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A Lesson on The History Mystery by Kessid Vonderhaar

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours 30 minutes

Lesson Keywords: historical events/ explanatory writing/ mysteries/ making inferences ("reading between the lines")

Lesson Description: In this lesson, students will read a passage centered on the theme that history is like a mystery. The text introduces the concept of "reading between the lines" (making inferences) of historical events and becoming inquisitive. They will need to reference the text as they go through the vocabulary questions. Then, the discussion questions will introduce the topic of the final writing assignment. The final writing assignment will allow space for students to make text to text, text to self, and text to world connections.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1b: Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2b: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2c: Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1?3 above.)

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Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

The History Mystery

by

Content: I remember when I learned to like history. It was last year. My teacher, Mr. Brown, said, Take out your world history books and turn to page 3.

We did, and I was ready to be bored. But on that page was this poem. I was surprised, because I thought it would be a page full of lots of facts.

The ancient Egyptians were very clever.
They figured out how to use the lever.
They built pyramids with stones that weighed a lot.
Many workers dragged them to the right spot.
Why not use wheels? Were not certain.
History sometimes holds mysteries behind a time curtain.

Mr. Brown asked us, What do you think the poem means?

Darren raised his hand. He said, Maybe what the poem means is that it is hard to know exactly what happened a long time ago.

Great answer, Mr. Brown replied. Yes, the poet is saying history is a mystery. How many of you like mysteries?

Everyone said they did except Jerome. He doesn't like anything. He never even pays attention.

Let's read this book like a mystery book. It will tell you about some of the things that happened. Some of these things we don't know. For example, how do you think Abraham Lincoln felt when he was elected President?

He was happy, I replied. He won the election.

He was worried, Marcia said.

Why would he be worried? Mr. Brown asked.

Well, there were a lot of problems then, Marcia replied. I think he probably was worried about how to solve them.

That could be, Mr. Brown said. We might be able to find out if we read what Lincoln wrote in his letters and speeches, but we won't know what he said to people. Let's think about another mystery. The poet talks about pyramids. How do you think those workers felt?

Jerome said, I think they were very tired from doing all that hard work. He hadn't listened.

I said, I think they were very proud of what they did.

Mr. Brown said, Both of those answers are possible. We will never know for sure. When you read the history of any event, we never have all the information. So reading history is like reading a mystery. You need to think about what happened, why, and how people probably felt. That is called reading between the lines thinking about what the book didn't tell us.

From then on I liked history a lot. I like mysteries.

Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: lever **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The poem written in this passage says the Egyptians "figured out how to use the lever." They figured this out when they built pyramids with stones that "weighed a lot." Given these clues, what do you think a lever is?

- A: a valuable thing pirates tried to find
- B: an animal that could move large branches
- C: a tool used to make sure things are lined up straight
- D: a rigid bar used as a tool to carry heavy loads

Question: Which sentence below uses the word "lever" correctly?

- A: Johnny put the lever in the picnic basket so he could go fishing.
 - B: Johnny put the lever in his backpack for school.
 - C: Johnny asked his dad to buy a lever at the grocery store.
 - D: Johnny used the lever on his tractor to move the rocks at his job.
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Q: 2 WordPhrase: certain **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The last line of the poem in the passage says "Why not use wheels? We're not certain." What does certain mean?

- A: ready
- B: lonely
- C: excited
- D: sure

Question: Which one of these sentences below uses the word "certain" correctly?

- A: My sister was late for school and felt certain.
 - B: My mom was certain that the played started at 5.
 - C: My brother thinks my shirt is certain.
 - D: My uncle thinks eating seafood is certain.
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Q: 3 WordPhrase: elected **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: In the passage the teacher says, "How do you think Abraham Lincoln felt when he was elected President?" What does the word "elected" mean in this sentence?

- A: to be selected for a job by voting
- B: to vote
- C: to be hungry
- D: to be chosen to find treasure

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "elected" correctly?

- A: Jacob rudely elected Judy to pick up her toys.
 - B: Jose was elected by the teachers to help the new student.
 - C: Jonathan was tired and elected to go to bed.
 - D: Jessie bought the three shirts she elected.
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Q: 4 WordPhrase: proud **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author of the passage says, "I think they were very proud of what they did." He says this about the Egyptians. What does the word "proud" mean in this sentence

- A: grumpy
- B: happy about what they did
- C: selfish
- D: silly

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "proud" correctly?

- A: Adam was proud of his A+ grade in Math.
 - B: Alex was proud of his mom for making a mess in his room.
 - C: Ana was very tired and proud.
 - D: Anastasia had proud pets.
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Q: 5 WordPhrase: "reading between the lines" **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The teacher in the passage says thinking about historical events includes "reading between the lines." What

does "reading between the lines" mean in this sentence

A: using an LED light to read invisible text between the lines

B: using vocabulary from the text (lines) to guess what language historical people spoke

C: using information from the text (lines) to make an inference about information not included

D: using math to measure the distance between the lines of a text

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the phrase "reading between the lines" correctly?

A: Some poems need you to "read between the lines" to understand them.

B: I used my glasses to "read between the lines" in the recipe.

C: He "read between the lines" using an LED light.

D: He "read between the lines" because there was a secret note in-between the lines.

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Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - How do you think Abraham Lincoln felt when he was elected president and why?

History, according to our passage, will tell you about some of the things that happened. Some of these things we don't know. How do you think Abraham Lincoln felt when he was elected president and why?

2 - What resources and tools do historians use to find out what happened a long time ago?

Darren in the story says that, it is hard to know exactly what happened a long time ago. What resources and tools do historians use to find out what happened a long time ago?

3 - What is your favorite historical event that you have learned about?

This passage talks about how learning about history can be very interesting. What is your favorite historical event that you have learned about?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: The teacher in the passage says, When you read the history of any event, we never have all the information. Think of your favorite historical event. What do you wish you could know about this event or the people in the event? Think of two questions you wish you could answer about this event. Then, write down your educated guesses to the questions. Use at least four facts that you already knew about the event.

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