

TITLE OF LESSON: The History of Postcards

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:

- How do the images chosen to be sent in communications reflect personal interpretations about important information about the current events of the time?
- Why do different forms of communication develop?

ASSESSMENT:

Student Brainstorm sheet and Graphic Organizer should be collected and examined for thoughtful responses. Participation evaluated with a group participation or [collaboration rubric](#).

SETTING THE PURPOSE:

Students will have a discussion about their knowledge of the styles of communication of the past and present. Students will then study the history of postcards to narrow in their focus on a specific type of communication, postcards. Students will then use this knowledge as a foundation to study archived postcards in an educated way.

DURATION: 2 class periods

PROCEDURE:

- Write on the board, overhead or white board: “Why do people communicate?” Discuss with the class the purpose of communication and how it is a necessary component of building community and culture.
- Distribute the [Communication Brainstorm](#) to students. This is a group brainstorm. Depending on the needs of your class, you can divide students into groups of 2, 3 or 4. Make sure one person is the recorder, one is the leader who keeps the conversation going by making sure each person answers, one person is the clock checker to make sure they are keeping paced, and one is the reporter to the whole group if you are using groups of 4. Groups that are smaller can adjust jobs accordingly.
- Explain the [Brainstorm sheet](#). Have students be as specific as possible (for example, instead of saying the style is electronic, list the different types: instant messaging, email, television, etc).
- After adequate discussion time is given (depending on the age and size of your class) pull together groups and gather a report from each. Record answers on the board, overhead, white board, etc, so students can record other groups’ answers if they didn’t think of something the others did.

PART 2

- Explain that for this project, you will be studying the history of postcards. You will be examining why they came about in the first place, and how they evolved in order to both compare that to the popular or preferred form of communication today-the email and to study how primary sources (straight from the source) can teach us about the history of the time.
- Have students visit <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Meadows/2487/pchistory.htm> A Brief History of Postcards by Stefano Neis (This one is nice because it has examples students can click on) and http://www.playle.com/IFPD/pc_history.html A Short History of the Postcard in the United States by John McClintock. If you cannot get access to the internet, you can also use the book History in Postcards: Champaign, Urbana, and the University of Illinois by Willis C. Baker and Patricia L. Miller. There is a brief history of postcards on pp. 1-3.
- Have students use [Graphic Organizer for History of Postcards](#) while reading the article. Students will fill in the cause and effect graphic organizer to make predictions and summations about why each age of the postcard evolved into the next. You may have students read in pairs to better brainstorm answers.
- Have a class discussion on the cause and effect findings from the readings. Again, make sure to record responses to that others can record answers they may have missed.
- Discuss the conclusion question. Explain to students that later in the unit they will be drawing comparing and drawing conclusions about why popular forms of communication have changed over the years.
- Next lesson preview-students will examine archived postcards and analyze these documents of history, as well as examine the different images put on postcards depending on the region where they were purchased or created.

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL PRIMARY SOURCES:

Teacher may see examples of Champaign Co. Postcards in the book History in Postcards: Champaign, Urbana, and the University of Illinois by Willis C. Baker and Patricia L. Miller. More in depth analysis will happen in future lessons.

TIES TO NATIONAL PRIMARY SOURCE OR SOURCES:

Students can look at historical examples of postcards as they read the history of postcards at

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Meadows/2487/pchistory.htm>

A Brief History of Postcards by Stefano Neis. More in depth analysis will happen in following lessons.

ANNOTATED LIST OF MATERIALS AND RESOURCES:

<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Meadows/2487/pchistory.htm>

A Brief History of Postcards by Stefano Neis.

http://www.playle.com/IFPD/pc_history.html A Short History of the Postcard in the United States by John McClintock.

History in Postcards: Champaign, Urbana, and the University of Illinois by Willis C. Baker and Patricia L. Miller.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Communication Brainstorm](#)

[Graphic Organizer for History of Postcards](#)

[collaboration rubric.](#)

TIES TO ILLINOIS STATE LEARNING STANDARDS, HABITS OF MIND, AND VITAL THEMES OF HISTORY