

Descriptive Childhood

Melinda Moore, Petal Middle School, Petal, MS

This learning activity was created for “The Richest Hills: Mining in the Far West, 1865–1920,” sponsored by the Montana Historical Society and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities Landmarks of American History and Culture: Workshops for Schoolteachers.

Grade Level: 8th

Subject(s): American History and Language Arts

Common Core Standards:

- Reading 6-8:1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Reading 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.
- Reading 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).
- Reading 6-8:8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Time needed: One 50-minute class period

Description

Readings from the non-fiction book by Janet Finn, *Mining Childhood: Growing Up in Butte, Montana 1900-1960*, help students understand the importance of perspective, how one’s community helps determine his/her lifestyle, and how cultures of the past impact our lives today and tomorrow. Students will construct a formulated thinking map comparing and contrasting childhoods revealed in the book with their own.

Essential questions/understandings:

- How can reading non-fiction about a person’s childhood help us understand the importance of perspective?
- How does one’s community determine his/her lifestyle?
- How do cultures of the past impact our lives today and tomorrow?

Goals:

During this lesson, students will accomplish the following:

1. Understand how descriptive language is useful in writing.
2. Analyze a primary source/secondary source and gain a sense of how people at a particular time in history felt about individuals, issues, and events of the day.
3. Examine a primary source/secondary source in depth and verbally summarize the analysis of it.
4. Effectively compare and contrast using a formulated thinking map.
5. Orally present information to an audience.

Objectives:

- The student will cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- The student will determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source and provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- The student will identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose.
- The student will distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- The student will effectively present written information to an audience.

Materials

- Finn, Janet I. *Mining Childhood: Growing Up in Butte, Montana 1900-1960*. Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2012. 64-110. Print.
- <http://www.linbarconsulting.com/Instructional%20tools/new/DoubleBubble%20compare%20contrastMap.pdf> (copy of thinking map)
- <http://www.online-stopwatch.com/countdown-timer/> (online timer to be used during presentations)
- http://www.betterhighschools.org/MidwestSIG/documents/Szachowicz_handout3.pdf (presentation rubric)

Preparation

- Teacher should make copies of Chapter 2 of the non-fiction book, *Mining Childhood: Growing Up in Butte, Montana 1900-1960*

- Teacher should prepare to review primary and secondary sources.
- Teacher should prepare to review purpose of a double-bubble thinking map.
- Teacher should prepare to review purpose of adjectives in writing.
- Teacher should prepare to review presentation rubric (see link)

Procedure

- Teacher will review the importance of understanding perspectives when reading non-fiction.
- Teacher will review the significance of using vivid, descriptive words in writing for an audience.
- Teacher will copy and distribute Chapter 2 of *Mining Childhood: Growing Up in Butte, Montana 1900-1960* to each student.
- Each student will be given a section to read (Elinore's story, Frank's story, etc.). Students will silently read their section while analyzing the perspective of each child on his/her community.
- Students will identify the vivid language each child uses in his/her descriptions.
- Teacher will also copy the photographs for reference.
- After all students have analyzed their section on their particular person, teacher will instruct students to formulate an individual double-bubble thinking map and compare their Butte child's community (his/her given section) to their own current community. (Petal, Mississippi, or other significant community)
- Teacher will remind students to use descriptive words in their thinking maps.
- After all students are done, teacher will pair up students and allow them to share their children of Butte stories as well as their thinking maps, including their description of childhood in Petal, Mississippi, or other childhood community.
- Teacher will direct students to share maps aloud with the class using a one-minute timer for each student.
- Teacher will monitor lesson in order to ask high-level thinking questions at the end of the class period as part of daily formal assessment.
 - Example: What words in the presented thinking maps helped you connect to the person who wrote them?
 - Why is remembering your community important to an outsider?

- What things do we tend to remember as a child?
- How did the photographs help you connect to the story?

Assessment

- Teacher will observe effective teamwork and collaboration with partners.
- Teacher will observe effective presentation skills as students present thinking maps.
- Teacher will take up thinking maps and grade for understanding and completion of goals.
- Teacher will use presentation rubric to give students feedback (see link).

Extension activity

- Teacher will suggest further reading of the book for students to pursue accelerated reading goal.