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The following lessons were created by **Merrill Bell**, a teacher participating in the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute for Teachers entitled Touch the Past: Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi River Region.

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Introduction to World History Unit

Grade Level: High School

Subjects: World History

Objectives:

- (1) Students will be able to discuss and apply the various methods and disciplines historians use to reconstruct the past.
- (2) Students will understand how individuals create cultures and civilizations and the factors which influence their creation (environment, population pressures, etc.) and destruction.
- (3) Students will utilize the scientific method in historical analysis.

Essential Questions: How do we know what people did in the past? What is culture? How do people form cultures? What is the difference between culture and civilization? What is the difference between observation and inference? How do people use observations to support inferences? Why do cultures adapt and change?

Standards: North Carolina Essential Standard in World History 1: Apply the four interconnected dimensions of historical thinking (chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, and historical research) in order to understand the creation and development of societies/civilizations/nations over time.

Duration: Eight ninety minute class periods

Materials/Supplies: Projector, computers, internet access, PowerPoint, Prezi and/or Glogster software, five plastic bins each containing objects (artifacts) about a culture, worksheets, pencil, paper

Vocabulary: Anthropology, archaeology, artifact, culture, context, observation, inference, hypothesis, chronology, prehistory, adaptation, environment, civilization, subsistence, technology

Background: I will need to understand the scientific method, some anthropology, and historical methodology. NC Common Core Standards focuses on concepts, 21st Century Skills (technology and collaborative learning), and not lecturing, but preparing questions that invite the students to learn on their own. I will need to prepare brief PowerPoints and focus on activities that allow students to explore the relevant topics. I would also like to build in fifteen minutes of individual reading to each of my students' grade level, since many of them have literacy issues, in each ninety minute class. I will need to prepare the plastic bins with artifacts from each culture for the observation and inference class and have the appropriate worksheets available for each class. For the group experiences to be educationally valuable, each group member must have a specific task and understand his responsibilities to the group, and all members should be completing worksheets.

Setting the Stage: For most lessons, I will have a "Bellringer" that the student can answer with reference to his/her own life. For example, in the first lesson, when we are introducing the idea of how we know what people did in the past, I might ask students to write about their own families and ask them to write all the ways that they might discover information about themselves, about their parents, and about their grandparents.

Procedure: I will use this as the introductory unit in my world history class with students who have previously failed world history and require review of basic concepts in order to understand the themes we will be covering in future world history units.

Lesson 1: How Do We Know What People Did in the Past?

Bellringer: Tell me something that happened to you when you were two years old. How do you know about it? What are some of the ways you can learn about yourself, about your parents, about your grandparents?

Class Discussion about Bellringer

Brief PowerPoint on how we study what people did in the past (with demonstrations?)

Discussion of various methods used to research history and their reliability

Individual reading about various cultures throughout history, with attention to each person's functional reading level

Individual Group Discussion on what does it take to form a culture, using illustrations and/or pictures to spark discussion

Groups will report on their discussions to the class

Ticket out: Define culture in your own words

Lesson 2: Observation v Inference

Bellringer: Setting the Stage Activity on p. 14, *Intrigue of the Past*. Ask each student to write down at least three reasons why each student might be ill and ask them to write how their

reasons might be tested.

Class Discussion re: answers for Bellringer

Individually read abridged Sherlock Holmes mystery. Discuss in class how Holmes solves the mystery.

Brief PowerPoint on Scientific Method

As class, complete “Boy in the Water” Worksheet on pp. 16-7 of *Intrigue of the Past*.

Individually complete the worksheet about coins on p. 18. Go over in class and discuss answers.

In Groups, give students foreign coins and ask them to make a list of observations about these coins and a list of inferences about the country of origin.

Discuss reasons with class

Ticket out: What is the difference between an observation and an inference?

Lesson 3: Context

Bellringer: Choose 10 items from your house. What might an archaeologist be able to tell about your family’s lifestyle from these items?

Class Discussion of Bellringer

Group Activity: In groups of four, choose a location (supermarket, bathroom, stable, dry cleaners) and list five items from this place that an archaeologist might find one hundred years later on a piece of paper. Each group gives the paper to another group who guesses and writes down what location they think it is. Then each group tears off one of the items from the list and passes it on to another group, who decides which location the four items come from. Then another item is torn away. This continues until the original group receives their own paper back. Have the students discuss what answers they gave to each group’s items. The answers will probably be less accurate with fewer items, and the students should arrive at this conclusion. Then ask the students why this is so. This will set the stage for the idea of context. (p. 20, *Intrigue of the Past*)

PowerPoint: Aspects of Culture

Students form groups of four. Bring out individual bins with artifacts and pictures. Students make observations about artifacts and pictures and then make inferences about people who created them, their environment, and how they adapted to it. Complete Worksheet.

Each group reports to the class about their findings. Class gives feedback.

Ticket Out: In your own words, define context. Why is context important in historical analysis and interpretation?

Lesson 4: How Does the Environment Affect Humans? How Do Humans Affect the Environment

Bellringer: How does living in Durham, NC, affect you? What do you do in the winter months here? What do you do in the summer months? How might your activities change if you lived in Canada? In Mexico?

Play excerpt from Part I of Jared Diamond’s movie *Guns, Germs and Steel* about the Papua New Guinea inhabitants’ adaptation to their lifestyle.

Class Discussion on video regarding environmental adaptation

Group Project: Each group has webquest on specific environment/human interaction. Possible topics: Ancient southern Iraq, Native American setting fires, feudalism, Little Ice Age in Europe, Potatoes and its effect on European populations, Industrialization, etc.

Groups go to library, create Glogster poster. Poster should include information about original environment, human adaptation, human impact on environment, and timeline.

Lesson 5: Human/Environmental Impact Continued

Bellringer: Quiz on Information in Lessons 1-3

PowerPoint: Levels of Society and their Characteristics. During the PowerPoint, have the students make connections between the equality of members in smaller groups, labor specialization in larger societies, etc.

Go to library to have student groups complete projects on human/environmental interaction

Lesson 6: Design a Culture

Bellringer: What information surprised the group project? Why?

Class discussion of Bellringer

Group Presentations of Glogster Posters of human/environment interaction

Group Project Final: Design a Culture Project. Group should complete worksheet and it should reflect understanding from the previous lessons. Students will also create a poster, PowerPoint or Prezi on the various aspects of their culture.

Lessons 7 and 8: Group Project Final Continued

Last 45 minutes of Lesson 8, group worksheets turned into teacher and group presentations of culture

Closure: The Design a Culture Projects will pull together all aspects of what they have learned about the study of history, the scientific method, context, culture, human/environment interaction, and levels of society.

Evaluation: Tickets out, the quiz on the first three lessons, the human/environment interaction project and the Design a Culture Project will serve as evaluations of student comprehension of concepts. Additionally, I will be monitoring classroom comments and individual group discussion to check for gaps in understanding.

Links/Extension: This unit will form the basis of understanding for the other World History units. In every other unit, we will be discussing context, culture and clashes between cultures, human/environment interaction, and levels of society. This first unit is critical to the understanding of history and describes the important concepts to be discussed in future units.

References:

Intrigue of the Past; A Teacher's Activity Guide for Fourth through Seventh Grades by Shelley J. Smith, Jeanne M. Moe, Kelly A. Letts, and Danielle M. Paterson

Guns, Germs and Steel, Part 1, by Jared Diamond PBS video

Human Impact on Ancient Environments by Charles L. Redman

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center <http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac/Educators/PastCultures.htm>

James Theler, *Design a Culture* Worksheet