative Sheet Individual evaluation page](#)

You will also need the following materials that are topic specific.

Steamboats

A hot plate, a teakettle to boil water, a pinwheel

Erie Canal

Computer and internet access

Railroads

Tongue depressors, give each 2 teams a box of tongue depressors.

Immigration

Read-Alouds

- *Grandfather's Journey*
by Allen Say

- *When Jessica Who Came Across the Sea*
by Amy Hest

The Free Market System

ballpoint pens

Telegraph

Materials for a simple circuit

a light bulb

paperclip

Morse Code guide

Background for Teachers

Teacher needs general knowledge of the post-Civil War era.

Understand how a free market system works.

They need to know how to make a simple electrical circuit. (This goes with the 5th grade Science Core.)

Student Prior Knowledge

They need to know how to make a simple electrical circuit. (This goes with the 5th grade Science Core.)

They need to have basic research skills.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to identify and understand the importance of inventions and events following the Civil War.

Instructional Procedures

Teachers will prepare 6 investigative folders. (See the Materials' attachments.) Inside the folders there will be primary source materials about the following topics:

Steamboats

Erie Canal

Railroads

Immigration, Ellis Islands and Angel Island

The Free Market System

Telegraph

The teacher divides the class into 6 groups. (Groups smaller than 4 students are not suggested.) Then the teacher assigns 1 folder to each group.

The students will look through their assigned folder and discuss what they know about each primary source document or artifact. Next, as a group, they will write a sentence or statement about each item. The groups will then share their information with the whole class.

Students will complete the Historian's Investigative Sheet and then present their findings to the class. (See the Materials' attachments.)

Students will research the topic in their folder. They will use the researched information on their topic to present to the class.

As a whole class, the teacher will guide the students through a series of demonstrations and activities related to each of the 6 topics. The following are some possibilities.

- Steamboats

Using a hot plate the teacher will bring a teakettle to boil water. He/she will use the steam to drive a pinwheel, thus demonstrating how a steam engine works.

- Erie Canal

Teacher will project the attached web link that shows how a canal lock system works. Then he/she will display the attached map of the Erie Canal System.

<http://visual.merriam-webster.com/transport-machinery/maritime-transport/canal-lock/canal-lock.php>

- Railroads

The teacher divides the class into 6 teams. Three teams will line up on one side (the east side of the room) of the classroom and will represent the railroad company building the railroad from the east. The other three teams will line up across from them on the west side of the classroom and will represent the railroad company building the railroad track from

California. The object is for 2 teams to work from opposite sides of the room to build track toward each other. They will use the tongue depressors to simulate laying down railroad tracks. (First, lay 2 depressors parallel to each other for the side rails of the track and place 1 depressor perpendicular to cover the cracks where the next set of rails meet.) All teams race to see which side wins by getting to the middle first. Give each 2 teams a box of tongue depressors.

- Immigration, Ellis Island and Angel Island

Teacher reads a read aloud about the Immigration. (Here are some suggested titles.)

Suggested Read-Alouds

- *Grandfather's Journey*
by Allen Say

- *When Jessica Who Came Across the Sea*
by Amy Hest

- The Free Market System

Ball point pen assembly line.

The teacher takes apart a number of ballpoint pens and gives each team a certain number. Each team brainstorms the best, most efficient way of putting the pens back together. If they don't think of doing it assembly line fashion the first time through, the teacher should have them repeat the activity with each student having an assembly line job and then have the students evaluate to see which worked better.

- Telegraph

Students will assemble a simple circuit that will light a light bulb. Use a bent paperclip as a switch that makes a complete circuit when pushed down and springs back up when released to turn the light bulb off. Students will be paired with another group of students sitting across the room. Using their Morse code guide, they will send simple messages to each other.

Extensions

Students could research for specific information using the web sites listed below.

The following Web Sites have wonderful resources for teachers and/or students to use in any part of this lesson.

Assessment Plan

The students will answer the questions about each of the 6 topics.

How did this change society at the time?

How does this still affect us today?

Authors

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