

Brunswick School Department
Social Studies
Grade 8 American Biography

Unit Overview

This unit prepares students for the Biography Day at Brunswick Junior High School. Students will conduct research on prominent American figures. They will then chose one person to study intensely using multiple sources and read a quality biography. Skills covered will be note taking, identifying influences of others on this person's life, and recognizing turning points. After researching applicable period clothing, a costume will be created to be used when students deliver an oral presentation in the persona of the subject. The oral presentation will be based on a five paragraph essay and delivered to an authentic audience of 6th and 7th grade students.

Essential Understandings

The past becomes meaningful by studying it in the context of those who have lived through it.

Priority Standards and Performance Indicators

(as based on the Maine Learning Results)

P.S. SS -1 Conduct and present original research that utilizes primary and secondary sources in order to analyze, interpret and explain historical (and/or) contemporary social studies topics.

- a. Students will locate relevant information that includes multiple perspectives from varied sources.
- b. Students will demonstrate facility with notetaking, organizing information, and creating bibliographies.
- c. Students will distinguish between primary and secondary sources.
- d. Students will use information ethically and legally.

P.S.SS-5 Draw on concepts and processes from history to develop historical perspective and understand issues of continuity and change in the community, Maine, the United States, and world.

- a. Students will explain that history is the study of the written record of the past, based on available evidence from a variety of sources.
- d. Students will explain how history can help one better understand and make informed decisions about the present and future.

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Examples of Formative / Summative Assessments

- Rubric for Turning Point two paragraph essay
- Rubric for five paragraph essay on major contributions to society
- Rubric for speech preparation, content, organization, and presentation in the social studies classroom
- Rubric for speaking skills on Biography Day

Sample Texts and Materials/Resources

- Biography books from BJH Media Center and Curtis Memorial Library
Brunswick School Dept. online Databases including American National Biography and Thompson-Gale