

Mining Childhood

Grade 4 Lesson One: Play Places in Butte

Essential Question: How would your life be different if you had lived in Butte in the mid-1900s, especially the places and ways you play?

Learning Targets:

1. I can describe the kind of regular play areas the children in Butte had.
2. I can compare/contrast the ways children in Butte played with the ways I play.
3. I can describe Columbia Gardens accurately in order to understand its powerful effect on children who played there.

Common Core Connection:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2 Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7 Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9 Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Montana Social Studies Standards:

- 3.3 Grade 4: describe and illustrate ways in which people interact with their physical environment (e.g., land use, location of communities, methods of construction, design of shelters).
- 4.1 Grade 4: identify and use various sources of information (e.g., artifacts, diaries, photographs, charts, biographies, paintings, architecture, songs) to develop an understanding of the past.
- 4.3 Grade 4: examine biographies, stories, narratives, and folk tales to understand the lives of ordinary people and extraordinary people, place them in time and context, and explain their relationship to important historical events.
- 6.1 Grade 4: identify the ways groups (e.g., families, faith communities, schools, social organizations, sports) meet human needs and concerns (e.g., belonging, self worth, personal safety) and contribute to personal identity.

Length of Lesson:

Two sixty-minute periods

Materials Needed:

1. Photo of trolley to Columbia Gardens, c. 1910 (see page 5 of this lesson)

2. Frank Carden quotes from [Mining Childhood: \(pp. 143-44\)](#), [John Sheehy \(pp. 149-50\)](#), [Marie Butori \(pp. 173-74\)](#), and [Lucille Sheehan \(pp. 174-75\)](#) (and copies for students if you want them to read along)
3. [Copies of Mining Childhood, pp. 171-73](#)
4. Knowledge Rating Sheet: <https://mhs.mt.gov/education/MiningChildhood/ColumbiaGardensKnowledgeRating.pdf>

Day One

Hook:

Project photo of the trolley or make copies for each student/pair of students. Ask students to study the photo for 2-3 minutes before discussing it, paying attention to details. Engage students as a whole group in critical viewing and discussion of the photo by asking the following questions (about 10 minutes):

1. What do you notice in the photo?
2. What do you NOT notice in the photo?
3. Who might have taken this photo and why?
4. What questions do you have after thinking about this photo?

Activities:

1. Wrap up the discussion of the photo by connecting it to the content of today. You can ask, "Are your play areas anything like the one you saw in the picture? What's the same/different?" Explain that this photo depicts Columbia Gardens, a special place children could go in Butte, and that you'll get to more about Columbia Gardens tomorrow. Today you're focusing on regular play places for Butte children. (5 minutes)
2. Share the learning targets with students by writing them on the board or projecting them. Point out that students can already partially do all three of these. The purpose of sharing the learning targets is to help students know where they are going and what they should be learning. (5 minutes)
3. Ask students to have paper/pencil ready. You will be reading two quotes, and you want them to write what kind of place the speakers describe. Ask them to write down words that stand out to them.
4. Read the quotes from Frank Carden (pp. 143-44) and John Sheehy (pp. 149-50). You may need to read them twice for students to hear clearly. (15 minutes)
5. Whole-group discussion: What words and descriptions stood out to you? Why? If you had to draw this place they described, what words would help you see the place in your mind first? (5 minutes)

Assessment:

Now have students write: "Are the places described by Frank Carden and John Sheehy the kind of places you would want to play? Why/why not?" (Use the words you wrote down from the read-aloud as reasons.) → meets Learning Target 1

Day Two

Hook:

1. To connect to yesterday, have students write a brief entrance ticket on an index card: Thinking about what you heard yesterday, how is that like and not like the places that YOU play? (You might take this opportunity to explain “compare and contrast.”) Be specific if you can. → meets Learning Target 2
2. On the back of the card, ask students to write one specific change they think would improve the play experience of the Butte children. (5 minutes)

Activities:

1. Vocabulary development: use the Knowledge Rating sheet for important concept words found in the reading: *poignant*, *lush*, *gritty*, *pavilion*, *arcade*, *captivate*. Have students complete the “Before reading” column for each word before listening to you the excerpt. This will give you (and them) an idea of what words they know and don’t know. (5 minutes)
2. Now, have students listen as you read the excerpt called “Columbia Gardens: Every Child’s Dream” from pages 171-73, ending with the paragraph that ends with “Once a week on Children’s Day.” Once you’ve read it out loud, ask students to go back and read it to themselves, again. (10 minutes)
3. Discuss the following concept vocabulary words: *poignant*, *lush*, *gritty*, *pavilion*, *arcade*, *captivate*. Choose how you want to address them – by part of speech (3 adjectives, 2 nouns, 1 verb)? By description of landscape? By description of feeling, by description of something tangible? Alphabetically? Lead students on a tour through the words. Ask if any students want to guess, based on concept clues or other parts of the words, what they might mean. They can help each other understand them. Stop short of providing a concrete definition if you can. This allows the second part of the Knowledge Rating to function. (10 minutes)
4. Now, read the Marie Butori quote (pp. 173-74). Ask students to listen for something that might be a “penny arcade” and for a description of a pavilion. After the reading, discuss those two words and ask what new information there is to add to our understanding. What other details did students notice that helped them picture Columbia Gardens? (5 minutes)
5. Next, read the Lucille Sheehan quote (pp. 174-75) and ask students to think about how her description makes them feel. Tell them “*poignant*” and “*captivate*” are not used in this interview, but they describe the feeling of it. After the reading, ask students if they can explain how Ms. Sheehan’s words sounded. Did she like Columbia Gardens? Feel like she would go back if she could? Help students come up with synonyms for “*poignant*” and “*captivate*.” (5 minutes)
6. You haven’t talked about “*lush*” and “*gritty*” yet. If you go back to the beginning of the selection you read, you can help students see that these words are not antonyms but represent two opposing descriptions of landscape. Ask students to describe Butte itself (they might say dirty, ugly, working) and then to describe the gardens they heard about (they might say beautiful, green, flowers). If they had to select which word went with Butte and which word went with gardens, what would they pick and why? Discuss without giving them a definition of “*lush*” or “*gritty*.” (5 minutes)
7. Have students complete the “After Reading” column for each word on the Knowledge Rating and provide a brief, in-your-own-words definition or synonym for each word. Collect and you can use as formative assessment or create a chart representing the class growth across the before/after reading and discussions for each word. (10 minutes)

Assessment:

Return to changes on backs of index cards (from the hook) and ask students to consider: If you think Columbia Gardens made a change like the one you suggested for Butte's children, explain how. If it didn't, give an example of how Columbia Gardens *did* improve life for children. → meets Learning Target 3

Extension Ideas:

- View *Remembering Columbia Gardens* in its entirety or excerpts. This video can be purchased from MontanaPBS or watched online.
<http://www.montanapbs.org/RememberingTheColumbiaGardens/>
- Have students interview adults in their lives about their play places. They should use the same skills used during these activities: close listening, note-taking of descriptive words, and summarizing. Then they should create a compare/contrast product (paper, posterboard, presentation) showing the similarities and differences between their own play places and the adults'.
- Find more descriptions of play in *Mining Childhood* and have students read, then draw the scenes, using specific details from the descriptions they read.
- Have students do a research project to locate photos and descriptions of the tools and equipment described in *Mining Childhood*, Chapter 4: "Child's Play: Risk and Resilience."
- Have students read a couple of different selections from *Mining Childhood* and compare/contrast them in a single paragraph with details to strengthen reading comprehension, compare/contrast, synthesis, evidence-based writing and summary skills.
- Create a panel activity wherein students become "experts" on certain play areas. Assign small groups a few similar selections to read and understand (learning about the landscape and equipment from the book and/or research they can do) and present their play areas to the rest of the class. There are several descriptions with research they can do, such as the chemicals in the water kids swam in, the types of wood used for timbering the mines, the depth of the mines themselves, and so on.



Courtesy World Museum of Mining, 00306