

TEACHING BURIED HISTORY

English Language Arts Lesson - HS Senior Level

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- ◆ How can we make inferences based on observation to tell the story of geographical spaces such as cemeteries in our community?
- ◆ What can we learn from these stories and what they tell us about the relationship between these spaces and the history of our community?
- ◆ What are the gaps in the story and how might we responsibly fill these gaps to tell a more complete story?

OVERVIEW:

- ◆ Students will explore 2 local cemeteries and collect data from grave markers.
- ◆ Students will write “the story” of each cemetery, grounding their stories in evidence and reasoned inferences.
- ◆ Students will compare the stories of the 2 cemeteries and make inferences about the relationship between the cemeteries and the story of the broader community.
- ◆ Students will analyze the gaps in the story and determine how one might responsibly attempt to respond to these gaps.

OBJECTIVES:

At the conclusion of this lesson students will be able to

- ◆ Engage in a writing process to tell the “story” of each cemetery.
- ◆ Craft a written response comparing the “story” of each cemetery with support from data and inferences.
- ◆ Evaluate additional areas for research that would be needed to support the accuracy of the historical account of each “story” and how they relate to the history of the broader community.



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (Missouri Learning Standards)

<p>R1C Interpret visual elements of a text and draw conclusions from them (when applicable).</p> <p>W1A Draw conclusions, infer, and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including where the text leaves matters uncertain.</p> <p>W1C Interpret visual elements of a text including those from different media and draw conclusions from them.</p>	<p>W2A Follow a writing process to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, style, and voice are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience; self-select and blend (when appropriate) previously learned narrative, expository, and argumentative writing techniques.</p> <p>SL1A Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.</p>
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MATERIALS:

For Students

- ◆ Why study a cemetery? What can we learn?
- ◆ Background materials on history of cemeteries
- ◆ Gravestone motif glossary
- ◆ Gravestone materials glossary
- ◆ How to draw conclusions

For Teachers

- ◆ Why study a cemetery? Annotated with illustrations
- ◆ Background materials on history of cemeteries: Annotated with illustrations
- ◆ Extra Resources and links
- ◆ Instructional video, materials, links on using GIS app and story maps



ACTIVITIES/PRODUCTS:

- ◆ Students will write the “story” of the cemeteries.
- ◆ Students will craft a written response comparing and making inferences about the cemeteries based on collected data.
- ◆ Students will craft a written response identifying the “missing pieces” of the story of the cemetery.

CLASS TIME/PERIODS REQUIRED:

One school day

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXTENSION:

- ◆ Research the history of visited cemeteries.
- ◆ Research the history of an individual or family interred at one of the visited cemeteries.
- ◆ Research a particular grave marker and write a poem mimicking the style of *Spoon River Anthology*.

LESSON OVERVIEW:

ONE

Teachers will assign partners and make sure students' have access to the technology.

TWO

Teachers will review the student material.

THREE

Students will travel to the first cemetery and disperse to collect and record data from grave markers.

FOUR

Students will travel to the second cemetery and disperse to collect and record data from grave markers.

FIVE

Students will convene and work in groups to view the data as a whole.

After analyzing the data, students will work in groups to respond to the following prompts:

1. As a group, write the "story" of the first cemetery.

A.

Based on the data, what is the beginning of the story of the cemetery?

How "old" is the cemetery?

How might this beginning shape the story?

Explain your reasoning.

B.

Based on the data, what are some of the important moments of the middle of the story?

When was the cemetery the "busiest"?

What historical events might account for this?

C.

Who is included in the story?

Who is not included?

What historical events might account for this?



2. Following the same process, write the “story” of the second cemetery.
3. Compare and contrast the two “stories”. What inferences can you make about the story of the wider community based on these similarities and differences?
4. Students will receive brief overviews of both visited cemeteries and compare the stories they created with the stories presented in the overviews.

Students will craft a written response to the questions:

5. What do these overviews tell us that you knew from the data? What do they tell us that you didn't know? Were your inferences correct? Why do you think your inferences were or were not accurate? What additional information would you need to verify the stories you created, or the overviews presented?

CLOSING QUESTIONS:

- ◆ What additional work would you need to do in order to accurately tell the story of these cemeteries?
- ◆ What do you think learning more about these sites could do to enhance your understanding of the history of our community?
- ◆ What additional data and information would you need to gather?
- ◆ Are you ready to do the work?

TEACHER NOTES: