

Frontier Grant Lesson Plan

Teacher: Gay Roberts

Topic: History's Mysteries

Grade/Subject: 5th Social Studies - 6th Grade Writing Process

Duration of Lesson: 1 week to research mystery person and write about them. 1 – 2 days to allow other students the opportunity to solve the mysteries.

Idaho Content Standards:

Language Arts:

Goal 3.1: Acquire Prewriting Skills

6.LA.3.1.1 Generate ideas using prewriting strategies.

6.LA.3.1.5 Plan writing to produce a piece of writing within a set time period.

Social Studies:

5.SS.1.1.2 Discuss significant individuals who have been responsible for bringing about cultural and social changes in the United States.

5.SS.1.1.3 Identify and explain influential political and cultural groups and their impact on American history.

5.SS.1.1.6 Discuss the causes and effects of various compromises and conflicts in American history.

Guiding/essential questions: How did the subject of your research influence events in US History? Why is it important for us to study this subject and what can we learn by studying this person's life?

Activity: The students will research and take notes on a person in American history. Lesser known people are more interesting and often generate interesting discussions/papers. The students will use the notes to write a nonfiction paper about the person without using their name but using the facts about them to create a mysterious piece. (See example of mysterious piece and nonfiction paper at the end of the lesson plan).

Activity continued:

The students will use the writing process to complete this piece to publication.

The students will research the person they choose and then use the writing process to write a mystery paper about that person. They can also find a picture which can be displayed. They will not put the pictures together with the writing, but let other students try to match the mystery with the picture. After students have had the opportunity to match the person with the “mystery writing,” the answers can be revealed by having the students write a short biography of their mystery person.

Assessment: Use a writing rubric to evaluate each student’s writing piece.

Note: This activity can generate some great conversations about a lot of different people and how they influenced our country and our history. Those are the things that evaluation forms don’t reflect.

Examples:

HOST FILE# 1865-1940

Witnesses tell about a stubby, short, dark haired, faded image of a man roaming the “Main Rotunda” at the “U.S Capital Building” in “Washington D.C.” He’s heard mumbling about his beloved “Idaho,” and also seems to be a very “political” man. When he passes by, some people experience visions of what seems to be his past memories. We think they’re about elections to the “Senate.” And after the visions a lot of victims remember the number “six” for some reason. They also remember something about a “Big Bill.”

Who is this faded image of a man, and why is he roaming the Main Rotunda in Washington D.C. Also what does this Big Bill have to do with it?

Non-fiction Piece:

William Borah

William Borah was born in 1865, in Fairfield, Illinois. His schooling included the Wayne County and the Southern Illinois Academy at Enfield. According to a drawing, published by H.T Webster in 1916, he had a boyhood ambition to be a railway conductor. In 1885, he attended the University of Kansas and was forced to leave after contracting tuberculosis his freshman year.

On September, 1887, Borah studied law and was admitted to the bar. In 1890, after practicing law in Lyons, Kansas, he relocated to Boise, Idaho. There he became the most prominent attorney in the new state. With one of his cases he wrote a letter to the Board of Pardons protesting the change of sentence in the hanging of “Diamond Jack” Davis, a man charged with killing a shepherd who was working for a cattle company. Borah married Mary McConnell in 1895; they had no children.

He ran for U.S Senate in 1902 but was defeated by Idaho Legislator Weldon B. Heyburn. In 1906, the Idaho Legislature elected William to the U.S Senate. In 1907, shortly after entering the Senate, Borah, as the prosecuting attorney, was pitted against Clarence Darrow in the nationally publicized trial of “Big Bill” Haywood and two other radical labor union officials for the 1905, murder of former Idaho Governor Frank Steunenberg.

He was reelected to the U.S. Senate in 1912, 1918, 1924, 1930, and 1936. He's the longest serving member of the U.S Congress in Idaho History.

Borah died January 19, 1940, in Washington D.C. His cause of death was a stroke. He was taken to Morris Hill Cemetery in Boise, Idaho, to be buried.