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Lesson Plan: Oral Histories: What Can We Learn? (grades 6-8)

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Lesson Plan

Course/Grade Level:

- American History / 8th Grade (could be adapted for 4th grade)

Topic:

- Oral Histories: What Can We Learn?

Historical Time Period:

- Reconstruction to Present

Thematic Question:

- What importance did the settlement of St. Helena play in American History?

Standards/Benchmarks/Indicators:

- Social Studies: People in Societies
 - B. Analyze examples of interactions between cultural groups and explain the factors that contribute to cooperation and conflict.
 1. Trace the development of religious diversity in the colonies, and analyze how the concept of religious freedom has evolved in the United States.
 2. Describe and explain the social, economic and political effects of:
 - a. Stereotyping and prejudice;
 - b. Racism and discrimination;
 - c. Institutionalized racism and institutionalized discrimination.
 4. Analyze the economic, geographic, religious and political factors that contributed to:
 - a. The enslavement of Africans in North America;
 - b. Resistance to slavery.
- Social Studies: Geography
 - C. Explain how the environment influences the way people live in different places and the consequences of modifying the environment.
 2. Analyze how physical characteristics of the environment influenced population distribution, settlement patterns and economic activities in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries.
 - D. Explain reasons that people, products and ideas move from place to place and the effects of that movement on geographic patterns.
 3. Explain how colonization, westward expansion, immigration and advances in transportation and communication changed geographic patterns in the United States

Materials/Resources:

1. Gullah Digital Archives: drc.kenyon.edu
2. Interview questions (page 3)
3. www.rubrics4teachers.com/presentation.php

Motivation /Attention Grabber:

1. Show excerpt from the movie “The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman.”
2. Then show an excerpt from the Gullah Digital Archives of an interview of 104 year old from St. Helena, South Carolina making a joke and cracking herself up.

Activities:

1. Watch several interviews and evaluate them using a co-constructed rubrics.
2. Have students do interviews of each other to practice oral interviews.
3. Have students create an identity chart of themselves. Include information ranging from family tree, personality traits, hobbies, career interests, milestones, likes and dislikes, and favorite memories. Encourage them to include primary sources, such as photos, award certificates, and other things that are meaningful and relevant to the assignment. Representations from magazines, newspapers, internet, and clip art can be included as well.
4. Students will interview elders in their families and community using the attached interview questions.
5. Culminating Activity: Present an oral presentation of their interview using Keynote, Power Point, or Prezi as vehicles of their information. Include the same elements at in activity 3, if available.

Assessment:

1. Oral presentations
2. Grade using rubric (page 4)

Possible questions/104 and more Oral Interviews

Choose an elder member of your family to interview. Ask them some of the questions below (and some of your own). Take notes so that you can write up a biography from the answers. The purpose of this interview is for you to talk with and learn things about this person that you didn't know. Write their responses on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What city were you born in? Describe where you lived as a child and where it was.
2. Where else have you lived? Did you or your parents/older relatives move from one part of the country to another? When? Why?
3. Did you attend church or religious services? What were your earliest memories of religion in your family?
4. Describe your parents or the people who raised you. What were they like? What did they do?
5. Describe your grandparents. What is most memorable about them.
6. How far back can you trace your family tree? Do you know when they came to America?
7. What are some of your most treasured family traditions? (favorite recipes, rituals, holiday celebrations, oral histories, etc.)
8. Have any of your elders mentioned the term, "Gullah?" If so, what did they say about it and what do you know about it?
9. What did you like to do in your free time? What do you do now?
10. Tell me about a memorable moment in your life you will never forget.
11. What are some changes in our society you have seen in your lifetime? Which ones do you view as positive? Which ones do you view as negative?
12. If you could change ONE thing about the world today, what would it be and why?

Multimedia Project : Oral History Project

Teacher Name: _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Presentation	Well-rehearsed with smooth delivery that holds audience attention.	Rehearsed with fairly smooth delivery that holds audience attention most of the time.	Delivery not smooth, but able to maintain interest of the audience most of the time.	Delivery not smooth and audience attention often lost.
Sources	Source information collected for all graphics, facts and quotes. All documented in desired format.	Source information collected for all graphics, facts and quotes. Most documented in desired format.	Source information collected for graphics, facts and quotes, but not documented in desired format.	Very little or no source information was collected.
Content	Covers topic in-depth with details and examples. Subject knowledge is excellent.	Includes essential knowledge about the topic. Subject knowledge appears to be good.	Includes essential information about the topic but there are 1-2 factual errors.	Content is minimal OR there are several factual errors.
Organization	Content is well organized using headings or bulleted lists to group related material.	Uses headings or bulleted lists to organize, but the overall organization of topics appears flawed.	Content is logically organized for the most part.	There was no clear or logical organizational structure, just lots of facts.
Oral Presentation	Interesting, well-rehearsed with smooth delivery that holds audience attention.	Relatively interesting, rehearsed with a fairly smooth delivery that usually holds audience attention.	Delivery not smooth, but able to hold audience attention most of the time.	Delivery not smooth and audience attention lost.