

American Beginnings Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum Focus: U.S. History

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

Meet Kennewick Man, a 9,000-year-old skeleton that changed our view of prehistoric America. Discover why the Pilgrims really left Europe and what it was like to live in one of the earliest English settlements. Follow American colonists as they prepare to break from British rule. And examine the many influences that shaped the new nation's government.

- The Mystery of the First Americans (23 min.)
 - From the Old World to the New (4 min.)
 - Jamestown: The First Colony (4 min.)
 - The Truth About Plymouth Rock (8 min.)
 - A Nation Is Born (5 min.)
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Onscreen Questions

- How can new evidence shed light on established scientific beliefs?
 - What influenced the founders of American government?
 - Would the settlers of Jamestown and Plymouth have survived without Native Americans?
 - Why did colonists become upset about British taxes?
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Discuss how historians learn about the past.
- Analyze political cartoons from the Revolutionary period.
- Write a paragraph summarizing what each cartoon means.

Materials

- *American Beginnings* program
- Computer with Internet access

Procedures

1. Have students view “The Mystery of the First Americans” and “The Truth About Plymouth Rock” segments of the *American Beginnings* program.
2. Review the ways in which historians learn about the past. Ask students, What tools do historians use? Answers may include the following.
 - Physical remains, such as bones
 - Government documents, such as the Declaration of Independence
 - Eyewitness accounts, such as autobiographies
 - Historical documents, such as newspaper stories and illustrations
3. Explain that students are going to examine political cartoons from the time of the American Revolution. Working in pairs, they will analyze each of the following cartoons and then write a paragraph that explains its meaning.
 - *The Colonies Reduced*
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/6764/>
 - *The Repeal*
<http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/cartoon/stampact.html>
 - *Wise Men of Gotham and Their Goose*
<http://www.lclark.edu/~jhart/mezzo1775/mezzodated1776.html>
 - *Ben Franklin's Join, or Die.*
http://www.teachersparadise.com/ency/en/wikipedia/a/am/american_revolutionary_war.html
4. Give students time in class to analyze the cartoons and write their paragraphs. Have them consider the following questions as they work.
 - What is the central image in the cartoon?
 - Do you think this image is effective? Why or why not?
 - What clues in each cartoon help viewers understand its meaning?
 - Did you find some cartoons more effective than others? Why or why not?
5. As students explore the Web sites, they will notice commentary about each cartoon. To discourage them from depending on this commentary, explain that there are no “right” or “wrong” answers. Political cartoons like these are open to interpretation, and students should focus on their own ideas about what each cartoon mean.
6. During the next class, have students share their paragraphs and discuss their analyses. What do students think the cartoons mean? Is there consensus among students?
7. Conclude by discussing the ability of political cartoons to communicate ideas. Do students think these cartoons conveyed the relationship between Britain and her colonies more effectively than

could have been done with words? Do they believe political cartoons are useful communication tools today?

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were highly engaged in class and small-group discussions; analyzed the cartoons carefully and thoughtfully; produced an insightful paragraph about each one.
- 2 points: Students participated in class and small-group discussions; adequately analyzed the cartoons; produced a satisfactory paragraph about each one.
- 1 point: Students participated minimally in class and small-group discussions; did not complete their cartoon analysis or write a complete paragraph about each.

Vocabulary

American colonies

Definition: The thirteen separate land areas that joined together to form the original states of the United States

Context: Most people living in the American colonies survived by farming, although more and more members of the growing middle class were artisans and shopkeepers.

Great Britain

Definition: The mother country responsible for the administration of the American colonies

Context: One of the reasons that tensions grew between Great Britain and the American colonies was that Great Britain passed a series of laws designed to increase its control over the colonies and the amount of revenue it collected from them.

loyalist

Definition: The people living in the American colonies who supported the British point of view in the growing tensions between the two sides

Context: Many loyalists feared that a war between the colonies and Britain would be costly and could even lead to anarchy.

patriot

Definition: The people living in the American colonies who wanted to be free of British control

Context: Patriots such as Patrick Henry strongly believed that without freedom, America would be stifled by Great Britain and would not be able to grow and thrive.

political cartoon

Definition: The visual portrayal of an idea, often using symbols, caricature, and humor, to make a point or argue a particular point of view



Context: A use of a visual image, as is done in political cartoons, is often a powerful way to present a controversial point of view.

Revolutionary War period

Definition: The mid-1760s until the final peace treaty between America and Great Britain was signed in 1783

Context: During the Revolutionary War period, conflicts between Great Britain and the American Colonies escalated to the point where war was the only option; the fighting took place between 1775 and 1781.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- U.S. History: Era 3 – Understands the causes of the American Revolution, the ideas and interests involved in shaping the revolutionary movement, and reasons for the American victory
- Historical Understanding – Understands the historical perspective
- Language Arts: Viewing – Uses a range of strategies to interpret visual media

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

NCSS has developed national guidelines for teaching social studies. To become a member of NCSS, or to view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org>

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
- Power, Authority, and Governance

Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>

DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How to Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index – Here the video is divided into five segments (see below), indicated by video thumbnail icons. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. Brief descriptions and total running times are noted for each part. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. The Mystery of the First Americans (23 min.)

Examine the struggle over what might be the most significant artifact found in the United States, the prehistoric skeleton of Kennewick Man.

II. From the Old World to the New (4 min.)

See how the European colonies founded during the Age of Exploration brought ideas about republics and citizens' right to the Americas along with people.

III. Jamestown: The First Colony (4 min.)

Witness the establishment of the Jamestown colony, which many historians believe gave rise to American democracy.

IV. The Truth About Plymouth Rock (8 min.)

Visit the real Plymouth Rock to investigate the truth behind the widely known story of the Pilgrims' landing.

V. A Nation Is Born (5 min.)

Explore the causes of the American Revolution, a long, bloody battle that culminated in the birth of a new nation.

Curriculum Units**1. Discovery of a Skull**

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever seen an ancient artifact?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What did James Chatters determine during his first examination of the skull?

A: Upon first glance, forensic anthropologist James Chatters determined that the skull was in good condition and the bone was strong and sound; the skull appeared to be relatively young because of these characteristics. The long, narrow brain case, distinct brow, and pronounced nose caused Chatters to believe that the skull was European and not Native American.

2. Examining the Kennewick Man

Pre-viewing question

Q: What can scientists learn by studying a skeleton?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What did the skeleton tell forensic anthropologists about Kennewick Man?

A: Chatters was able to determine that Kennewick Man was indeed male by studying his pelvic bones. He then discovered that the skeleton was estimated to be about 45 years old. By measuring the femur and ball joint, Chatters was able to tell that the man had been about 5 feet 8 inches and weighed around 160 pounds. Kennewick Man's skeleton also showed that the man had led a very rough life and had incurred several injuries. A mysterious spear point lodged in the man's pelvis showed that he may have been a prehistoric person and not a 19th-century settler, as first believed.

3. Radiocarbon Dating

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you know about carbon 14 and radiocarbon dating?

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question

Q: Should James Chatters have been given more time to examine Kennewick Man?

A: Answers will vary.

4. Native American Rights: Science and the Law

Pre-viewing question

Q: Which is more important, preserving cultural traditions or advancing scientific knowledge?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What did the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act do?

A: This law granted Native Americans both legal and scientific rights to ancient skeletons found in the United States. Under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, Native American tribes can claim any skeleton over 500 years old as their ancestor.

5. Beating a Path to America

Pre-viewing question

Q: Compare and contrast some of the world's native populations.

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Who do you think were the first people to settle in the Americas?

A: Answers will vary.

6. Reconstructing Kennewick Man

Pre-viewing question

Q: What do you think the first settlers in the Americas looked like?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What were Kennewick Man's origins?

A: Answers will vary.

7. The Age of Exploration

Pre-viewing question

Q: How have other people's ideas influenced your life?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What role did the colonies play in mercantilism?

A: Colonies played an important role in the economic system known as mercantilism. They were a source of cheap raw materials and provided a market for goods made in a parent country, increasing its wealth.



8. Strangers in a New Land

Pre-viewing question

Q: How can you familiarize yourself with a new town or city?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What positive things did John Smith do for Jamestown?

A: John Smith was able to establish a trading system with local Native Americans by which settlers could trade for food and commodities. As president of Jamestown, Smith created a solid foundation for the colony by setting strict rules, strengthening the colony's defenses, and encouraging farming.

9. Viewing the Rock

Pre-viewing question

Q: How do you picture Plymouth Rock and its surrounding area?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: Are you disappointed in the appearance of Plymouth Rock?

A: Answers will vary.

10. Saints and Strangers: The Story of Plymouth Rock

Pre-viewing question

Q: Do you believe the story about Plymouth Rock is true?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How has Plymouth Rock changed over the years?

A: Plymouth Rock was initially moved from the beach as a way to inspire patriotism on the eve of the revolution. Over the years the rock was moved so many times that it actually began to break into pieces. As the rock became more and more famous, people began breaking off pieces of it as souvenirs and the rock now looks very little like it did originally.

11. Taxes and Protests

Pre-viewing question

Q: Have you ever protested something?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What happened at the Boston Tea Party?

A: The Boston Tea Party was a protest against the British tax on tea. Organized by a group of Americans called the Patriots, the protest took place on December 16, 1773. A band of rebels disguised as Mohawk Indians marched to the Boston Harbor on this night and dumped 342 chests of tea into the water in an act that became known as the Boston Tea Party.



12. Fighting for Independence

Pre-viewing question

Q: Are violence and war ever justified?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: If the British had won the Revolutionary War, how would the world be different today?

A: Answers will vary.

