

Lowell Field Trips to create a sense of place
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Approaching Walden
Curriculum Unit

Class Description and Unit Goal: English as a Second Language Level Three
(Intermediate ESL) uses a variety of reading, writing and grammar texts. To pull these subject areas together the core text, High Point, Success in Language, Literature, Content is assigned. The goal of the enclosed unit is to use the textbook as a base connecting field trips to the class activities while enhancing a sense of place. It is important to note that students in this class are not from Lowell and now find themselves making their homes in the USA.

Section One: Creating and giving an interview

The first section of unit one introduces three poems of Gary Soto's and an interview with the poet. After reading this section of High point's unit one, we'll visit the Lowell Sun and have a staff member speak to us about how he/she develops interviews and articles for the newspaper. Upon returning to the classroom students will choose, among willing staff members, someone to interview. They will create interviews in small groups. Charged with tape recorders, interview questions, and pencils the students will then go out and tape-record their interviews. They will transcribe the interviews and then write a short essay explaining what the person's job is and skills needed for the job. The transcribed interview, paragraphs, and a picture of the staff member interviewed will be a graded written report. They will also give a graded oral presentation to the class.

Job titles within Lowell High School to choose from:

- Security Guards
- Secretaries
- Housemasters
- Librarians
- Technical Support Staff
- Schedulers
- Guidance Counselors
- Headmaster / Assistant Headmaster
- Instructional Specialists
- Cafeteria Staff
- Janitors

Section Two: Observing and creating monuments

The next High Point section is from a book, Talking Walls, by Margy Burns Knight. It describes three distinctly different walls, which serve as monuments to three distinctly different things. After reading about these we will take a walking tour of monuments to Lowell mill girls, Lowell factories, the artist, Whistler (born in Lowell), and the writer, Kerouac (a Lowell High graduate). After analyzing each different

monument each student will design his or her own monument. They will be asked to consider what is important in their own lives and chose something that is meaningful them to commemorate. They will then write a short essay explaining what they chose to memorialize and why. The essay will also explain how and with what materials they created their monument. They will give an oral presentation of their written work to the class.

Section Three: Creating a personal quilt and connection to Lowell

The last High Point section that I will include in my unit is the Keeping Quilt, by Patricia Polacco. It gives the history of a family quilt. Students will make personal quilts of four squares. One square will be for the student, one for their family, one for their hometown, and one for Lowell. They will be free to choose something of significance representing each topic to fit in each square. They will write a paragraph explaining each square and present their quilts to the class. After this we'll participate in a guided tour of the New England Quilt Museum to learn of other quilts with a story.

Unit Summary:

All of the field trips described are in downtown Lowell near the high school. These trips will give the students a common sense of place. Participating in formal school staff interviews will help students and staff become more familiar with each other in the school environment. Observing Lowell's monuments and learning what is important to the people of Lowell will help students gain an understanding of what is important to the people of Lowell. Creating their own personal monument will state something that is important to them. Allowing them to create a quilt about themselves encourages an expression of who they are. Looking at other quilts will encourage them to see others' stories. However, this unit only launches the school year and many more field trips will follow in search of each individual's place in the city of Lowell.

Example Lesson Plans:

Day before *Lowell Sun* trip

Objectives:

Students will:

1. distinguish what a human interest story is.
2. become curious as to how a writer develops a human-interest story.
3. develop questions to ask a writer.

Materials:

Recent *Lowell Sun* human interest story, notebooks, pencils, chalkboard, chalk

Procedure:

1. Written on the board as students enter: “What is a human-interest story?”
2. Students do a one-minute brainstorm of ideas in their notebooks.
3. Bring the group back together and discuss their written answers.
4. Have article by Lowell Sun staff writer ready to read.
5. Read together, then discuss why the story is of interest, but not crucial. What is the message of this interest story?
6. Brainstorm ways the author may have prepared the article. (research, interviews, outlining, mapping, proofreading, rewriting...)
7. Use ideas from the brainstorm to create questions to ask the writer for the day of the visit.

Follow-up:

Using what they learned from the visit with the writer students will develop questions for a Lowell High School staff member, interview them, and write an essay about them.

Day before Monument trip

Objectives:

Students will:

1. review “Talking Walls” story and look at what was commemorated by the artists in each mural or wall
2. discuss what different cultures celebrate through murals, walls and monuments
3. think about what you might want to commemorate
4. review monuments for the field trip

Materials:

High Point book, notebooks, pencils

Procedure:

1. Question on board as students enter: “What did people commemorate in the different walls in ‘Talking Walls?’ Do you know of murals, walls, or monuments in your country? What was commemorated?”
2. Students take two minutes to write answers in notebooks and then share thoughts with the class
3. Student’s answer in notebooks: “If you were to commemorate something in your life, what would it be? Why this particular object, person, feeling?”
4. Students brainstorm monuments in Lowell. What are they? What do they look like? What are they for? Share all answers on board.
5. Teacher explains the following statues, which we will visit.
 1. Lowell mill girls: 3 women joining hands in a circle.
Discuss significance of statue
 2. Whistler Bronze- the artist with a hat and a chest of butterflies- significance of statue
 3. Giant spool- outside factory- what the looms brought to the city during the industrial revolution.

4. Jack Kerouac's commemorative- excerpts of his writings on eight polished granite columns.

What does each statue commemorate? How is each commemorated?

Follow-up:

At the sights ask-

1. Why did the people use the mediums they chose?
2. What feelings do you get from the structure? Write reflectively of their observations in their journals. A few days following each student will design a mural or monument to commemorate something, someone that is important to them

Day of introduction to making one's quilt

Objectives:

Students will-

1. research quilts on line.
2. brainstorm and choose topics to use in their own quilts.

Materials:

High Point, computers, quilt making books, notebooks, and pencils

Procedure:

1. Discuss The Keeping Quilt: how the quilt came to be and how the quilt was used.
2. Using the computers students will go on line to find information about quilting traditions. At the same time other students will be looking in quilting books provided within the classroom.
3. After research time students will work individually to brainstorm the following lists:
 - Things important to know about me.
 - Things important to me about my family.
 - Memories of my hometown.
 - What I like about Lowell.

Follow-up:

Students will use their brainstormed lists to choose ideas for quilt making. Each student will create a quilt with four squares using one idea from each list in the square. Material will be provided by the teacher.

The above are only three lessons that will occur throughout a six-week unit.