

Assignment for San Francisco Trip
by

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Topic: Life in Alcatraz

Grade level / subject: Fifth / Social Studies

Duration of Lesson: Three Days (50 minutes each)

Idaho State Standard:

Goal 1.8: Build an understanding of the cultural and social development of human civilization

5.LA.4.2.2: Write a report using multiple sources that includes a main idea and facts and details about the topic.

Introduction:

Just hearing the name “Alcatraz” as a young child was enough to scare me. My dream of being a visitor to the island came true the afternoon of June 16th. In no way could I imagine being an inmate on the island, but for my lesson, this is what I want my students to think about.

Towards the end of the tour through the federal penitentiary, I stopped and gazed out through a barred window. While looking at the Bay I noticed a large amount of dust that had built up on the window ledge. I gathered up some of the dust in my fingers and placed it in a zip lock bag.

Guiding question: Why did the dust on the window ledge catch my attention so much that I took some home with me?

Activity: In groups of two, have students research the history of Alcatraz on the internet answering the following questions.

- Who used the island before it was turned into a prison?
- What types of prisoners were put on the island?
- What was the typical length a prisoner stayed on “The Rock?”
- What was the daily routine on the island?
- Who were some of Alcatraz’s more famous prisoners?
- When was the prison closed?
- What is the prison used for today?

Assessment: Have students compare and contrast the dust on the window ledge and the inmates that are “On the Rock.” Students can choose to write an essay, design a Venn diagram, or write a two person poem.