

Madison Historical

The Online Encyclopedia and Digital Archive
for Madison County, Illinois

Documenting Local History with Madison County Historical Encyclopedia & Archive

High School Social Studies

Mini-Unit / 3 classes

Description of Lesson:

This project is designed to fit into a three day, 50-minute, curriculum that engages students with Public History; it is a small sampling of the tasks historians who work in Public History perform. Students will learn how public historians determine and preserve local historical artifacts and oral histories by conducting their own oral histories or documenting artifacts of historical significance. One of the primary goals of this project is to have students critically think about their local history and how that history fits into a larger national narrative. In doing this, students will connect personally to history while learning higher level thinking skills about how that personal connection fits into larger narratives. And throughout this process, they will gain skills and exposure to the professional historical field and contribute to the going archive at Madison Historical.

Students can pick to bring an “artifact” to school to image/scan and create a description, or they will conduct an oral interview with a friend or relative at home, creating an oral history, after which they will transcribe their interview. Once these projects are complete, Madison Historical will publish them to its website archive, so your students can see their active contribution to the documentation of their local history, an essential part of recognizing their role in community building.

Madison Historical can send our research assistants to conduct this lesson for your students. Just contact us at madisonhistorical1812@gmail.com.

Lesson Plan

Essential Question:

How do we, as a society, decide what gets preserved for future generations?

What gives an artifact or oral history meaning and importance?

Illinois State Learning Standards:

SS.IS.4.9-12: Gather and evaluate information from multiple sources while considering the origin, credibility, point of view, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources.

SS.IS.8.9-12: Use interdisciplinary lenses to analyze the causes and effects of and identify solutions to local, regional, or global concerns.

Materials Used:

- Student-generated artifacts
 - Madison County Historical Encyclopedia & Archive
 - Projector
 - Ability to scan/photography/record artifact and oral history
 - Computers (ideally for each student or one computer for a group of three) for the Scavenger Hunt, transcriptions, and possibly the meta-data.
 - Worksheets and Handouts
 - ◆ Artifact Handout
 - ◆ Oral History Handout
 - ◆ Determining Historical Context Worksheet
 - ◆ Madison Historical Worksheet
 - ◆ Metadata Worksheet
 - ◆ Peer Editing Worksheet
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Students Will Be Able To:

- Understand and participate in the digital archiving process.
 - Analyze the historical significance of individual artifacts and oral histories.
 - Contextualize local histories into larger historical narratives
 - Conduct meaningful oral histories for preservation for the historical record
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Students Will Demonstrate These Skills By:

- Scanning objects, writing meta-data and conducting oral histories
 - Articulating and writing the importance of their artifact or oral history in the meta-data
 - Developing open-ended questions for oral histories that allow the interviewee to articulate and situate themselves in the local/national/global historical narrative.
 - Recording and transcribing their oral history.
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Day One: Introduction

Materials Used

- Projector
- Madison County Historical Encyclopedia & Archive
- Determining Historical Context worksheet
- Scavenger Hunt Worksheet
- Oral History and Artifact Handouts

Suggested Procedures:

Introduction:

1. Students will be introduced to the history and significance of [Madison Historical](#) and its applications through a visual overview of the website (to be seen on a projector).
2. Students will meet the historical team from Madison County Encyclopedia & Archive and be given a verbal summary of the project they will be engaging in over the next three days.
3. Students will complete the [Scavenger Hunt worksheet](#), in their groups, which investigates different facets of the Madison Historical website. Instructors will go over the answers for the worksheet utilizing a “call and response” methodology.

Class Activity: Historical Context

4. Students will be put in groups of three or four and asked four questions to answer as a group.
 - a. What does it mean to put history into context?
 - b. What do historians do?
 - c. What makes an object or oral history worth preservation?
 - d. How does historical preservation work and what does it look like? (This last question should lead into the idea museums and digital archiving)
5. “We do, You Do” to figure how to put an oral history or artifact into context
 - a. Madison Historical staff will pick an artifact from the website, and the students will be asked:
 - i. Who
 - ii. What
 - iii. When
 - iv. Where

- v. By using this information, can we determine why this artifact is important?
 - vi. Have the students come up with a “statement of context.” In doing this, the students will have contextualized the artifact and why it was worth preserving
- b. Hand out Determining Historical Context worksheet, one per group, and with a new artifact and have the groups of students repeat this process while Madison Historical staff walk around the room and provided help.

Class Activities: Artifact Documentation

- a. Students will be given the oral history and artifact directions and the staff will over what makes a good oral history and artifact.
- b. A great example of an artifact with metadata is:
 - ★ After students are shown the artifact, have students think-pair-share the following questions:
 - i. Ask students what a good / bad artifact is?
 - ii. What do you need with the artifact? (metadata)
 - iii. How does that artifact fit into the larger national narrative?
- c. A great example of an oral history with metadata and transcription is:
 - ★ After students listen to a clip, have the students think-pair-share the following questions:
 - i. What makes this a good/bad oral history?
 - ii. What do you need in order to conduct an oral history?
 - iii. How does this oral history fit into the larger national narrative?

Closure:

1. Explain to students that their artifacts and oral histories will be contributed to the Madison Historical website
2. Exit Ticket: Name, choice of project, why?
 - i. If students select artifact, they are to tell what the object/material is and bring it with them to the next class
 - ii. If students select oral history, they are to tell who they would be able to interview by Friday.
 - iii. Students should be able to justify why the artifact / oral history is relevant not only to Madison County, but also the national dialectic discourse of the Cold War.

Homework:

- Artifact: They must bring in an artifact by tomorrow, and a small researched paragraph behind why they chose the artifact and how it speaks to both a local/national narrative.
- Oral History: Bring in who you are going to interview, two questions you want to ask, contact information for that person/release form/recording device and headphones for the next class.

Day 2: Artifacts & Conducting Oral Histories Detail

Materials Used:

- Student generated artifacts
- Madison County Historical Encyclopedia & Archive
- Meta-Data worksheet
- Scanner
- Oral History and Artifact Handouts

Suggest Procedures:

Introduction/Do Now:

1. Using the software [Poll Everywhere](#) students will generate a word world of some of the things that they have learned from their research, the teacher will check that students have completed their homework; addressing any issues that might have occurred about the artifacts / oral history
2. Teachers will debrief with students about their answers, and then tell students to go to their respective “group” within the classroom based on their selection of the project.

Class Activities:

1. Students will be divided into two groups “Oral History Participants” / “Artifact Participants”
2. Once in their groups, students will follow the set of procedures that adheres to their respective group

➤ Oral History Participants:

1. Staff will ask students to write their two questions that they did for homework on the board.
2. Staff will pass out Oral History Handout that provides question construction guidelines.
3. Students will then rank the questions in order of how they should be asked in their own interviews
4. Students will then generate a master list of questions that will be asked at their interview. Staff should compile those questions with students into one google doc that can be shared for their interview or students can write them down in their note.
5. Students should then compile a small set of questions that they would like to ask each other about this project, as well as on the history of their town (3-4 questions maximum)
6. Students will then be paired off in teams to answer each other’s oral history questions. In this way, students can practice open-ended questions, allowing for time for the interviewee, and timing.

➤ **Artifact Participants:**

1. Staff will ask students to take out their artifacts they have brought into the classroom to have them scanned by the mobile scanning unit.
2. Before scanning, staff will go over with their students the importance of logging correct metadata information for each item scanned. Teachers should familiarize themselves with the worksheet prior to distribution, so that they may answer any questions that students may have.
3. Before scanning in their items, students must complete a metadata worksheet for the artifact.
4. Students should work with a partner in checking over the metadata worksheets before handing them in along with their artifact.

Closure:

1. Students will regroup as a class and answer the following question for the exit ticket:
“Top three things that you took away from today’s class in your groups.”

Homework:

1. **Oral history participants** must have the interview conducted by the next class meeting
2. **Artifact participants** must write a 250-500 word composition on the significance of their artifact’s history within the broader framework of American History, and in this way, they will contextualize the artifact. Students must use at least two outside sources for citation.

Day 3: Artifacts & Conducting Oral Histories Detail

Materials Used:

- Student generated artifacts
- Madison County Historical Encyclopedia & Archive
- Meta-Data worksheet
- Scanner
- Oral History and Artifact Handouts
- Peer Editing Worksheet

Suggested Procedures:

Do Now:

1. Staff will go over what is expected by the end of the day to wrap up the project and will check in with the class to see if there are any issues or questions.
2. Students will get into their designated groups based on their project choice (oral history/artifact group)

Class Activities:

➤ **Oral Histories:**

1. Students will have uploaded and transcribed their oral history onto a platform (i.e. Google Drive, etc.)
2. Students will swap their oral histories with another student so that they can be audit checked.
 - a. Students will listen to the oral histories that they are given and make sure that they are typed correctly as well as formatted and checked for spelling, structural, and any other errors within the interview.
3. Students will generate meta-data for the oral history that they have listened to, as well as provide a brief summary of the interview for the website.
4. Once completed, students will then ask each other (and record) about their favorite part of the process. (Oral interviews will then be uploaded and shared to the website) **[Optional]**

➤ **Artifact Participants:**

1. Students will have completed the homework assignment about their artifact. They are to take it out and place it on their desk.
2. Staff will collect the student's articles and then distribute for Peer Editing worksheet.
3. Teacher will go over the Peer Edit worksheet and ask any questions that the students may generate about the revision process.
4. Students will then receive another student's paper and edit the article for publication to the Madison Historical Website.
5. Once completed they will turn in the revised copies for teacher approval.

Closure:

1. Students will share with their classmates what they brought in / what their oral history was about and relate it back to the larger theme of their town's narrative within the national framework of history.
2. Exit Ticket: Students will be given an index card asked to write down what their favorite part of the project?