



Assignment Discovery Lesson Plan Horsepower: Harnessed for War

Subject

World History

Grade level

6-8

Duration

One or two class periods

Materials

- Newsprint and markers
- Paper and pencils
- Computer with Internet access
- *Horsepower: Harnessed for War* video and VCR (optional)

Objectives

Students will

- brainstorm with the class about how technology influences the way wars are fought;
- research past soldiers to learn how their fighting styles were shaped by available technology; and
- develop profiles of three society's soldiers to see the evolution of fighting styles.

Procedures

1. Begin the lesson by asking students what they know about how wars are fought, writing their ideas on a sheet of newsprint. Ask: What kinds of weapons are used? In what ways do weapons determine battle plans and strategies? Don't be concerned if students have little to contribute. The point of this introductory activity is to prompt them to begin thinking about these issues.
2. Tell students that they will explore these questions by researching famous soldiers of the past. Then divide students into pairs, and have them research these groups of soldiers:
 - Vikings
 - Normans
 - Medieval knights

3. Make sure students consider these questions during their research:
 - What form of transportation did each group of soldiers use?
 - What weapons did each group use?
 - What strategies did each group use to fight battles?
 - How did each group try to ensure its personal safety?
 - What, if anything, do we know about how each group learned from those who came before them?
4. Give students time to conduct their research in class. Useful Web sites for each group are listed below. Students also may want to watch *Horsepower: Harnessed for War* as part of their research.

Vikings

<http://www.strangehorizons.com/2001/20010827/vikings.shtml>
<http://kidzlit.bravepages.com/Articles/vikings.html>
<http://www.runenews.com/mythology.shtml>
<http://www.runegame.com/myth.php?loc=Warfare>

Normans

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~chatsol/viking.htm>
http://members.tripod.com/~Battle_of_Hastings/Hastings.htm
<http://www.innish.btinternet.co.uk/History/AncientInnish.htm>

Medieval Knights

http://www.pbs.org/wnet/warriorchallenge/knights/profile_job.html
http://kevin.lps.org/Middle_ages/castles/weapons/knight.html
<http://www.cyberlearning-world.com/nhhs/compapps/workshop/medieval/knights.htm>
<http://historymedren.about.com/library/weekly/aa030598a.htm?once=true&>
<http://members.tripod.com/~hkcarms/knights.html>

5. Using what they've learned in their research, have the pairs write a profile for each group of soldiers. Remind them to address the questions in Step 3.
6. If time allows, give students an opportunity to share their work. Conclude the lesson by listing, as a class, what war technology was considered "state of the art" for the Vikings, for the Normans, and for the medieval knights. Ask students: How did available transportation and weapons shape the ways these soldiers fought wars? How did war technology affect the outcome of their wars?

Extensions

1. Have students research how wars have been fought in the past century. What technology is available to people today? How does current technology shape the way wars are fought? How does it determine a war's outcome?
2. Ask students to imagine that they were living during the time of the Vikings, Normans, or medieval knights. What would daily life be like? Would they like to live during that time frame? Why or why not?

Evaluation

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

3 points: Students researched the topic carefully and thoroughly; developed a creative and comprehensive summary of their research; actively participated in class discussions.

2 points: Students researched the topic; developed a competent summary of their research; participated somewhat in class discussions.

1 point: Students did not complete their research; developed a summary with gaps and misunderstandings; did not participate in class discussions.

Vocabulary

Battle of Hastings

Definition: Famous 1066 battle in which Norman ruler William the Conqueror defeated the English and established Norman rule in England

Context: The effective use of archers on the battlefield allowed William the Conqueror to defeat Harold of England at the Battle of Hastings.

code of chivalry

Definition: The rules a knight followed, which included fighting against evil and injustice and defending his church and his land with his life, if necessary

Context: Although knights were supposed to follow the code of chivalry, in reality many were cruel and ruthless and treated people from lower classes very harshly.

knight

Definition: Soldiers during the Middle Ages (1100-1300) who were equipped and trained to fight battles on horseback

Context: Knights went through a long training program, in which they first had to become a page, and then a squire, before they were knighted.

Normans

Definition: A group of people, descended from the Vikings, who first settled in France and eventually conquered England

Context: Over time, the Normans blended with the English and contributed a great deal to English literature and architecture.

Vikings

Definition: Norsemen soldiers that came from the countries known today as Norway, Denmark, and Sweden; the Vikings were known for raiding the coasts of Europe and exploring the world between 789 and 1100 A.D.

Context: Although once thought to be barbarians, the Vikings are now recognized as having a sophisticated culture and being expert navigators and sailors.

Academic Standards

This lesson plan addresses the following curriculum standards created by the National Council for the Social Studies:

- Culture
- Power, Authority, and Governance
- [Science, Technology, and Society](#)

- Global Connections

Credit

Marilyn Fenichel, education writer and editor