

Evaluate the Power of a “Heart on Fire”

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Abstract

This Social Studies unit is designed for 11th graders in Advanced Placement US History but can be adapted for any 11th grade history class. It is always difficult for AP teachers to hit all of the content that the College Board lists as fair game on their assessment in May. This is compounded when teaching content that still includes problematic interpretations, as well as too many assessment questions on traditional curriculum topics of white male contributions to American identity, political power, and economic contribution. To be fair, College Board has been making efforts to adapt itself. It has been trying to diversify its decision makers, hire more assessors from diverse backgrounds, create an African American AP History course, and revise its curriculum. It is simply not good enough *yet* as many within its organization are pushing back against progressive revision of racist byproducts in favor of maintaining the status quo. The cost for society is many students expecting to not be seen or appreciated in these history curriculums, more and more so seen in Philadelphia classrooms. Over 20% of my students are first generation in immigrant families spanning 4 continents. In addition, though we receive 100% free lunch, 15% of my students come from households where an adult holds an advanced degree, even higher if we consider siblings pursuing one. All this is to say that I

cannot assume that any cultural or abstract idea should be considered by our school, let alone our society, as dominant at all. In this unit we will look at how political will has shifted focus on ideas of identity and ideals, and hence the narratives taught to its people, over time with 2 historical monument movements. One will be Confederate ones that were put up right after the Reconstruction era and current progressive pushes for more diverse representation while also removing especially problematic monuments from public spaces. This unit will use excerpts from scholarly critique of “dominant narrative” to identify what those narratives were during both eras, and why they were made. Students will ask themselves: For whom did they benefit? Students will also be challenged to explain the narratives that nation states try to communicate via their “official” monuments. While looking at these, we will also investigate how the people within U.S. society challenge “official” narratives to communicate their own narratives, and how some Americans challenge not being included in the ideals claimed in these narratives by either demanding insertion or revising the ideals to make sense within their culture. In the end, we will be focusing on the fact that we have always been a nation of diverse people. Despite systematic racism and lack of attention from academia for most of our history, diverse groups have contributed more to American culture, innovation and economic prosperity than just the Christian white male contingent. Part of the AP US History assessment gives the student a document or picture and asks students to make a statement supporting an argument using either the Historical Context, Intended Audience, the Point of View of whoever created it, or the historical evidence’s Purpose. Students

will write statements addressing the above categories listed in the theory of historical narrative to illustrate those four ways to analyze.

Keywords

dominant narrative, challenging dominant narratives, Reconstruction, progressivism, nation state, analyzing historical evidence, HIPP, APUSH

Unit Content

I teach 11th grade AP US History in an ethnically diverse magnet school in Philadelphia. Most of my students come into the class with grade level reading skills, meaning they need only minimal instructional support, such as vocabulary, to access the college level readings required in an AP course. More often they need support in writing evidence-based arguments that the College Board will accept as a thesis. Consider also that 12% of my students are just below their grade reading level which makes AP readings frustrating and hence need additional reading strategies such as chunking or graphic organizers. I have been planning using more visual aids and giving more segmented work assignments with shorter due dates that build on one another when I want a more sophisticated product. I feel these are needed more this year, as students are still adjusting to being back from online learning. I sense the gratitude of not being socially isolated from last year's class has faded, but feelings of being overloaded by work have remained. I hear the student's express frustration with work to one another more and more, not just from one specific class as I have in past years. Providing tangible notes to reference for their thesis evidence has also been helpful in maintaining student confidence. One objective

overall in this class is to expose students to college level secondary sources with the intent to use it to support an argument. The excerpts of scholarly critiques of “dominant narrative” will be presented to achieve that end as well.

Part of the AP US History curriculum is required to cover the idea that “New demographic and social developments changed US culture and led to significant political and moral debates that sharply divided the nation”. I cannot assume that the entire student body will meet these ideas at the same point of exposure, some will have background knowledge into the idea of dominant narrative, progressivism, status quo, and/or content history, etc.

Teaching Strategies

Lecture on the Idea of Reconstruction and the Compromise of 1877 with Guided Notes: Students will need direct instruction on some concepts due to the time constraints of the course as a test on all U.S. history is coming for them on May 5th 2023. Lectures will be limited to 7 min intervals with breaks in delivery for questions and notetaking.

Inquiry Based Learning - Student explore a real issue that affects us today. I will ask high-level questions but I want students to come up with their own as well. I do not have all the answers; not want to impose assumptions I have about narratives on my students’ narratives. They need theirs to make sense in their own lives.

Think Pair Share - In order to quickly hear evidence of thinking, foster community, and allow students the opportunity to process thoughts into memory, the strategy of turning

and talking, also known as Think Pair Share will be employed after every prompt on the notetaking doc.

Guided Notes: Used to help students keep themselves accountable for covered content through the lectures and webquests. Points of the guided notes also ask students to reflect on concepts by having them write things in their own words or apply content to specific questions. Reflections and feedback given from students have been asking more recently to have concrete questions to answer, these notes are a way to allow for open/creative responses while still giving students a framework to feel they are on the right track.

Art and Primary Source Analysis: Used in the lecture to illustrate how the placement and prestige of certain monuments give them power. These show that the author and artist made a conscious choice in their art or their words to communicate what is important to their culture. This is important in showing that I am not making assumptions or trying to put my bias into the ideas communicated.

Secondary Source Analysis: College Board requires that student decipher secondary sources and apply those ideas to historically defended arguments. I give students a choice of which quotes to decipher so that they can attack a quote at the level they are either comfortable in, or interested in.

Socratic Seminar: This is a structured dialogue between students about important ideas or moral and ethical issues found in a texts and images and/or connected to the background knowledge or content already covered in the unit. It should enable the students to

construct meaning around this idea of identity, and the idea that there are different versions of the story of our identity, while also thinking about how these different points of view affect decisions. This exercise does this and ignites critical thinking. As a result, the students can construct new knowledge with the asking and answering of questions, the need for evidence to substantiate claims, and the ability to look at an issue from multiple perspectives. Students are also required by College Board to read secondary text that is college level, these articles and quotes short but rigorous and aligned with the reading levels they will be exposed to on their APUSH assessment and beyond in their higher learning environments.

Self-Assessment: Used to shift ownership of learning to students while getting a snapshot of their emotional comfortability with absorbing this material. They need to reflect on learning to absorb it and the exercise of checking in with oneself and communicating that to a teacher can be a powerful exercise. After each lesson, students are identifying their comfortability using a scale. Asking “What is standing out to you so far?” “What have you learned?” “What are you most proud of yourself for doing in this unit?” in the middle of the unit and the end help keep them motivated and will give me key insight into how this experience is going for them.

WebQuest Research: A Webquest allows students to work at their own pace and learn more detailed information about a specific topic being studied and creates a greater sense of importance for that topic. I ask students to read an article anchoring the feelings of identity and determining values societies hold with an article and guided questions on the

Rocky Statue. They will also read articles on black resistance to Jim Crow and the taking down of racist monuments due to recent progressive activism. This exercise will provide the researched evidence to support thesis statements on continuity and change. In both exercises, students will be given one reputable website in order to begin their search as well as specific questions to answer in their notetaking doc. Finally, students will be asked to do their own search via monument audit and take guided notes on what they find to support a thesis claim.

Thesis Writing: Students need to learn how to write a thesis for college and also for the APUSH test administered through College Board. Students get a point on 2 of the 3 free responses sections of the test for making an argument relevant to the prompt that has at least two categories of analysis.

Classroom Activities

Lesson 1

Day One:

1. **DO NOW:** Remind students that one of the themes in APUSH is American Identity. Post APUSH standard: “Explain how and why Reconstruction resulted in continuity and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American”. Have students annotate the objective by underlining key words, circling key verbs, and write what questions may need to be answered to complete the key verbs. Share out results.

2. Have students write thoughts/connections/feelings about the quote from *Knowing the Past* on pg. 290, “our psyches continue to shape and direct our behavior” OR *Heritage as Cultural Process* page 48, “material culture as heritage is assumed to provide a physical representation and reality to the ephemeral and slippery concept of identity”, then Think-Pair-Share. The hope is that students will apply the KtP quote to address the continuity and change skill and the HaCP quote to the cultural identity theme.
3. Ground the Practice of Analyzing by providing a local example of identity. Read article and answer questions with Think Pair Share.
4. As a whole class, discuss: Why do we have a Rocky statue? What is meant to be valued when we see it? Was there political will to get it up? How “safe” is it there in terms of political will to keep it there?
5. Follow the slides: what was the “narrative” about American Identity in 1865 on? What historical evidence would you use to defend your answer? Who pushed it and why in the redemption? Public spaces used and standards have it put up.
6. Exit Ticket: “What is standing out to you so far?” “What have you learned?”
“What are you most proud of yourself for doing in this unit so far?”

Day Two:

1. DO NOW: Repost that one of the themes in APUSH is American Identity. Post APUSH standard: “Explain how and why Reconstruction resulted in continuity

- and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American” and ask students to pull out their annotations from yesterday.
2. Repost and analyze the quote *Heritage as Cultural Process* page 51 “experts are not simply a stakeholder group in the use of heritage. They often set the agendas”.
 3. Define the term narrative and tell students we will investigate how political will has shifted narratives over time. Have students pull out the narratives they came up with from yesterday’s class and incorporate the Compromise of 1877 history.
 4. Analyze the quotes from Lees article.
 5. Show students the Monument Audit tool and analyze the statue together using HIPP.
 6. Allow them to explore and take notes on the HIPP of other Confederate monuments around the country.
 7. Have students read the article and summarize what was done to combat these monuments.
 8. Exit Ticket: “What is standing out to you so far?” “What have you learned?”
“What are you most proud of yourself for doing in this unit so far?”

Materials: Notetaking Doc [Lecture](#) slides, [Article](#)

Timeline: 2 days

Objectives:

SWBAT explain how and why Reconstruction resulted in continuity and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American”

SWBAT explain that while facing increased violence, discrimination, and scientific theories about race, African American reformers continued to fight for political and social equality in the “New South” from 1877-1898.

Standards:

- District: see “Standards Addressed” in the appendix
- State: CC.8.5.11-12.I, CC.8.5.11-12.G, CC.8.6.11-12.B
- National: see “Standards Addressed” in the appendix

Evaluation: Notes will be checked for accuracy.

Lesson 2

Materials: Progressive Push for taking statues down Investigate how political will has shifted narratives over time.

Timeline: 3 days

Objectives: The 1970s saw growing clashes between conservatives and liberals over social and cultural issues, the power of the federal government, race, and movements for greater individual rights.

New demographic and social developments changed US culture and led to significant political and moral debates that sharply divided the nation between 1945-1980.

Standards:

- District: see “Standards Addressed” in the appendix
- State: CC.8.5.11-12.I, CC.8.5.11-12.G, CC.8.6.11-12.B, CC.8.5.11-12.D,
CC.8.5.11-12.J
- National: see “Standards Addressed” in the appendix

Evaluation: Thesis Statements, Exit Tickets

Step-by-Step

Day One

1. DO NOW: Remind students that one of the themes in APUSH is American Identity. Post APUSH standard: “Explain how and why Civil Rights and Social Justice work resulted in continuity and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American” Have students annotate the objective by underlining key words, circling key verbs, and write what questions may need to be answered to complete the key verbs. Share out results.
2. Have students write thoughts/connections/feelings about the quotes Heritage as a Cultural Process pg. 44 “most attempts at public or community inclusion excluded community groups become ‘invited’ to ‘learn’, ‘share’ or become ‘educated’ about authorized heritage values and meanings”, to eventually focusing on the

fact that we have always been a nation of diverse people who, despite systematic racism and lack of attention from academia for most of our history, has contributed to American culture, innovation and economic prosperity.

OR

page 49 in Heritage as a Cultural Process, “modernization erodes customs..individuals and communities are forced to re-articulate and recover..to affirm..to renegotiate a sense of habitus”.

OR

“So as not to become meat we must return the jaguar’s gaze”..To survive, Indigenous peoples develop a keen sense of how settlers and ruling elites see them, which can actually crystallize the development of so-called Indigenous identity” - Unsettling the Land, then Think-Pair-Share. The hope is that students will apply the quotes to address the continuity and change skill.

3. Read article on taking down Roosevelt statue and write a thesis statement to the prompt: Evaluate the extent that the statue’s removal was because of Teddy Roosevelt’s leadership.
4. Exit Ticket: “What is standing out to you so far?” “What have you learned?”
“What are you most proud of yourself for doing in this unit?”

Day Two and Three

1. <https://monumentlab.com/audit> research day
2. Watch video on how to use the interface

3. Have students use HIPP to take notes on monuments found using Monument [Audit](#) that will help them craft a thesis claim addressing the prompt: Evaluate the extent to which Civil Rights and Social Justice work of the 1970s to today has resulted in continuity or change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American”

Lesson 3

Materials: Socratic Seminar [Rubric](#) and Notes/Materials from Previous Lessons

Timeline: 1 day

Objectives: SWBAT systematically question and examine the issue of American ID and whether it changed or stayed the same over time, as well as articulate different points-of-view.

Standards:

- District - see “Standards Addressed” in the appendix
- State: CC.8.5.11-12.I, CC.8.5.11-12.C, CC.8.5.11-12.G, CC.8.6.11-12.B
- National - see “Standards Addressed” in the appendix

Evaluation: see Rubric

Step-by-Step

Day One

1. Socratic Seminar has desks in a circle

2. Have students take out all notes associated with the lessons and have the following questions posted to address, but let the students control the discussion.
 - a. Are “hearts on fire” significant? Why or why not?
 - b. What was the “narrative” about American Identity in 1865?
 - c. Explain how and why Reconstruction resulted in continuity and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American”
 - d. Why do you think the histories/efforts of non-dominant groups have not traditionally been highlighted?
 - e. “Explain how and why Civil Rights and Social Justice work resulted in continuity and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American”

Resources

Burow, P. B., Brock, S., & Dove, M. R. (2018). Unsettling the Land: Indigeneity, Ontology, and Hybridity in Settler Colonialism. *Environment and Society*, 9, 57–74.

This resource was used to pull quotes in the hope that students will apply the thoughts to address the continuity and change skill and to practice analyzing secondary sources with higher learning level vocabulary and syntax.

“Key Findings.” *National Monument Audit - Monument Lab*,
<https://monumentlab.com/audit>.

This site is a gold mine for finding literal monuments and why they were created. It is instrumental in helping students make the basis of their arguments on how much the US has changed its narrative about its identity or not.

Lees, William (2021). “The Problem with ‘Confederate Monuments’ on our Heritage Landscapes. *Social Science Quarterly* (1002-1015)

This source gives the history of why and how the “New South” tried to erase the contributions of the black community it shared space with, as well as how narratives change over time as political will is exercised.

Lowenthal, D. (2015) Knowing the Past. In *The Past is a Foreign Country-Revisited* (pp. 289-302)

This resource was used to pull quotes in the hope that students will apply the thoughts to address the continuity and change skill and to practice analyzing secondary sources with higher learning level vocabulary and syntax. In particular this quote is sweeping but applicable, so it was a good intro quote as it is short but profound.

Modest, Wayne (2012). "We have always been modern: Museums, Collections, and Modernity in the Caribbean" *Museum Anthropology* 35; 1: 85-96.

This quote was used to show a POV of indigenous while students are exposed to a very racist image in the Roosevelt statue. It is to help them hold in their mind, that though this monument is magnificent in a sense, it can also be criticized and therefore right sized next to other cultures.

New York Historical Society. (2022) "Black Citizenship in the Age of Jim Crow"

<https://blackcitizenship.nyhistory.org/challenging-jim-crow/>

This source is used to give historical evidence of concerted activism against the Jim Crow and Daughters of the Confederacy actions. It is used to prove these stories were known and yet intentionally downplayed in traditional history curriculums.

Smith, Laurajane. (2006) Heritage as a Cultural Process in *Uses of Heritage*. Routledge (pp 44-84).

This source is secondary but expert in the process of continuity or change. Students can apply these quotes to their analysis and historical arguments.

Appendix A - Standards Addressed

District Standard - The SD of Philadelphia, while adhering to PA Standards for Reading and Writing in History, also cites "social studies is meant to enhance students' understanding of their society and their world, with that enhanced understanding comes the seeking out of solutions to our society's issues."

PA Standard - CC.8.5.11-12.C - Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

PA Standard - CC.8.5.11-12.D - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).

PA Standard - CC.8.5.11-12.G - Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

PA Standard - CC.8.5.11-12.I - Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

PA Standard - CC.8.5.11-12.J - By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 11–CCR text complexity band independently and proficiently.

PA Standard - CC.8.6.11-12.B - Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

National Standard:

Content Topic 5.11: College Board (the national organization AP students will take their test with) requires students to “Explain how and why Reconstruction resulted in continuity and change in regional and national understandings of what it meant to be American”

Content Topic 6.3.II.C: Facing increased violence, discrimination, and scientific theories about race, African American reformers continued to fight for political and social equality in the “New South” from 1877-1898.

Content Topic KC 8.2.III.F: The 1970s saw growing clashes between conservatives and liberals over social and cultural issues, the power of the federal government, race, and movements for greater individual rights.

Content Topic KC 8.3.II: New demographic and social developments changed US culture and led to significant political and moral debates that sharply divided the nation between 1945-1980.

Content Topic KC 9.2.II: The US population continued to undergo demographic shifts that had significant cultural and political consequences.

- KC 9.2.II.C: Intense political and cultural debates continued over issues such as immigration policy, diversity, gender roles, and family structures.

Skill: Analyzing secondary sources. Students will be able to examine a secondary source and describe the author's argument, how well the author supports the argument with evidence, and how it relates to other historical interpretations.