

Lyrical American History

Using familiar songs to teach pieces of American history is a unique way to gain the interest of students. Furthermore, allowing them to write and illustrate in their own journals as they learn about the songs gives them a sense of ownership to their learning.

Curriculum/State Standard

1.2, 1.3, 3.3, 3.5, 6.1, 6.2

Overview

As students learn American history, they will become familiar with popular Americana songs that originated from historical events. They will write and illustrate about the songs in their own Lyrical Journals.

Objectives

- The students will identify the origins of folk and Americana songs in America's history.
- The students will learn the lyrics and melodies to a variety of folk and Americana songs.
- The students will describe in written narrative or poetic form about how the songs originated.
- The students will visually interpret the songs through collages, drawings, or other works of visual art.
- The students will gain an appreciation for the history behind the lyrics of many well-known songs unique to America.

Materials

Blank, spiral bound journals (one per student), colored pencils, magazines.

Optional: bare book line guides

Optional: cassettes/CD's with the songs

Readiness Activity

Each song will have a different readiness activity, generally the studying of an historic event or era that will lead into the historical background of the song. Listening to the song, identifying the author, and the learning of the lyrics should also be a part of the readiness activity.

Continued on the back...

5

GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



SOCIAL STUDIES

2-3

WEEKS

\$400

TOTAL BUDGET



THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

Jennifer Mross
Franklin Elementary School
50 Washington Avenue, Franklin, NJ 07416

“Lyrical American History” project continued...

Strategies/Activities

Students will be introduced to folk or Americana songs in conjunction with lessons about American history. (the Internet is a good resource; also, videos and filmstrips)

Samples:

“Yankee Doodle”:
Revolutionary War

“Star Spangled Banner”:
War of 1812

“America the Beautiful”:
westward expansion

“She’ll Be Coming ‘Round the Mountain”:
transcontinental railroad

Lyrical Journal entries-student written explanations of the songs (use a variety: poems, skits, stories, etc.)

Students will create visual representations of the songs, using a variety of art media (collages, magazines, etc.)

Culminating Activity

A community performance will be done that includes the reading of the history of each song, performing the songs, and sharing and displaying of the Lyrical Journals.

Evaluation

A written assessment that requires the students to place songs studied in chronological order as well as match the songs to the historical events from which they originated.

Lyrical Journals will be collected and evaluated for historical accuracy according to a rubric.

Native American Village

The project developed an awareness and appreciation of early Native American life and provided an opportunity for students to experience pre-Columbian life.

Curriculum/State Standard

The project follows the guidelines for problem based learning in the area of history.

Overview

The students participated, in sequential order, in study and activities focused on the pre-Columbian culture and lifestyle.

Objectives

- Construct a replica of pre-Columbian life, including a building structure and livestock.
- Design and make era clothing.
- Invite schools in the area to a pre-Columbian celebration.
- Photograph and journal the progress of the project.

Materials

Straw, plants, reeds, fencing, fabric and costume accessories, wood and paint.

Readiness Activity

We studied the pre-Columbian lifestyle, environment, and living conditions, preparing students with the concept of the project.

Continued on the back...

6

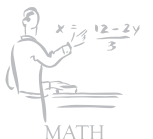
GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



SOCIAL STUDIES

2

MONTHS

\$935

TOTAL BUDGET



THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

Sue McCracken
St. George Parish School
144 West 5th Street, Stockton, CA 95206

“Native American Village” project continued...

Strategies/Activities

Two tepees were built according to architectural styles and scale found on the Internet. Tepees were covered with paper to reduce cost, and the project was built inside because of the outside elements. The canoe was built to one-half scale. The most difficult challenge in construction was obtaining the shape of the bow. We duplicated a lake with fish and natural plants to replicate a natural environment. Straw was laid for the ground covering surrounding the tepees. Bows and arrows were fashioned out of natural materials, as well as spears, to catch fish. Feathers, string and tree limbs were the main materials. Chicken and beef bones, made of paper mache, were used both for “decoration” and as artifacts that could be found at the site. A large variety of baskets were used both as carriers, bowls, and containers. Foods purchased were corn, a mixture of squashes, and simple breads. Designing the livestock was a big challenge. We created small creatures: squirrels, rabbits, and raccoons. Material for the creatures was an expensive component. Authentic period clothing was designed and sewn. The women wore long skirts and simple tops, decorated with beads, feathers and silver jewelry. Anklets, wrist beads and hair decorations and headpieces were also created. Boys wore decorated vests and short skirts.

Culminating Activity

All grades (K-8) in the school and a nearby public school were invited to a presentation and viewing of the Native Village put on by the 6th grade.

Evaluation

At the end of the project, a paper entitled “Pre-Columbian Life” was written by each student describing what was learned and how that changed his/her appreciation for life during the time period. Each student made an oral presentation to the class detailing his/her individual part of the project.

Living History Presentations

The project gives the students a chance to gain hands on role-playing experience of Americans during specific historical time periods. They get to dress the parts, act out the parts, and feel what it might have been like to live during the time period.

Curriculum/State Standard

American Heritage: Students will be able to identify significant individuals and groups in history and gauge their impact on specific historical events during the 1920's through the 1930's. Also, students will be able to trace and compare our culture's development in regard to art, literature, music, social developments, customs, and traditions.

Overview

Students participated in a Living Theater Presentation, where they were working in groups to research a period of time, an event, or famous people from the time. They had a month to create scripts that the group would present to the rest of the class. They were to use slang from the time and dress in the appropriate period clothing.

Objectives

- The student will be able to research an event or an individual during the 1920's/1930's.
- The student will be able to write a script and use costumes to perform the play.
- The student will be able to write a brief summary about the experience and what was learned.
- The student will be able to use a rubric to assess performance and learning.

Materials

Period costumes were needed for the 1920's and the 1930's. Examples were flapper dresses, long necklaces, fedoras and other period pieces. In addition, each group was to create a written script. We also used video equipment to videotape each presentation.

Continued on the back...

9

GRADE LEVEL



ARTS



LANGUAGE



MATH

Misc

MISCELLANEOUS



SCIENCE



HISTORY



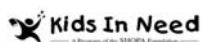
SOCIAL STUDIES

1

MONTHS

\$750

TOTAL BUDGET



THIS WINNING LESSON PLAN WAS SUBMITTED BY:

Dave Lubinger
Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School
6380 Mill Road, Broadview Heights, OH 44147

“Living History Presentation” project continued...

Readiness Activity

Students conducted research using books, Internet sources, classroom lectures, magazines, music, and other media and were able to gather enough information about the famous people they were to portray. As a group they wrote a creative and active script.

Strategies/Activities

Students began with a random selection for their project groups. They were given a list of some of the famous and infamous people of the 1920's and the 1930's. The groups were instructed to do research in our media center and at the public library about their specific individuals.

Through lecture, discussion, music, primary source readings, CD Rom activities dealing with the Harlem Renaissance and the Great Depression, pictures, and stories, each group was supposed to come up with a 20- minute script involving their particular characters, which included a story line and interaction between the characters. If they chose to re-create an actual event, such as the Scopes Trial, the group would have to include all of the main characters.

Students acquired their costumes. We videotaped each performance, and the students were to use a rubric to assess the other performances as well as their own.

The students had an objective test and short answer/essay questions to assess student learning.

Culminating Activity

We finished our activity with live performances that were videotaped. The class was encouraged to ask questions and make comments about what they saw and experienced.

Evaluation

The students were given a pre-unit list of people's names from the time period and were told to write what they knew about any of them. Of course the assessment by rubric of the finished product, including the scripts, was an important part of the evaluation. The unit test that followed was an appropriate measure for student learning of the overall time period.