The Star Spangled Banner

Students incorporate music, history, math, and writing skills in their study of “The Star Spangled Banner.”

Curriculum/State Standards

1. Music: cultural/historical perspective
   – Understand how events and conditions influence the arts
2. Social Studies: Civics/government
   – Identify essential ideas expressed in national symbols, heroes and patriotic songs of the U.S.
3. Math: Measurement: Select the appropriate tool for measuring length. Determine the measurement of length to the nearest foot, inch.

Overview

This unit is a collaborative study with classroom teachers and the music teacher. Students will use media, hands on math (measuring), discussion, writing, and singing in their study of “The Star Spangled Banner.” The hands-on element of constructing a life size model of the flag was especially meaningful to the students. The use of video, computer research and compiling fact sheets all helped the students gain a more complete understanding of our National Anthem.

Objectives

The student will identify events that inspired the writing of the words to “The Star Spangled Banner.” The student will choose the best tool for measuring a variety of lengths from 14 ft to 42 ft. The student will accurately measure and cut string in lengths of 42’, 30’, 24’9”, 17’3” or 14’. The student will describe feelings (orally and in writing) related to the U.S. flag, the National Anthem and patriotism. The student will participate in singing “The Star Spangled Banner” with the student body.

Materials

6 skeins of yarn (red, white and blue), 64 cans of spray chalk (or other non caustic spray for colors of the flag), variety of measurement tools (yard sticks, rulers, 50’ measuring tapes), pegs for marking the stripes (could be large nails or tent pegs), video clip of the history of “The Star Spangled Banner” united streaming or other source), fact sheets for students to complete (each page contains one historical fact and a picture related to the fact), construction paper for booklet covers

Readiness Activity

Play a recording of “The Star Spangled Banner.” Ask questions to determine students’ prior knowledge.

Strategies/Activities

1. Watch a video (United Streaming or other media type) on the history of “The Star Spangled Banner.” Discuss events in the video.
2. Read the entire poem. Discuss Key vocabulary – banner, dawn, twilight, ramparts, gallantly, proudly, hailed, etc. How does the poem express the author’s feelings about the events that had transpired? Sing “The Star Spangled Banner.”
3. Depending upon the age and experience of the students, fact sheets may be completed by computer research (directing students to selected sites) or through direct instruction. This will take at least two class periods. If using computers, students may work in teams to complete their booklets. If

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using whole group instruction, complete pages one at a time. Students will assemble facts sheets into a booklet with covers designed by them to represent the song.

4. Construct a model of the flag which flew over Fort McHenry in Sept 1814. Students are divided into groups of 3 or 4. Each group is assigned a specific length and color of yarn to cut (ex: red yarn 30’) and a tool to use for measuring (e.g., ruler, yard stick, 50’ measuring tape). Students will work together to cut the yarn the exact length designated. Students will be asked to determine which tool was the best choice for this job. Each group will be given a diagram of the flag and asked to mark the lengths for each part of the flag (blue yarn for the blue field, red for the perimeter, red/white for the stripes). When all dimensions are marked accurately, students will use the yarn lengths, measuring tapes, tent pegs and framing squares to form the flag in the area of the playground. The flag will then be painted, using the spray chalk. The stars are painted using pre-cut stencils. (stripes are 2 ft wide; stars are 2 ft across).

**Culminating Activity**
The student body will gather around the flag as the story of “The Star Spangled Banner” is told. Students will be instructed in the proper etiquette during the performance of our National Anthem. Third grade (or grade level completing the project) students will lead the student body in the singing of “The Star Spangled Banner.”

**Evaluation Method**
1. Completion of fact sheets – check for accuracy and completeness
2. Verifying accuracy of measurement
3. Observation – construction of the flag and singing of “The Star Spangled Banner”
4. Key vocabulary – quiz: matching words to description or definition
5. Writing a paragraph describing the events which inspired the writing of “The Star Spangled Banner” or telling about their feelings when hearing or performing “The Star Spangled Banner”