

Unit 5, Lesson 1 : Utopia

Lesson Overview

In this lesson students will read about Thomas More's book Utopia and how it served as a cause for people to migrate to the American colonies. They will have opportunities to describe and draw their own visions of a utopia. Estimated time to complete = 30 minutes.

Delaware Standard(s)

- History Standard 1, 4-5 [Chronology]: Students will study historical events and persons within a given time frame in order to create a chronology and identify related cause-effect factors.
- History Standard 2a, 4-5 [Analysis]: Students will draw historical conclusions and construct historical accounts from primary and secondary source materials.

Big Ideas

- Cause-effect
- Utopia

Essential Questions

- What effect did Thomas More's Utopia have on people in England? Why did some people from England migrate (move) to America?

Enduring Understandings

Students will understand that visions of a utopia and the dream of a better life was one cause of migration to the English colonies.

Resources

- [Google Slides](#)
- [Resource 1](#)
- [Resource 2](#)

Procedures

Optional

Play tunes and select lyrics to a song about Utopia as a transition to this lesson

- [Utopia by Annie Leblanc](#)
- [Utopia by Lykke li](#)

1. **Tap Prior Knowledge:** Project the word "*utopia*" and sound it out. Have students say the word. Ask if anyone has ever heard of the word utopia. If so, ask volunteers to share what they think they know.
2. **Define:** Project and share the following definition: *an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect.*
3. **D3 Vocab Development - Define, Describe, Draw:** distribute copies of [Resource 1](#) and crayons or colored pencils. Ask students to develop their understanding of utopia by defining it, describing what their utopia would be like, and drawing what their utopia would look like.

Field Testing Note - Misconception Alert

A common misconception among fourth graders is that the task of explaining and drawing their visions of Utopia is interpreted as a request to describe what a perfect day or moment might be like. Emphasize that the task is asking them to describe a perfect society

4. **Small group sharing:** have students share their utopias with others in their groups emphasizing that no one's utopia is better than another person's. It's a personal preference.
5. **Mini Lecture - Origins of Utopia:** Explain that the word *Utopia* was first used in the year 1517 by a famous person named Thomas More. More wrote a book entitled *Utopia* in which he described a place that some believed was a perfect place. More also drew an illustration of what it looked like.
6. **Reading:** distribute copies of [Resource 2](#) - Summary of Thomas More's book *Utopia*. Have students read the passage then discuss with a partner:
 - a. What effect do you think Thomas More's book *Utopia* might have on the people of England who are poor, who want to practice a different religion, and who are sick of fighting wars? [\[it made some people want to move to a place in the New World where they could create their own Utopia\]](#)
7. **Common Core Connection:** ask students...
 - a. which text structure did the author of Resource 3 use to summarize Thomas More's *Utopia*? Read a sentence that supports your conclusion. [\[comparison\]](#)
 - b. how does the drawing included in the reading contribute to your understanding of the reading? [\[it shows what the island of Utopia looked like\]](#)
8. **Debrief:** Highlight that one reason why people move is the dream for a better life. Thomas More's *Utopia* made some people who lived in 16th Century England believe that they might have an opportunity to create their own utopia in America.

Note to Teachers

During field testing students were quick to make connections to the movie Zootopia.