

Archives on the Arctic: Connecting to Global Issues with Primary Sources

Lesson Plan: Historical Inquiry of Inuit Culture

Submitted by: Jane Hesslein (Seattle Country Day School - Seattle, WA)

Date: September 1, 2013

Description:

This lesson is among those introducing the study of culture, which forms the basis of the Grade Five Social Studies curriculum at Seattle Country Day School. It is designed to be Lesson 3 of a larger unit on Canada but can also be used in classrooms initiating a study of Canada's north or the Arctic, in general. In the lesson, students find visual evidence of elements of Inuit culture using photos from the early 1900's and more recent photos. The lesson helps students build historical inquiry skills and so are not evaluated for their efforts at this point in the unit.

Grade Level(s):

Grade 5 (Gifted) or Grade 6

Subject(s):

Social Studies

Duration:

Three 45-minute periods for all three lessons.

Goal:

Students will discover resources available on the Library of Congress website and develop historical inquiry skills that also lead to an appreciation of Inuit culture.

Objectives:

Students will be able to visually locate and name at least three specific elements of culture among the Inuit using historical photographs of Inuit families and communities.

Standards:

- This lesson meets the following Washington State standards:

For Grade 5 - Component 5.2 Uses inquiry-based research.

For Grade 6 - Component 3.2.2 Understands the characteristics of cultures in the world from the past or in the present.

- This lesson meets Common Core Literacy standards for Social Studies, Grades 6-8:
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Background Information:

Students begin investigating culture with two lessons from the Peace Corps that establish the elements of a culture (see additional notes below). Beginning with the idea that culture is like an iceberg (with far more below the surface than above) and then naming examples of the elements of a culture (location-specific clothing, childrearing practices, etc.), students then place the elements of culture on the outline of an iceberg to indicate how deep (or inaccessible to outsiders) each element is.

Primary Source Documents/Resources:

- Inuit Family Photograph: www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002722488/
- Inuit Girl (Columbia) with Dog: www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002722488/
- Community on north coast of Baffin Island (Pond Inlet): www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/native-people-arctic
- Eskimo Woman and Dog Traveling in Summer: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/ppmsc.01608/>

Materials:

- Pencil
- Paper

Procedures:

1. Students will work alone or in pairs.
2. Students will have a list of cultural elements and a labeled “cultural iceberg” template that they have used in the preceding two lessons (details are offered in “Additional Notes”). They should keep them on hand as references.
3. Each student/pair will be given the set of photos (see Primary Source Documents above).
4. Students will study the photos to locate cultural elements of the Inuit. Some should be from “above the water line” (easily accessible to outsiders: clothing, food, housing, music, etc.) and some from below (less accessible: education practices, religious rituals, concept of beauty, child-rearing practices, etc.). They have 10 minutes to do so.

Evaluation/Assessment:

Although students are asked to respond on a piece of paper and identify the elements of culture that he/she has found (including the primary source document that they reference), they will not be formally evaluated on the exercise.

Possible Extension:

Students may then find elements of Inuit culture that are comparable to their own (personal, ethnic, local, national) or dig deeper on the Library of Congress website or World Digital Library websites to discover additional primary source documents that point to the significance of Inuit culture.

Additional Notes:

Here are the two lesson plans from the Peace Corps that may precede the Canadian lesson above.

Lesson 1: *Culture Is Like an Iceberg* <http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/lesson-plans/culture-iceberg/>

Lesson 2: *Defining Culture* <http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/educators/lessonplans/lesson.cfm?lpid=346>