

Unit 1, Lesson 2: History Bags

Lesson Overview

In this lesson students will construct historical accounts using artifacts/documents that are provided by classmates to develop a foundational understanding of how the story of the past is pieced together, and how it is not just a “bunch of facts.”.

Delaware Standard(s)

- **History Standard 2a, 4-5 [Analysis]:** Students will draw historical conclusions and construct historical accounts from primary and secondary source materials.
- **History Standard 3a, 4-5 [Interpretation]:** Students will explain why historical accounts of the same event sometimes differ and relate this explanation to the evidence presented or the point-of-view of the author.

Big Ideas:

- facts, interpretations

Essential Questions

- How do we know about the past? Why might there be different accounts of the past?

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that we know about the past based on evidence-based conclusions that are grounded in artifacts, documents, and other sources that survive the passage of time. History, or what we know about the past is a blend of facts and conclusions or interpretations based on those facts.

Resources/Materials Needed

- Paper bags for each student
- Artifacts and documents that the students bring in from home
- [Resource 1: Drawing Conclusions and Creating Accounts from History Bags](#)
- [Resource 2: Drawing Conclusions and Creating Accounts from History Bags](#)

Procedures

1. **Pre-Lesson Planning:** Approximately one week prior to conducting the lesson ask students (or send home a letter of request to their parents or guardians) to go home and select 5 “sources” (e.g. photos, books, old report cards, trophies, certificates, copies of birth certificates, toys, jewelry, journals, travel memorabilia etc.) that would enable another person to learn more about them, their hobbies, their families, their interests, and most importantly their past etc.
2. **Preparing History Bags:** Distribute paper bags. Ask the students to write their names on them and label it “*My History Bag*.” Tell the students that they are to put their 5 or 6 “sources” in the bags and bring them to class in the bags on the day selected for this lesson. Ask them not to share the contents of their bags with anyone in class.

3. **Modeling:** On the day of the lesson, bring in your own History Bag with items that reveal positive and age-appropriate information about yourself.
 - a. Model and provide guided practice by taking one item out of the bag. Ask students to think quietly and independently about a conclusion that the item suggests about you and your past. Have volunteers share their conclusions
 - b. Next, ask, what served as evidence for their conclusions? Confirm or correct their conclusions. Continue this until you have gone through each item in your History Bag.
 - c. Then ask one or two students to summarize what the 5 items reveal about you and your past.

4. **Draw Conclusions from History Bags (Part 1):** Distribute Copies of [Resource 1](#) and walk students through how to fill out the chart. Place students in pairs (Student A and Student B). Have each student take out 3 items from their bags and give the 3 items to their partners. Then, ask them to analyze the three items and silently fill out the chart on Resource 1 i.e., identify each item, explain a conclusion about their partners' pasts that can be drawn from the items/evidence, then write an account of their partner's past based on those three items or pieces of evidence.

5. **Presenting and Corroborating:** Beginning with Students A, have them share their conclusions and accounts with Student B. Student B should then confirm or correct what the documents or artifacts were meant to reveal about Students B.
 - a. Repeat the process but this time have Students B report on conclusions drawn from the contents of Students As' bags.

6. **Draw Conclusions from History Bags (Part 2):** Distribute Copies of [Resource 2](#) which is the same as Resource 1. Have each student any remaining items from their bags and give them to their partners. Then, ask them to analyze the new items/evidence and silently fill out the chart on Resource 1 i.e., identify each item, explain a conclusion about their partners' pasts that can be drawn from the items/evidence, then write an account of their partner's past based on those three items or pieces of evidence.

7. **Presenting and Corroborating:** Beginning with Students A, have them share their new conclusions and accounts with Student B. Student B should then confirm or correct what the documents or artifacts were meant to reveal about Students B.
 - a. Repeat the process but this time have Students B report on conclusions drawn from the contents of Students As' bags.
 - b. **Debrief:** Remind students of the essential questions for this lesson -
 - i. How do we know about the past? [[drawing conclusions about evidence that survives the passage of time](#)]
 - ii. Why might there be different accounts of the past? [[different evidence presented](#)]
 - c. Explain that one way that we can "know" what happened in the past is by engaging in a process that involves
 - i. analyzing sources of information
 - ii. drawing conclusions from those sources
 - iii. grounding those conclusions in evidence (sources)
 - iv. checking or corroborating our conclusions against other sources of information
 - d. History is not simply a bunch of facts. Rather, it is a blend of facts, conclusions, and interpretations. So, if the students read or hear a conclusion that seems a bit odd,

encourage them to ask, “what’s your evidence?” And when you read history, it is OK to question what you read.

- e. And tell students not to wed themselves to a conclusion or interpretation until they have had a chance to check the evidence that supports it.