

Sample Lesson Plan for Fifth Grade

Level: Fifth Grade

This lesson is appropriate at the beginning of the year. Through this lesson, students will review basic geographic concepts and expand their reasons for studying history.

Goal: Social Studies Competency Goal 1: The learner will apply key geographic concepts to the United States and other countries of North America.

Objective 1.01: Describe the absolute and relative location of major landforms, bodies of water, and natural resources in the United States and other countries of North America.

Objective 1:06: Explain how people of the United States and other countries of North America adapt to, modify, and use their physical environment.

Goal: Social Studies Competency Goal 4: The learner will trace key developments in United States history and describe their impact on the land and people of the nation and its neighboring countries.

Objective 4.01: Define the role of an historian and explain the importance of studying history.

Materials: Maps to be projected on screen for all students to see: World map; Western Hemisphere map; North America outline map; North America map with divisions for Canada, United States, Mexico, and Central America; United States map with divisions for each state; North Carolina map with county divisions; Durham County map, and City of Durham map.

A sheet of notebook paper for each student

“History Beneath Our Feet” website projected for all students to see and/or use.

Procedure:

1. Tell students that this year for their social studies they will be “zooming in” before “zooming out.” Project the world map, and briefly review the major continents and major oceans.
2. “Zoom in” on the Western Hemisphere, and then North America.
3. “Zoom in” further, using the map of North America that has political divisions, and ask volunteers to point to the part of the map as each region is named: the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Central America. These areas will be studied this year in fifth grade.
4. Tell students that first we are going to “zoom in” even further. Show a map of the United States with divisions for each state, and have a student point out North Carolina, which was the basis of their social studies for fourth grade.
5. Tell them that we will “zoom in” again, and project a map of North Carolina with the divisions for counties. Have a student point out the area that is Durham County.
6. “Zoom in” again, now using a map of Durham County, with the area marked for Durham City. (The teacher might also mark other places of interest, such as the site of the school, the major neighborhoods that attend that specific school, etc.)
7. Now for the final “zoom”! Project a map of the city of Durham, and tell the students that their first history lesson will focus on Durham.
8. Ask the students to think of names of persons who are important to the history of Durham. Ask for volunteers to share the names.
9. Let your students know that there is an easy way to generate a list of possibilities----by first thinking of names of streets. Have students list names of streets in their neighborhoods, those they travel back and forth to school or activities, streets where their friends or relatives live. (You may also want to pass out maps of Durham, and let the students work in pairs or small groups to generate a list of street names.)
10. Ask your students to circle the names of any streets that sound like last names, like Mangum and Watts and Foster.
11. Tell students that cities often name streets, parks, schools, and buildings as a way to honor the work of specific persons. The names of these important Durhamites are all around us, often right beneath our feet.

12. In fact, there is a new website that focuses on this city of ours, “History Beneath Our Feet.” Go to the website, or if in a computer lab, have the students go to the website,
www.museumofdurhamhistory.org/beneathourfeet.
13. Introduce the headings of the websites: Home, To Student, To Teacher, About Us.
Ask your students to click on “To Student”, and one person could read the letter out loud.
14. There are three choices for the next step. To help the students to begin exploring, you might ask one-third of the class to click “Person”, one-third to click “Streets”, and one-third “Landmarks”.
15. Give students time to explore the website.
16. Then ask: Why study history---our family history, our city’s history, our state’s history, our country’s history, our world’s history? (Begin a list of reasons, and this question should be asked at multiple points during the year.)