

Lesson Plan: Historical Journal Activity

Grade Level: 5-8

Subject: History/ELA

Time: 90 Minutes (3- 30 min. sessions)

Standards:

Standards for the English Language Arts

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Standards for Social Studies

6.4.4.21.4 The economic growth, cultural innovation and political apathy of the 1920s ended in the Great Depression which spurred new forms of government intervention and renewed labor activism, followed by World War II and an economic resurgence. (Great Depression and World War II: 1920-1945)

Benchmark: *Identify contributions of Minnesota and its people to World War II; describe the impact of the war on the home front and Minnesota society after the war. (The Great Depression and World War II: 1920-1945) For example: Fort Snelling, Japanese Language School, SPAM, Iron Range mining and steel production.*

Objective: After studying what mining in Minnesota was like during the early 20th century, students will create a historical fiction story written in the format of a journal in first-person point-of-view.

Assessment Rubric:

- 4- Standards are exceeded
- 3- Standards are met
- 2- Standards are partially met
- 1- Standards are not met

Materials: Computers, writing notebooks, primary sources about mining in Minnesota

Procedure:

Day 1:

1. Tell students that they will be writing a story from a first-person point of view about life during the early 20th century. Watch the following video episode. "Croft Mine History Museum." <https://video.lptv.org/video/croft-mine-history-museum-2qy5gn/>
2. Give students access to a few primary sources about mining in Minnesota that they can look at during class. (Field trip, journals, poems, original artwork, photographs, autobiographies, etc.)

Day 2 &3:

1. Start by exploring examples of diaries and journals as a class. Some examples could be, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank, *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole* by Sue Townsend.
2. Discussion Questions- “What makes reading journals interesting?”, “What point of view are these types of stories written in?”, “What does writing in chronological order mean?”
3. As a class, brainstorm types of characters (boy, girl, adult, elder, teen, child). What will their character be like? What are the advantages and disadvantages of living during that time period? What are some hobbies during this time? What was life like for people?
4. Tell students that they will be pretending that they are living during the time that we have been researching. They may choose to be a person who is working in a mine or a family member of someone working in a mine. Then, students will use the ideas that were brainstormed to write journal entries from the perspective of their character including topics such as feelings, family, friends, and anything else that would have been important to their character.

Tips:

- Remind students about the format of a journal entry.
- Discuss including a “voice” to their writing that would make their journal more authentic sounding.
- Depending on the character that they choose, their journal may have doodles, or drawings.

Differentiate- Students who need a little more of a challenge can research events that happened during this time period to add additional historical references to their journal entries.

Follow-up Discussion:

What did you learn about mining that helped you write your journal? What do you think would be fun about living during the early 20th century? What would be difficult?