

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT – 2009-2012

Lesson Title - Unchained Memories

Grade - 11

Length of class period – three 45 minute periods

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

What was life like for a slave during the mid- 1800's

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

Students will be able to understand the living conditions as a slave.

Students will be able to analyze materials from the time period.

Students will be able to develop a connection to the people being discussed.

Students will be able to differentiate between primary, secondary and tertiary sources.

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

1. HBO documentary *Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives* (study guide included.)
2. Student Guide to *Unchained Memories*
2. Transcripts of slave narratives

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

Pre-activity: students will be given a copy of the film guide that is meant to accompany the film so that they can familiarize themselves with it .There is a “Think about it question” at the end of the packet, students will be asked to answer for homework the night before viewing the film.

First 75 minutes of class: view the film *Unchained Memories: Readings from the Slave Narratives*

* The film is a collection of primary and secondary sources compiled together. During the later stages of the great depression FDR developed a program to provide jobs for writers, journalists, and columnist. They were dispatched all over the country looking for the surviving former slaves from the south. It was these individuals that transcribed and recorded the memories of the African Americans whom had been former slaves. These transcriptions and audio files were compiled and bound into volumes called the Slave Narratives which are housed in the Library of Congress.

HBO in association with the Library of Congress hired African American Actors of today to read from the slave narratives, and narrate the film. In the time between the readings of the narratives, there is the use of photos and explanations of the time.

PLEASE NOTE there is no rating on this film. However, there are graphic photos and the language of the narratives is at times harsh. The n word is used repeatedly in the narratives because they are read in the vernacular in which they were written. There are also some graphic descriptions of rapes that occurred.

During the film students will be asked NOT to do a worksheet or another assignment so that they are able to focus and connect with the stories being told.

Remaining 15 minutes of class: have students read selected excerpts from other slave narratives from the *Slave Narrative* collection from the Library of Congress. (Narratives can be found at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>.)

Homework: have student finish reading anything that was not completed in class. Additionally have students prepare talking point for a discussion for class the following day. Things that should be focused on are emotions during the film and reading the reading, how do the two different media compare to one another. Which source would they trust more to give an accurate account of life as a slave and why, general reactions to what they have seen and read about. General questions or comments

Day three: Discussion

This is meant to be a student facilitated discussion, with the homework questions being the primary focus. Discussions work differently in each class and should follow current classroom practices. It is the goal to have the students participate in a meaningful and thought provoking conversation with little interference from the teacher. It is in day three that the skills of critical thinking and communication take place.

How will you assess what student learned during this lesson?

Learning will be assessed by the worksheet they hand in before the film, the notes they take while preparing for discussion and their participation in the discussion. (For students who do not feel comfortable participating in large discussions they can turn their preparatory notes into a paper to be handed in.)

Connecticut Grade Level Expectations-

- 2.1 – Access and gather information from a variety of primary and secondary sources (maps, charts, graphs, images and print materials).
- 2.2 – Interpret information from a variety of primary and secondary sources (maps, charts, graphs, images and print materials).
- 2.4 – Demonstrate ability to participate in social studies discourse through informed discussion, debate and effective oral presentation.
- 3.1 – Use evidence to identify, analyze and evaluate historical interpretations.