

But What About Me?

Teaching Perspective in the Social Studies Classroom

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Grade Level	6th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	100 minutes
Subject	Social Studies	**Duration**	1-2 class period(s)
Course	Human Geography, Oklahoma History, U.S. Government, U.S. History, World History, World Human Geograp		

Essential Question

Whose "story" is this? Is history the story told by the "winners"?

Summary

This lesson explores the stories in history that are often forgotten. Frequently, textbooks include the "winners" of history, but the stories and perspectives of the "losers" of history are left out. Students will explore those stories in this lesson and look at all sides of history in an attempt to see the full story.

Snapshot

Engage

Students view a multi-perspective painting and complete an I Notice, I Wonder activity.

Explore

Students discuss the discovery of America and the associated historical narrative and brainstorm other situations.

Explain

Students read Jane Yolen's *Encounter* and compare the story with the Christopher Columbus narrative.

Extend

Students create a two-voice poem that showcases two perspectives using the previously brainstormed list.

Evaluate

Students submit their two-voice poem for evaluation using a detailed rubric.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices PK-12)

4B: Students will apply critical reading and thinking skills to interpret, evaluate, and respond to a variety of complex texts from historical, ethnic, and global perspectives.

Attachments

- Two-Voice Poem Rubric—But What About Me - Spanish.docx
- Two-Voice Poem Rubric—But What About Me - Spanish.pdf
- Two-Voice Poem Rubric—But What About Me.docx
- Two-Voice Poem Rubric—But What About Me.pdf
- Two-Voice Poem Template—But What About Me - Spanish.docx
- Two-Voice Poem Template—But What About Me - Spanish.pdf
- Two-Voice Poem Template—But What About Me.docx
- Two-Voice Poem Template—But What About Me.pdf

Materials

- Projector or interactive whiteboard
- Jane Yolen's book *Encounter*
- Jane Yolen's *Encounter* Read Aloud (optional)
- Two-Voice Poem Rubric
- Two-Voice Poem Template

Engage

As students walk into class, have this image posted on the interactive whiteboard or projector screen.

Teacher's Note: Standards Alignment

This lesson is aligned to only grade 8 standards. However, this lesson can be taught in grades 9–12 and re-aligned accordingly.

When students are seated, ask them to take out paper and pen/pencil to participate in an I Notice, I Wonder activity. Students will view the image while writing down their observations and questions about it.

When students have had enough time to complete the activity, have them share out their questions and observations. Then, begin a brief class discussion. Some starting questions could include:

- What image did you see first? A man, woman, and dog? Or an old man's profile?
- Could you see both?
- If someone saw one image first, does that make them right? What about someone who saw the other image first?
- What other parts of life (history, art, learning) does this affect?
- Has a friend ever retold a story of an event you two participated in? Was it different from your retelling? Why would it have been different?

Explore

After students have discussed the image, ask students about the discovery of America.

Some probing questions could include:

- Who discovered America?
- What happened upon this discovery?
- Was it a welcomed discovery?
- Have you only ever heard one story about the discovery of America?
- Do you think anyone's story has been ignored? Why or why not?

As a class, brainstorm other instances when someone's story might be ignored, either historically or personally. Leave this list on the board for the remainder of the lesson.

If students are having a difficult time coming up with ideas, ask students to review what they have learned so far in their textbooks. Have them ask the questions: Whose voices are not being heard in our textbooks? Whose history is not being told?

Teacher's Note: Brainstorming

These brainstorming ideas could be very specific or vague. Older students might consider voting, immigration, civil rights, World War I, and the Vietnam War. Younger students might consider local community members, teachers and students, animals, and siblings.

Explain

Teacher's Note: Novel Choice

There are many different books that use different perspectives to retell a well-known story. Feel free to use a different book in place of Jane Yolen's *Encounter* and modify the questions as needed to suit that book. For elementary and early middle school students, Jeannie Baker's *Mirror* may serve well. For high school social studies students, Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* could easily supplement this lesson with nonfiction text. Howard Zinn's work can be found online for free.

Before starting the book, ask students to think about their discussion over Columbus while reading, and try to identify to whom the story belongs. Then, begin reading the story as a class. If you do not have a copy of the book, you can access a read-aloud option here.

Embedded video

https://youtube.com/watch?v=NSRvWlCwlKU

Teacher's Note: Classroom Fun

Although reading a children's book to a group of older students may seem like a bad idea, older students generally enjoy a short story time when properly engaged in the lesson. Have fun with it and be sure to show them the pictures!

Extend

Once students have read *Encounter* together, have students refer back to the brainstormed list. Do they have any more ideas that they may want to add to the list? Can they identify other historical stories or events that may ignore someone else's perspectives? If so, add them.

When the list has been finalized, ask students to take out a piece of paper and pen/pencil. Each student will choose a subject from the group list and construct a Two-Voice Poem that incorporates two different perspectives from their chosen subject.

In order to allow students the opportunity for reflection on their work, consider providing them with a copy of the rubric to guide them as they write and self-evaluate.

Teacher's Note: Differentiation

If students are struggling to look at a story from another perspective, consider pairing students up to write a collaborative poem where each partner has a separate voice.

Evaluate

When students have completed their poems, they should be turned in to be evaluated according to the rubric.

Students could also turn in their observations and questions from the beginning of the lesson for a grade.

Resources

- Baker, J. (2010). *Mirror*. Candlewick.
- Blacksun Software. (n.d.). *Count the Faces*. Optical Illusion Pictures. http://www.blacksunsoftware.com/pics/illusion/fotito.jpg
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I notice, I wonder. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/180
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Two-voice poems. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/133
- Pepples, M. (2015, October 19). *Read Aloud of Encounter by Jane Yolen* [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NSRvWlCwlKU
- Yolen, J. (1992). *Encounter*. Harcourt.
- Zinn, H. (2003). *A People's History of the United States*. HarperCollins.