

Unit 5, Lesson 10: Thank You, Sarah

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson students will read and analyze a number of primary and secondary sources to learn how and why Thanksgiving became a national holiday.

Delaware Content Standards:

- 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
- History Standard 2b, 4-5 [Analysis]: Students will examine historical materials relating to a particular region, society, or theme; chronologically arrange them; and analyze change over time.
- History Standard 4, 4-5 [Content]: Students will develop an understanding of selected themes in United States history, including...important people in American history

Common Core ELA Standard:

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9](#): Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Essential Questions:

- How did Thanksgiving become a national holiday and how do we know?

Enduring Understandings:

Students will understand that Thanksgiving became a national holiday in large part because of the persistence of Sarah Hale and the desire of the nation to experience some relief from the horrors of the Civil War. We know this by corroborating information found in primary and secondary sources.

Resources:

- [Google Slides](#)
- [Resource 1: Who are these two people?](#)
- [Resource 2: Frayer Model](#)
- [Resource 3: Providing Context for Today's Story](#)
- [Resource 4: Organizing Thank You Sarah in Chronological Order](#)
- [Resource 5: Graphic Organizer and Sources 1-3](#)
- [Resource 6: Check for Understanding](#)
- [Resource 7: Integrating Knowledge and Ideas](#)

Procedures:

1. **Engage Students with Mystery:** project a copy of [Resource 1](#) onto a board or screen (included on slide 2). Ask students - Who are these two people and why might they be shown together? Give students time to discuss and share but hold off on revealing who they are so that the students uncover the mystery as the lesson proceeds. **Do not reveal who they are yet.** [[Abraham Lincoln and Sarah Hale - "the woman who saved Thanksgiving" - see below](#)]

2. **Brainstorm:** Ask students to work with a partner to develop a list of everything that they know about Thanksgiving. Give students a few minutes then invite some to share out. Create a whole group list of different things students “know” about Thanksgiving for all to see.
3. **Frayer Model:** distribute copies of [Resource 2: Frayer Model for Superhero](#). Explain how to complete a Frayer model if they do not already know then have them complete one individually. Feel free to encourage them to discuss ideas with a partner or in small groups but each student should complete their own Frayer Model for “Superhero.” Again, provide time to complete then allow some to share out.
4. **Contextualize:** distribute copies of [Resource 3](#). Have students read the passage independently or read aloud with students then have them re-read with the focused goal of answering the two questions at the bottom of the page. Discuss the two questions:
 - a. What is the main idea of reading? [\[by 1863, the American people needed a break from the horrors of the Civil War\]](#)
 - b. Why were many Americans so sad between 1861 and 1865? [\[Americans were fighting and killing one another in numbers the country has never seen before or since\]](#)
5. Tell students that they are now going to read some texts that will help them solve the history mystery that we introduced at the beginning of this lesson (see Procedure 1 above). The readings will also connect the pieces of information from their brainstorming (see Procedure 2 above) and Frayer Model (see Procedure 3 above).
6. **Story Time!** Read “*Thank You Sarah*” by Laurie Halse Anderson aloud to the class. Consider projecting illustrations from the text on your Elmo device or Smart Board. Audio/visual readings of the book are available on YouTube at sites such as [here](#) and [here](#).
7. **Create a Chronology:** see [Resource 4](#). Have students analyze the major events described in *Thank You Sarah* then create a vertical timeline that organizes the events on Resource 4 in chronological order. Slide 9 can be used as a whole class. Double click each text box to allow students to move the events into chronological order (do not be in present mode) **Note** - Resource 4 can be used as a check for understanding.
8. **Vocabulary Development - Credibility** i.e. the quality of being trusted or believable. Ask students...
 - a. Should we believe everything that we read or hear? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you believe that the story told in *Thank You Sarah* is believable? Explain.
 - c. How might we (including historians) know if information about the past is credible or believable?
9. **Support Disciplinary Literacy:** remind students that when historians read or listen to accounts of the past, they do three things:
 - a. Source – find out WHO created the document or artifact to make judgments about how their backgrounds might have influenced what they wrote or created
 - b. Contextualize – determine WHEN something was created to understand why it was created and determine if that which is presented makes sense based on what was happening at the time. For example, something written during a war or when people are sick may have been written differently during peacetime or when they are healthy.
 - c. Corroborate – CHECK other sources to see if they support or refute what is presented.
10. **Read Aloud:** Distribute copies of [Resource 5: Graphic Organizer and Sources 1-3](#) and explain the next procedure. You will lead them in a read aloud of three texts or sources included in Resource 5. They will then be tasked with completing the graphic organizer found on Resource 5. Walk them through each question on Resource 5, noting that the questions are ones that both historians and expert readers ask of documents.
 - a. Alternative Procedure 11 - Jigsaw Option: place students in three expert groups numbered 1, 2, or 3. Put all #1 students in one “expert” group and take special care to ensure that each group has one of the best readers in your class (so they assume an

assistant teacher role within their group). Do the same for students #2 & 3. Tell them that each group will receive a document or “source” and work collaboratively to complete the column on the graphic organizer for that source. Give the groups sufficient time to complete their section of the graphic organizer, noting how important it is that they understand their responses to the point that they can share them with others who have not read their documents.

11. **Mixed Group Sharing** (speaking and listening): put students into groups of three so that each group consists of at least one student who has analyzed Source 1, 2 and 3. Have them explain the document that they read then share their responses in a manner that allows the others in their groups to record the answers. Sequence the sharing from Source 1 then 2 then 3 as this offers opportunities for students to draw inferences about chronological concepts such as causes, effects, and changes over time.
12. **Informal Check for Understanding:** Ask students...
 - a. What can we conclude are some credible conclusions about the history of Thanksgiving?
 - b. What allows us to have confidence in these conclusions?
13. **Optional Formal Check for Understanding:** Use [Resource 6](#) as an additional check for understanding.
14. **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:** Distribute copies of [Resource 7 - Integrating Knowledge and Ideas](#). Have students list some things that they learned from the book Thank You Sarah in Column 1. Invite volunteers to share some answers.
 - a. Then, read *Sarah Gives Thanks* by Mike Allegra to the class (or show a YouTube read aloud of the book - some available [here](#) or [here](#)). Then asks students to list some things that they learned from the book Thank You Sarah in Column 2 of Resource 7. Invite volunteers to share some answers.
 - b. Finally, have students complete the Preparing for the Question assignment at the bottom of the page.

Special thanks Delaware Public Archives for finding and providing Delaware Governor Robert Reynolds' Thanksgiving Proclamation.