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George Washington's Life Through Pictures

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George Washington's life through pictures.

Overview

This lesson uses primary sources – pictures – to explore the various aspects of George Washington's life. By looking at photographs the students will gain an understanding of what it would be like to live in the late 18th century and specifically how George Washington lived.

Goal

Students will develop an understanding of how people lived, specifically in American, in the late eighteenth century. They will apply this to how George Washington grew up, lived, fought and led. With the development of this background knowledge the students will be able to connect George Washington to the time he lived in and better understand the many roles in his life.

Objectives

This lesson will teach students to:

- Develop their ability to understand primary visual sources.
- Learn to draw conclusions and make inferences about primary sources.
- Cultivate a frame of reference about life in late eighteenth century America.
- Understand the life and impact of George Washington.

Investigative Question

What did you discover, during your analysis of primary source pictures, that would help you choose the most important part of George Washington's life?

Time Required

One two period block of 80 minutes

Recommended Grade Range

This lesson could be used for 1st – 4th grades

Subject

Social Science

Sub-Subject

Language Arts

Standards

CC.2.R.L.1 Key Ideas and Details: Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

CC.2.R.L.3 Key Ideas and Details: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

CC.2.R.L.7 Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

CC.2.W.8 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

CC.2.SL.1.a Comprehension and Collaboration: Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

CC.2.SL.2 Comprehension and Collaboration: Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CC.2.SL.3 Comprehension and Collaboration: Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

Credits:

Joe Pekarek

PREPARATION

Materials Used

Primary Source pictures (paintings and drawings), PowerPoint slides of the same pictures, pencils, LCD projector & document camera, and handouts asking students to write what they see as well as questions they have about the pictures.

PROCEDURE

Description of Procedure

I will start the lesson with a brief, whole class, discussion about the book "If you grew up with George Washington" by Ruth Belov Gross. I will let students share information they remember from the book and encourage them to compare and contrast the late eighteenth century with the present day. Connect

Then I will ask the class if they understand what a primary source is. I will ask the class why they are important and why they think Ms. McGann and I are showing them primary sources. Construct / Express

Next I will reference what the class did during Library with Ms. McGann. I will ask the students how the lesson went, what they liked/disliked about it. Reflect

Then I will explain that I have a copy of each picture they looked at in groups in the library on the projector for the whole class to see. I will ask the students to be quiet while I cycle through the pictures for all to see. Investigate / Construct

Next I will ask the student groups to share what they found with the class. Each member of a group will share something about the picture with the class. After the whole group is finished sharing each member of the group will then ask the class for questions or comments, call on two students to share their questions or comments, and respond when appropriate. This framework will create a class discussion managed by the presenting groups. Express / Reflect / Wonder

Finally I will end with the investigative question: "which part of George Washington's life was most important based on these primary sources. I will have students write a brief answer with reason on the back of their sheets from Library. Before letting students share their answers we will discuss if there is a right answer to the question. (The answer is right as long as it has a reason.) Construct / Express / Reflect

Extensions

As an extension I will give the students the following writing prompt: Do you think George Washington was great? How do you know?

Works Cited

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EVALUATION:

For starters I really enjoyed teaching this lesson. It was a thought provoking forum for the students. As I reflect it is thought provoking for me as well. Overall it was the most valuable part of my involvement with the Library of Congress thus far.

I enjoyed the way the students were given the freedom to observe and record what they saw, wondered, and thought. Just having them distinguish the difference between the two was pretty amazing. I would say that over half the class was able to recognize the difference between what they saw and what they knew for sure.

I thought the group discussion and sharing went fairly well. As usual I would have liked more students to participate and pay attention to the group. I was pleased that a large number of the class did as questions and seemed engaged in the activity. I really liked the amount of back and forth interaction students had with one another. Sometimes students talked at length about questions. Other times students tried convincing others about their view on the picture.

There were key moments in the group discussion when students disagreed about what was going on in different pictures. The biggest example was the picture that showed George Washington as a child showing that he cut down the apple tree. Students discussed whether the boy or the man in the picture was George Washington. I was very impressed with the way the students didn't argue. Instead they stated their reasons for thinking what they did and accepted the view of their peers. I was surprised and pleased that throughout the lesson students didn't argue with one another about their observations of the pictures.

It was very difficult for me not to tell students what was going on in the pictures. It made me realize that I should probably do more exploratory and stripping based lessons. I plan on continuing on with this lesson the next time we go to the computer lab. I want students to be able to research the answers to questions they had about the pictures. I also plan on letting the students see the pictures as they are posted on the Library of Congress website so they can try to find more information about them specifically and see where I found them.

There are some things that didn't go as planned that I would change. I didn't realize that the lesson would take as long as it did. I ran over the anticipated 40 minutes about 20 minutes. I learned that when allowing students to share ideas and discuss it may take longer than I think. Some of the pictures I showed on the overhead projector were not as clear as I would have liked them. This made it difficult for students to form ideas and draw conclusions about the pictures that were dark or blurry. And I thought too many students had the opportunity to tune out of the lesson. To combat this I would have a one on one share portion of the lesson where pairs of students talk about the pictures with one another. I would also have student presenters call on students who may not necessarily have their hands up to increase involvement next time.

Overall I found a lot of value in this lesson. Students applied what they already knew to new material, shared their thoughts, and asked important questions. Now I have the

challenge of providing them with a framework that lets them find their answers. I'm already enjoying thinking of how to make it happen.