

TAH Lesson Plan

Title: Perspectives in History

Possible subject areas: Language Arts, History

Overview: Students will read personal accounts and poetry that was inspired by events that took place in Montgomery Alabama in the early 1960's and respond in writing to the readings.

Essential Understanding:

Students will personally connect with the experiences of teenagers living in Birmingham Alabama in the early 1960's.

Essential Questions:

How did the events and historical struggles of the early 1960's impact the teenage developmental experience in Birmingham, Alabama?

CT standards:

Through the study of US history:

1. Students will develop historical thinking skills, including chronological thinking and recognizing change over time; contextualizing, comprehending and analyzing historical literature; researching historical sources; understanding the concept of historical causation; understanding competing narratives and interpretation; and constructing narratives and interpretation.

3. Students will apply their understanding of historical periods, issues and trends to examine such themes as ideals, beliefs and institutions; conflict and conflict resolution; human movement and interaction; and science and technology in order to understand how the United States came to be the way it is.

Objectives:

- The student will demonstrate an understanding of the text's general content.
- The student will interpret and/or explain the text.
- The student will connect or associate the text with one's own life
- The student will elaborate on the text and make judgments about the text's quality and themes.

Materials needed:

Readings, reading responses, journal articles, rubrics, poster board, markers

Suggested Activities/Procedures:

Day 1

Classroom Activity

- Read “1961 Freedom Rides”
- Gallery Walk: Students will preview open-ended questions and discuss them in teams.
- Review Gallery walk responses as a large group
- Students will independently complete reading response questions in paragraphs using the rubric to self assess their work

Homework

- Complete the reflective journal
- Students will use the rubric to assess their work

Day 2

Classroom Activity

- Read “1963 The Birmingham Bombing”
- Gallery Walk: Students will preview open-ended questions and discuss them in teams.
- Review Gallery walk responses as a large group
- Students will independently complete reading response questions in paragraphs using the rubric to self assess their work

Homework

- Complete the reflective journal
- Students will use the rubric to assess their work

Day 3

Classroom Activity

- Read “Ballad of Birmingham” by Dudley Randall.
- Gallery Walk: Students will preview open-ended questions and discuss them in teams.
- Review Gallery walk responses as a large group
- Students will independently complete reading response questions in paragraphs using the rubric to self assess their work

Homework

- Complete the persuasive journal
- Students will use the rubric to assess their work

Suggested Assessment/Evaluation

- Reading responses
- Reading response rubrics (student and teacher assessment)
- Journal responses
- Journal response rubric (student and teacher assessment)

1961 Freedom Rides

In 1960, the Supreme Court ruled that it was illegal to segregate people traveling on interstate buses. The following year, an interracial group, called the Freedom Riders, tested this law in the South. When they made a stop in Montgomery, Alabama, on May 20, 1961, they were attacked. Joseph Lacey saw the attack. The next night, he went to a freedom rally. This is this story.

On that Saturday, morning down at the bus station, I was with a bunch of college kids. I was a freshman. We went down there when we heard that the (Freedom Riders') bus was coming in.

We saw the mob attack the bus. Although I was not hurt, I was mashed up against a building.

The city police withdrew from the scene. The county sheriff withdrew from the scene.

I saw the Freedom Riders beaten. I cried. I just couldn't believe it. Human beings were beating other human beings. They were beating them viciously. One guy, a salesman at our local car dealership, beat people like he was going crazy.

The white people's ambulances would not help the Freedom Riders. Blood was flowing down there like some of those Civil War battles.

After it happened, I went home and got on my typewriter and wrote President John Kennedy, begging him for help, telling him how bad it was here, I had never seen people that vicious before.

I never got an answer, but the next night when the federal marshals held the crowd back at the rally at the First Baptist church, it seemed as if Kennedy must have read my letter.

The scene at the rally was indescribable. President Kennedy had sent in about four to five hundred U.S. marshals who were supposed to enforce the law because the city police had completely abdicated. Looking out the window, you could see the marshals' vehicles all up the street.

The church was packed. I would say there were 1,500 to 2,000 people. When we started chanting songs, we just got together and started singing and rocking with the wave. It was something to behold. Never in history has a group stuck together like that.

All of the sudden, you could hear the crowd outside getting louder and louder. You could hear bricks hitting the building. The people outside were screaming, "Bring them out, bring them out! Let's go in and get them!"

We had a little recreation room with some baseball bats downstairs. So a bunch of us were going to grab some bats, but the older people said, "Put them down!"

The telephone service at the church was off. Someone said, "How are we going to get a message out?"

The marshals had surrounded the church and were repelling the crowd. But some of our windows were broken, and tear gas seeped into the church. The fumes hurt our eyes. Some of the marshals were really hurt by the bricks that were thrown. One or two marshals were, I think, damaged for life.

I can only say this: Those marshals prevented a massive bloodshed that night. If that mob had gotten into the church... there would have been many lives lost, many lives.

1961 Freedom Rides

By: Joseph Lacey

Goal: To develop and strengthen critical reading and response skills

Instructions: Read the following questions and answer each in a well-developed paragraph.

Global Understanding:

1. Explain how the author, Joseph Lacey, life has changed. Use information from his narrative to support your answer.

Developing Interpretation:

2. How are police expected to react when innocent people are getting hurt? What can you infer about the attitude of the police toward the freedom riders?

Personal Response:

3. Joseph cried when he saw the Freedom Riders being beaten. How would you have reacted? What other reactions might people have when they see someone else getting hurt?

Critical stance:

4. Describe a part of the narrative you could picture vividly. Support your answers using details from the reading.

Reading Response Rubric

Directions: Use the rubric below to score your reading responses.

#1. Global Understanding: *What is the overall meaning and purpose of what you read?*

How well do you understand the characters and events of the story?

1. Limited understanding, serious misunderstanding of portions of the text or story as a whole
2. Literal or superficial understanding of portions of the text or story as a whole
3. Some understanding of portions, lacks insight or the support of examples from text
4. Basic understanding of the story as a whole, provides plausible interpretation supported with some examples from the text
5. Basic understanding of the story as a whole. Thoughtful and well supported with examples from the text.
6. Basic understanding of the story as a whole. Richly supported with examples from the text

#2. Developing an Interpretation: *What meaning does the relationships among the different parts of the text have? What do you think the story means?*

1. No ability to reflect, revise, reshape and or deepen initial understanding
2. Little if any ability to reflect, revise, reshape or deepen initial understanding
3. Limited ability to reflect, revise and reshape or deepen initial understanding
4. Some ability to reflect, revise and reshape or deepen initial understanding
5. Acceptable ability to reflect, revise, reshape or deepen initial understanding
6. Exceptional ability to reflect, revise, reshape or deepen initial understanding

#3. Personal connection: *How does what is read relate to or compare with the reader's knowledge and experience? How well can you connect the story to outside experiences?*

1. No meaningful associations or connections between the story /texts or outside experiences
2. Difficulty in making or supporting an association or connection between the story and other texts or outside experiences
3. Association or connection between the story and other texts or outside experiences, but is superficial and lacks depth or support
4. Some association or connection between the story and other texts or outside experiences that may not be supported with examples from the text
5. Associations and connections between the story and other texts or outside experiences and generally supports these connections with examples from the text
6. Perceptive associations and connections between the story and other texts or outside experiences and supports these connections with examples from the text

#4. Critical Stance: *How does what is read communicate information or express ideas? Students challenge the author's meaning or quality of text.*

1. No awareness of the literary quality of the story
2. Judgments about the literary quality of the story that are superficial or emotional or are not supported with examples from the story, other texts or outside experiences
3. Judgments about the literary quality of the story that tend to be formulaic or is lacking examples from the story, or outside experiences to support these judgments
4. Judgments about the literary quality of the text but tend to lack depth or are not well supported with examples form the story or outside experiences
5. Thoughtful judgments about the literary quality of the story and generally supports these judgments with examples from the story or outside experiences
6. Perceptive judgments about the literary quality of the story and supports these judgments with examples from the text or outside experiences

Perspectives in History

1961 Freedom Rides

By: Joseph Lacey

Perspective Journal Writing

Goal: To write a journal entry from the perspective of a character in the reading

Directions:

Pretend you were a teenager living down south in 1961. You make the decision to join the interracial group, the Freedom Riders to test the Supreme Court's ruling that it was illegal to segregate people traveling on interstate buses. Describe your reasons for becoming a Freedom Rider and making the choice to ride the bus. Describe some of the other riders. What was your experience when the bus stopped in Montgomery, Alabama when the riders were attacked? Were you scared? Were you hurt? Were you surprised by the mob attack? What were you thinking when the police and county sheriff withdrew? Describe the scene at the rally when the U.S. Marshals showed up. Tell about your experience. Did you regret your decision to travel on the bus? How did joining the Freedom Riders change your life?

Reminder - This is a reflective journal, be sure to use your imagination to put yourself in this situation. Add details and emotions to describe how you were personally impacted.

Journal entry should be one page in length.

Journal Response Rubric

Directions: Use the rubric below to score your journal.

Personal Connection:

How does what is read relate to or compare with the reader's knowledge and experience? How well can you connect the story to outside experiences?

1. No meaningful associations or connections between the story /texts or outside experiences
2. Difficulty in making or supporting an association or connection between the story and other texts or outside experiences
3. Association or connection between the story and other texts or outside experiences, but is superficial and lacks depth or support
4. Some association or connection between the story and other texts or outside experiences that may not be supported with examples from the text
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1963 The Birmingham Bombing

On September 15, 1963, a bomb exploded at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama. It killed four African-American girls; Addie Mae Collins, 14; Denise McNair, 11; Cynthia Wesley, 14; and Carole Robertson, 14. All decent people were horrified. Three women who were teens at the time remember the event clearly.

Mary Godson

I knew two of the girls who were killed at the Sixteenth Street bombing. Cynthia Wesley and I sang in the choir together. And Denise McNair went to Center Street School with me, although she was younger than I was. Denise's mother was one of my teachers.

I was at home getting ready to go to church when I heard the news on the radio. My whole family was at home. The lady next door called my mama to ask her to turn on the T.V. She did, and they had the news report about the bombing. My mama was crying. We all started crying. The news report said that as far as they could tell there were some deaths, but at that time they didn't know how many. Later the report came that it was four girls who had been killed.

I couldn't believe anybody would do something like that at a church. We knew they had bombed houses and cars. That was nothing new. But when you take it out of the street and into the church, it was like nothing was sacred anymore.

Audrey Faye Hendicks

I was at church when someone came and told my pastor. He let us know that there had been a bombing at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. People were real upset. They cried. I cried. Later on that night I learned that the girls had died. I wondered how somebody could be so hate filled about color. I remember seeing Denise's mother at school one day after they had buried her. But I don't think she ever taught again. Denise was an only child.

Bernita Robertson

When the bomb went off, we felt in our Sunday school class four blocks away. I lived across the street from Bethel Baptist, so I knew the feeling of a bomb. In about fifteen minutes, word got to us that they had bombed Sixteenth Street where the children were in Sunday school. Then our Sunday school immediately let out, and everyone got together in prayer.

I was a friend of Denise McNair. I knew her grandfather. He owned a cleaners, and I knew her from there. I was a flower girl for her funeral. Three of the funerals were held at the same time. There was nothing like seeing those three families there, and the three coffins. I was just trying to understand how somebody could do this to children. To this day, I don't really know.

I wasn't angry because I was taught not to be. I was taught to forgive people. Things were happening so fast during that time, you didn't know what to expect next. Anger and sorrow were just a part of trying to get accomplished what you wanted.

1963 The Birmingham Bombing

Goal: To develop and strengthen critical reading and response skills

Instructions: Read the following questions and answer each in a well-developed paragraph.

Global Understanding:

1. In your opinion what do you think the bombers were trying to accomplish?

Developing Interpretation:

2. "I couldn't believe people would do something like that at a church". Why is Mary so shocked about the location of the bombing?

Personal Response:

3. Bernita says that she was taught not to be angry. It seems natural to feel anger in this situation. Would you have been angry? What other emotions might you have experienced?

Critical stance:

4. When you compare, you identify how things are the same. When you contrast you see how things are different. Compare and contrast how Mary, Audrey and Bernita reacted to the bombing.

Reading Response Rubric

Directions: Use the rubric below to score your reading responses.

#1. Global Understanding: *What is the overall meaning and purpose of what you read?*

How well do you understand the characters and events of the story?

7. Limited understanding, serious misunderstanding of portions of the text or story as a whole
8. Literal or superficial understanding of portions of the text or story as a whole
9. Some understanding of portions, lacks insight or the support of examples from text
10. Basic understanding of the story as a whole, provides plausible interpretation supported with some examples from the text
11. Basic understanding of the story as a whole. Thoughtful and well supported with examples from the text.
12. Basic understanding of the story as a whole. Richly supported with examples from the text

#2. Developing an Interpretation: *What meaning does the relationships among the different parts of the text have? What do you think the story means?*

7. No ability to reflect, revise, reshape and or deepen initial understanding
8. Little if any ability to reflect, revise, reshape or deepen initial understanding
9. Limited ability to reflect, revise and reshape or deepen initial understanding
10. Some ability to reflect, revise and reshape or deepen initial understanding
11. Acceptable ability to reflect, revise, reshape or deepen initial understanding
12. Exceptional ability to reflect, revise, reshape or deepen initial understanding

#3. Personal connection: *How does what is read relate to or compare with the reader's knowledge and experience? How well can you connect the story to outside experiences?*

7. No meaningful associations or connections between the story /texts or outside experiences
8. Difficulty in making or supporting an association or connection between the story and other texts or outside experiences
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#4. Critical Stance: *How does what is read communicate information or express ideas? Students challenge the author's meaning or quality of text.*

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8. Judgments about the literary quality of the story that are superficial or emotional or are not supported with examples from the story, other texts or outside experiences
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Perspectives in History

1963 The Birmingham Bombing

Perspective Journal Writing

Goal: To write a journal entry from the perspective of a character in the reading

Directions:

Pretend you were a teen living in Birmingham in 1963. Write a journal describing your experience when the bomb exploded at the 16th street St. Baptist Church. Where were you? Who were you with? How did it impact your family? Did you know any of the girls that were killed or anyone that survived the bombing? What was your reaction to the bombing? How did it impact your family or neighbors?

Reminder - This is a reflective journal, be sure to use your imagination to put yourself in this situation. Add details and emotions to describe how you were personally impacted.

Journal entry should be one page in length.

Journal Response Rubric

Directions: Use the rubric below to score your journal.

Personal Connection:

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Ballad of Birmingham

By Dudley Randall

“Mother dear, may I go downtown
Instead of out to play,
And march the streets of Birmingham
In a Freedom March today?”

“No, baby, no you may not go,
For the dogs are fierce and wild,
And clubs and hoses, guns and jails
Aren't good for a little child.”

“But, mother, I won't go alone.
Other children will go with me,
And march the streets of Birmingham
To make our country free.”

“No, baby, no, you may not go,
For I fear those guns will fire.
But you may go to church instead
And sing in the children's choir.”

She has combed and brushed her
Night dark hair,
And bathed rose petal sweet,
And drawn white gloves on her small brown hands,
And white shoes on her feet.

The mother smiled to know that her child
Was in the sacred place,
But that smile was the last smile

To come upon her face.
For when she heard the explosion,
Her eyes grew wet and wild.
She raced through the streets of Birmingham
Calling for her child.

She clawed through bits of glass and brick,
Then lifted out a shoe.
“O, here's the shoe my baby wore,
But baby, where are you?”

Ballad of Birmingham

By: Dudley Randall

Goal: To develop and strengthen critical reading and response skills

Instructions: Read the following questions and answer each in a well-developed paragraph.

Global Understanding:

1. Describe the mother's reasons for not letting her daughter go to the Freedom March. What motivated her to send the girl to church instead?

Developing Interpretation:

2. Notice the specific images and descriptions: rose-petal sweet; white gloves on small brown hands, white shoes. How do these details contrast with events at the end of the poem?

Personal Response:

3. Describe a time when you did something your parents told you not to do? How did it turn out? Did you understand their reasons against your plans? What happened when they found out? What did you learn from the experience?

Critical stance:

4. One purpose for reading this poem was to see how poetry treats a real historical event. Describe some ways it does so. How is a poem different than a narrative or news article that discusses a historical event? Which do you prefer to read?

Reading Response Rubric

Directions: Use the rubric below to score your reading responses.

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Perspectives in History

Ballad of Birmingham

Dudley Randall

Perspective Journal Writing

Goal: To write a persuasive letter from the perspective of a teenager during this time period.

Directions:

Pretend you are a teenager during this time period. You want to attend the Freedom Marches and your parents are against you choice. Write a persuasive letter to your parents convincing them to let you go to the marches. Discuss how the marches make you feel. Try to anticipate what their reasons will be and what your arguments against them.

Reminder - Remember to consider the audience who will be reading your letter, use language and emotion that will appeal to them. Be sure to support your arguments with details.

Journal entry should be one page in length.

Journal Response Rubric

Directions: Use the rubric below to score your journal.

Personal Connection:

How does what is read relate to or compare with the reader's knowledge and experience? How well can you connect the story to outside experiences?

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