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SEATTLE'S WATERFRONT HISTORY CURRICULUM





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Inquiry Description

This lesson is ideal for block schedules or humanities classes that include English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies standards in the class. This lesson could also be done in an ELA class that is looking for a cross content lesson with Washington State History class.

This lesson will have students complete a narrative writing prompt. To complete this prompt students will look into the history of the Seattle Waterfront, the railroad industry, and how people have died because of the railroad in Seattle. Students will then research the history of their own community and add details to their short narrative prompt.

Standards

ELA Standards:

- G7 Text Type and Purpose: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- G7 Production and Distribution of Writing: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- G7 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

Social Studies Standards:

- H1.6-8.4 Analyze a major historical event and how it is represented on timelines from different cultural perspectives, including those of indigenous people.
- H2.6-8.4 Explain and analyze how technology and ideas have impacted Washington state history since statehood.

Learning goals/ Objectives

At the end of the lesson students will be able to:

1. Read primary sources for content ideas on a narrative writing prompt.
2. Write to a narrative prompt that uses sensory details to tell a historical fiction story about the history of the railroad on the Seattle Waterfront.
3. Revise their work using the peer writing process.
4. Research their community to add to the details of their short narrative writing.
5. Publish their writing for an authentic audience.

Focused Inquiry

Compelling Question: What is the story behind the history of the Seattle Waterfront?

Staging the question:

Students should read short writings that use sensory detail (using the 5 senses to tell the story) and have them write down the way that the author uses it in their writing. This could be children's books, poems, essays, music lyrics, etc. Have the students complete the note sheet (Student Handout #1).

This could be done individually or in a group. Students should share what they heard with their group or the class. Teachers should gather a class list of what was in their writing. This anchor chart could be used to help students revise their own writing.

Teacher Note: *Teachers could have students add different sensory details to the note sheet that might add to or improve the story.*

Supporting question(s): How does the history of Seattle's Waterfront create content for creative writing?

Formative Performance Task:

Students will read secondary sources and analyze images (Student Handout #2) that shows the history of the railroad in Seattle. This could be done individually or as a whole group.

Students will then read primary sources from Seattle based newspapers (Student Handout #3) that shows how people have died through railroad related accidents. Students should choose one or two newspaper stories to read.

Students will then find a compelling quote from the news article to write a narrative short story about the history of people at the Seattle waterfront. Teachers can have students write a short or longer narrative response.

When students are done with this part of their writing they should complete a peer edit activity. Teachers should use a routine that is familiar to the students. There is a peer edit routine that is attached (Student Handout #4), if needed.

Students should edit their writing using the feedback from their peers.

Featured Source(s):

- [Oregon Improvement Company completes purchase of Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad Company and Seattle Coal & Transportation Company on November 26, 1880.](#)
- [Image: Railroad Ave. looking north from Madison St. showing docks and railroad tracks, Seattle, probably between 1908 and 1920](#)
- [Image: Railroad Avenue, Seattle, ca. 1911](#)
- "Dies From Injuries"- *The Seattle Daily Times* April 22, 1903
- "Asleep on the Tracks"- *The Seattle Daily Times* September 14, 1903

Narrative Writing :

Students will write a narrative short story that shows the dangers of railroads in the early history of the Seattle Waterfront. In this writing, students need to include sensory details that will tell a complete story. Students should also complete a peer review and publish for an authentic audience. This could include reading aloud in class or small groups, comic booking the writing, sharing in a school literary journal, posts to class webpage, etc.

Take informed Action:

Students could add to their writing by researching historical newspapers from their community. This could include looking up local stories about high school sports, societal pages, local advertisements, other obituaries, etc. This could be added as a character in their story, as location, or motivation. Let the students be creative in how they add to their story. Students could use the [Washington State Library Digital Newspaper](#) as a resource.

Students Handout #1
Name:

Sensory Detail Notes

Directions: As you read the short story take notes of the sensory details that you hear in the story.

	Examples from the story	What would you add to make the story better?
Sight		
Sound		
Touch		
Smell		
Taste		

Student Handout #2

Name:

Background about Seattle Railroads

Directions: Complete the notes chart for the history of the railroad on the Seattle waterfront and images.

*Excerpt: Oregon Improvement Company completes purchase of Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad Company and Seattle Coal & Transportation Company on November 26, 1880. By John Caldbick
Posted 10/09/2014*

Railroad Blues

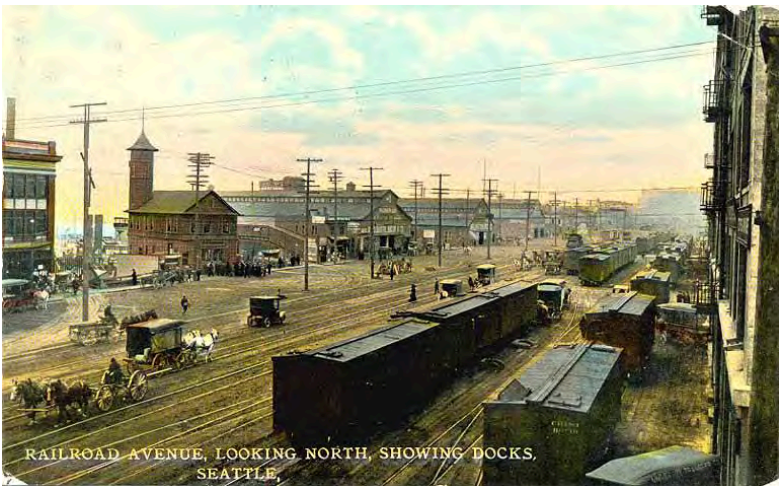
Every new town in the West with ambitions for greatness needed a railroad link to the rest of the country. The first transcontinental line, a collaboration between the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads, was opened on May 10, 1869, with its western terminus in San Francisco. In early 1870 Congress gave the Northern Pacific Railroad a charter to build its proposed transcontinental route down the path of the Columbia River, and required that a branch be run north to serve Puget Sound. Several cities, including Olympia, Tacoma, Seattle, Port Townsend, and Bellingham vied to become the railroad's northernmost terminus. All, in one way or another, were to be disappointed.

Seattle, with its fine harbor and nearby coalfields, thought itself a cinch for the honor and offered generous waterfront concessions to the Northern Pacific... [However] Tacoma, not Seattle, would be the first Puget Sound city to benefit from a rail link to the outside world...

Discouraged but not defeated, the citizens of Seattle decided to build their own system, to be named the Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad & Transportation Company. They started with a hopelessly optimistic plan to breach the Cascade Mountains at Snoqualmie Pass and open a direct rail route between Washington Territory's geographical halves. Work began on a bright May Day in 1874 when nearly the entire population turned out at the Duwamish River south of the city to clear a roadbed. After an enthusiastic start carried on in a party-like atmosphere, reality set in. Work progressed rather slowly after that; by October, a right-of-way had been laboriously cut as far as Renton, a distance of about five miles from the starting point, but no track was laid.

What does this tell you about the history of the Railroad in Seattle?

Image: Railroad Ave. looking north from Madison St. Seattle, between 1908 and 1920



What does this image show you about the history of railroads in Seattle?	What does this image make you think of?	Describe the image using sensory details

Image: Railroad Avenue, Seattle, ca. 1911



Property of Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

What does this image show you about the history of railroads in Seattle?	What does this image make you think of?	Describe the image using sensory details

Student Handout #3

Name:

Primary Sources as Source Materials

Directions: Read at least one of the newspaper articles. Take a compelling quote from the sources to use in your narrative short story.

Newspaper 1: Dies From Injuries- The Seattle Daily Times, April 22, 1903

DIES FROM INJURIES

Mike Downey was struck by a switch engine, crushing his right leg and arm.

Mike Downey died at the Waysides Mission Hospital this morning about 3 o'clock as a result of injuries received in a rail road accident last night. Downey was run over by the great Northern switch engine at the corner of 2nd Avenue South and King Street and his right arm and right leg were so badly crushed that amputation was necessary.

Little is known here of the dead man. He had a transportation ticket in one of his pockets and Connor Hoyer thinks he was a railroad laborer.

The remains of the dead man were removed from the hospital to the Bonnie-Watson Company's morgue. No inquest will be held.

Newspaper 2: Asleep on the Tracks- The Seattle Daily Times, September 14, 1903

Asleep on the Tracks.

John Donovan, a laborer, went to sleep on the Columbia & Puget Sound railroad tracks near Frye-Burhn slaughter house last night and a passing train cut his legs off early this morning. The man was taken to the Wayside Mission Hospital. He has a wife and family living at 61 Drexler Avenue.

Student Handout #4

Name:

Peer Review Routine

Directions: Read your peers' stories. You will need to give thoughtful feedback to help them with their story. Complete the feedback tickets below each of the stories that you read.

Author's Name:

Step 1: Read the writing closely and thoughtfully.

Step 2: Think about what you really liked about what the author did. List 2 things below.

1.

2.

Step 3: Think about what you wish the author had included or fixed. List no more than one thing below (this should help the writer improve, not tear them down)

1.

Author's Name:

Step 1: Read the writing closely and thoughtfully.

Step 2: Think about what you really liked about what the author did. List 2 things below.

1.

2.

Step 3: Think about what you wish the author had included or fixed. List no more than one thing below (this should help the writer improve, not tear them down)

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Step 2: Think about what you really liked about what the author did. List 2 things below.

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1.