

Teaching with Historical Personal Narratives in the Elementary & Middle Grades

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in partnership with the Teaching with Primary Sources Program at Southern IL University Edwardsville
Presented at the Illinois Council for the Social Studies Conference, Palatine, Illinois
October 16, 2014

1. Anticipatory Set: Ask students if someone from their family has ever shared a story about them when they were young/baby or has just simply shared a family story with them.
Share with students that they will be reading stories from the past.

2. Introduce historical narratives

What is narrative writing?

- Writing that tells a story or recounts an event.
- The narrator shares his/her experiences, observations, thoughts, feelings and motivations.

As tools, they help students to:

- Identify points of view through words and phrases
- Identify and question multiple perspectives of the same event
- Learn that stories can be unreliable
- Learn that telling stories is important in our culture

Minimum standards met by this activity:

Key Ideas and Details:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-5.1**
(With prompting and support, K-3) Ask and answer questions about key details in a text. (And refer and quote/cite textual evidence to support analysis, 4-5th)
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1**
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2**
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-5.3**
(With prompting and support, K-3) Describe and explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical text based on specific information in the text.

Craft and Structure:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6**
Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-5.8**
(With prompting and support, K-3) Identify the reasons an author gives to support points in a text. (5th and explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K-5.9**
(With prompting and support K) Identify similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic. (And compare and contrast 2-3rd) (And integrate, 4-5th) information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8**
Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Comprehension and Collaboration:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6-8.1**
Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

3. Historical event that will be studied:

President Abraham Lincoln's Assassination

Have students do the following:

Observe:

Underline 3 important words or phrases that will help you understand the narrator's point of view of Abraham Lincoln and his assassination.

Reflect:

In the margins of your paper, annotate or write **why** you believe the words or phrases are important.

4. Let's discuss!

- Using the words and phrases from your narrative, what was the author's point of view of President Lincoln's assassination?
- Discuss and explain how the points of view are similar and/or different.
**Hint: Use the timeline, map and their words to help you explain. ;-)*

On your own:

List 2 things the narratives tell you about life in the U.S. at the time of President Lincoln's death in 1865. (Or, list one thing that surprised you and one thing the narratives tell you about life in the U.S. at the time of President Lincoln's...)

Additional Resources:

- **Library of Congress Teacher Guides:** <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>
- Wineburg, Sam. **"Thinking Like a Historian"**. TPS Quarterly – Historical Thinking: Vol. 3, No. 1, Winter 2010. http://www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/quarterly/historical_thinking/article.html#
- Shopes, Linda. **"What is Oral History?"** History Matters: The U.S. Survey on the Web: Making Sense of Oral History. < <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral>>