

NEBRASKA STORIES OF HUMANITY INQUIRY #4

CONSTRUCTING NARRATIVES FROM HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS

HOW CAN WE CONSTRUCT NEW NARRATIVES FROM HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS?

Standards and Practices	SS HS.4.2 (WLD) Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of history.		
	SS HS.4.5 (WLD) Apply the inquiry process to construct and answer historical questions.		
	LA.7.RI.7 Compare and contrast regional, national, and/or multicultural perspectives by explaining how an author or narrator/speaker introduces, illustrates, or describes characters or individuals, events, and ideas within and across informational texts.		
Assessment	NOTE: Instructors should create an assessment tool that aligns with the language of the standards and the learning outcomes included in the standards. For further considerations, please see the Hess Cognitive Rigor Matrix (Tool 4) for additional guidance.		
Staging the Question	Students will utilize various historical artifacts, stories, and primary sources to construct a narrative about an individual’s experiences from the Nebraska Stories of Humanity digital archive. The focus of this lesson is to ascertain that a person’s life is more multifaceted than traumatic events they might have experienced. Teachers should consider how to support students’ understanding that even seemingly small personal belongings can reveal the significance of an individual’s life in a broader historical context. Some documents and artifacts lack context or additional details, which may present a disappointment to students. These limitations are important for them to understand, as we are often unable to obtain a complete history for each person, demonstrating the critical nature of investigating artifacts and documenting personal stories.		
Supporting Question 1		Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3
How do individuals fit into timelines? What is a timeline?		What is a narrative and how is narrative utilized in telling a person’s story? What can clothing tell us about history?	In what ways do spatial relationships help us further a narrative? (Connections and arrangements between objects.)
Formative Performance Task		Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task
Utilize the USHMM Timeline Activity – The timeline will be up on a classroom wall for the duration of this lesson. Students will be able to see how people’s stories fit into a larger narrative of historical events.		Students complete a search of the Nebraska Stories of Humanity website with a focus on Clothing. Students identify connections and explain what individual clothing can tell them about historical situations.	Students will continue to utilize the Nebraska Stories of Humanity website to curate a grouping of ten artifacts that can tell a story about one or more individuals.

Featured Sources		Featured Sources		Featured Sources	
• USHMM Holocaust Timeline Activity • Slide Deck		• Narrative Worksheet • Clothing Worksheet • Slide Deck		• 10 Artifacts Worksheet • Slide Deck • StoryMaps Worksheet	
Summative Performance Task	Argument	A “StoryMap” activity will demonstrate the student’s learning about how to construct narratives in new ways. • Students should establish a theme or idea connecting the ten artifacts (consider the formulation of the idea as the pathway to the artifact connections). • Students should consider how spatial relationships strengthen the argument they are making with the artifacts they have curated. • Have students share with the class or larger forum. ○ What was meaningful to them in this process? StoryMap Directions			
	Extension	Extension activities can connect other historical events and their artifacts to the theme that students have chosen.			
Taking Informed Action	Students should discuss and reflect on the process of constructing narratives with their peers and broader community, if possible.				

***NOTE: Featured sources are suggested, and links are provided.**

We apologize in advance for any inconvenience should these links not function properly.

Please try [Search](#) in the NE Stories of Humanity or contact cdrh@unl.edu.

Overview of Inquiry

Throughout this inquiry, students will utilize various historical artifacts, stories, and primary sources to construct a narrative about an individual’s experiences from the [Nebraska Stories of Humanity](#) digital archive. The focus of this lesson is to ascertain that a person’s life is more multifaceted than traumatic events they might have experienced. Teachers should consider how to support students’ understanding that even seemingly small personal belongings can reveal the significance of an individual’s life in a broader historical context. Some documents and artifacts lack context or additional details, which may present a disappointment to students. These limitations are important for them to understand, as we are often unable to obtain a complete history for each person, demonstrating the critical nature of investigating artifacts and documenting personal stories.

- This inquiry can take **approximately one week of class time** to complete depending on scheduling.
- Use the attached [Slide Deck](#) and student worksheets to guide your class through this Inquiry.

Nebraska High School US History and Language Arts Standards (suggested)

- SS HS.4.2 (WLD) Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of history.
- SS HS.4.5 (WLD) Apply the inquiry process to construct and answer historical questions.
- LA.7.RI.7 Compare and contrast regional, national, and/or multicultural perspectives by explaining how an author or narrator/speaker introduces, illustrates, or describes characters or individuals, events, and ideas within and across informational texts.

Formative Performance Task 1

*HOW DO INDIVIDUALS FIT INTO TIMELINES?
WHAT IS A TIMELINE?*

Section 1 (~1-2 50 minute OR ~1 90 minute class periods)

- Using the USHMM Timeline Activity students will be able to see how people's stories fit into a larger narrative of historical events.

FEATURED SOURCES

- [Slide Deck](#)
 - [USHMM Holocaust Timeline Activity](#)
 - [Nebraska Individual Profile Cards](#) (option)
1. Utilize the [USHMM Timeline Activity](#) and the optional [Nebraska Individual Profile Cards](#). This activity helps students see how narratives are often constructed. Use the bolded year on the id cards as reference for placement on the timeline OR encourage students to choose what **they think** is a "significant" year in the person's story.
 2. Keep a hard copy of the timeline up on a classroom wall for the duration of this lesson.
 3. Include a discussion/activity at the end that highlights the importance and subjectivity of selecting a year that is thought to be "significant." Consider the following questions:
 - How do people determine what is significant?
 - What year might the individuals identify as significant? Why?
 - Consider your own life... How might someone else determine the most significant year of your life?
 - In what ways are these details important in telling our personal stories?

Formative Performance Task 2

*WHAT IS A NARRATIVE?
HOW IS NARRATIVE UTILIZED IN TELLING A PERSON'S STORY?
WHAT CAN CLOTHING TELL US ABOUT HISTORY?*

Section 2 (~3-4 50 minute OR ~2 90 minute class periods)

- Students will complete a "[search](#)" on the Nebraska Stories of Humanity website with a focus on Clothing items.
- Students will identify connections and explain what an individual's clothing item can tell them about historical situations.

FEATURED SOURCES

- [Narrative Worksheet](#)
- [Clothing Worksheet](#)
- [Slide Deck](#)

1. Utilize the [Slide Deck](#) and begin framing the questions:
 - *What is “narrative” and how is it utilized in telling a person’s experience?*
 - *How can we construct new narratives from artifacts?*
2. In the [Slide Deck](#), Slides #4 and Slide #5 to give students an opportunity to demonstrate previous knowledge and build upon vocabulary that will be important as they work through this inquiry.
 - Students can complete these tasks on the [Narrative Worksheet](#).
 - Full definitions found on Slide #6 – “Important Terms.”
3. Viewing
 - Utilize Slide #7 on the [Slide Deck](#) that accompanies the video segments of the [Yom Hashoah 2018 Commemoration](#) from the Nebraska Stories of Humanity website.
 - Timestamp 5:57 - Watch the introduction to contextualize the commemoration.
 - Timestamp 9:00 – Watch the introduction of the survivors and their testimonies.
 - As each survivor gives a brief testimony, have students complete the [Venn Diagram on the second page of the Narrative Worksheet](#).
 - After each group of three survivors have spoken and students have summarized comments, ask students to also draw connecting lines on their Venn Diagram showing points of overlap in the survivor testimonies.
 - Facilitate a discussion with these possible questions:
 - Why do you think the survivors shared what they shared?
 - Why do you think the survivors were only given three minutes to speak?
 - What might have been left out?
 - What commonalities did they share in their remarks?
 - Where did they diverge in their perspectives and experiences?
 - After completing the Venn Diagram
 - What additional information is shared through the narrative in the candle lighting?

****NOTE: Best practices suggest not to compare or evaluate personal experiences as being “worse” or “better” - their encounters are each unique. Hearing these differences help us understand the broader impact of events such as the Holocaust.***

4. Transition to the following question with Slide #8 on the [Slide Deck](#):
Now that we have witnessed some short testimonies, we will look at an individual physical artifact in the form of a piece of clothing.
 - *What can a piece of clothing tell us about a person’s story?*
 - Encourage students to consider, ask questions, and speculate about the coat on Slide #9 and all of the questions that accompany this slide.
 - Reveal Slide #10.
 - Share Slide #11. Using the [Clothing Worksheet](#) - the teacher should discuss the answers, highlight, and add to the points in the first box.

5. Give students time - potentially as homework or more of the next class period - to search the [Nebraska Stories of Humanity website](#) for clothing items and to explain how they feel these artifacts are connected. This activity is to familiarize students with the website and to help them thematically process how to tell an individual's story with limited materials.

****NOTE: Artifacts may or may not include as many details or context as Hanna Rosenberg's coat. This should be emphasized as a normal part of understanding history. Some questions simply do not have all the answers, and we can only observe that which exists. A seemingly minor artifact may offer a significant reason for documenting an individual's story.***

Formative Performance Task 3

IN WHAT WAYS DO SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS HELP US FURTHER A NARRATIVE? (CONNECTIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN OBJECTS OR ELEMENTS IN A PHYSICAL SPACE)

Section 3 (~2-3 50 minute OR ~1-2 90 minute class periods)

1. Go to Slides #12 - #14 on the [Slide Deck](#).
2. In this section, students will continue to utilize the Nebraska Stories of Humanity website to curate a grouping of ten artifacts to tell a story about one or more individuals.
3. Students should be given the [10 Artifacts Guide](#)
Guidelines:
 - Now that you have connected clothing items, identify a theme that you feel connects these separate artifacts and weave together a narrative in a unique way.
 - As you develop this theme, articulate why the artifacts are connected, and note, if possible, where they came from and/or ended up. This will be important as you consider creating a map to show just how far a person's story can "travel."

****NOTE: The goal of this activity is to prepare students to create a digital StoryMap. Having details and connections before working on the Nebraska Stories of Humanity website and the StoryMap website will be useful for students to see connections and unique modes to tell a person's story.***

4. The final activity is for the student to take their ten artifacts and put them into a [StoryMap](#).

****Note: [StoryMaps](#) may not be available to everyone; alternative tools (Google Slides, Prezi, etc.) can be used to construct these new narratives.***

5. Encourage students to "play" on the StoryMaps website as there is endless functionality with map options, picture options, and ways to present text that describes the artifacts. [Here are basic instructions on how to create and begin on the StoryMaps website.](#)
One the [Slide Deck](#)
 - See Slide #13 which demonstrates how to include artifacts as part of a journey.
 - See Slide #14 for further direction

Summative Performance Task

****NOTE: Remember to center your final questions around the compelling question of this inquiry —
AS A RESULT OF THIS PROCESS, HOW HAVE WE CONSTRUCTED NEW NARRATIVES FROM
HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS?***

The “StoryMap” activity will demonstrate the students learning about how to construct narratives in new ways. Go to Slide #15 on the [Slide Deck](#):

- Students should have a connecting theme or idea between the ten artifacts and articulate why the artifacts are connected.
- Students may also consider how spatial relationships strengthen the argument they are making with the artifacts they have curated.
- Depending on teacher preference, have students share either their reflection, new narrative, or a combination of the two with the class. Consider the following questions:
 - What did students find meaningful from this experience?
 - What feelings or thoughts arose as they created this new narrative?
 - What choices were made, what was left out and why? How did those choices feel?
 - How would someone do this about your own life?

Extension

Ambitious educators should consider entering the annual [esri National StoryMaps competition](#).

This lesson was created by Pete White, Ph.D., [Science Focus Program](#), pwhite@lps.org