**Group 3**

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**General Overview**

For this lesson, students will learn to comprehend the implicit subjectivity of history and literature by working with their own mobile devices to take pictures, share them with a partner, create a historical narrative or tale behind the shared photo, and participate in a collaborative discussion about historical interpretation. When sharing the photo with a partner, students will not disclose the photo’s history, context, or origin. The purpose of this lesson is for students to see, understand, analyze, and interpret an author’s point of view when looking at historical and literary artifacts. By sharing and compiling ideas about how such narratives vary by creator and receiver, students will ideally gain a clear illustration of Winston Churchill’s humorous historical bravado, “...history will be kind to me for I intend to write it.”

**Objectives**

**Common Core Standards**

**8.RL.6:** *Analyze the differences in the points of view of the audience or reader.*

**8.W.2:** *Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.*

**8.RIT.6:** *Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.*

**Essential Standards**

**8.H.1.2:** *Summarize the literal meaning of historical documents in order to establish context.*

**8.H.1.3:** *Use primary and secondary sources to interpret various historical perspectives.*

**8.H.1.4:** *Use historical inquiry to evaluate the validity of sources used to construct historical narratives (e.g. formulate historical questions, gather data from a variety of sources, evaluate and interpret data and support interpretations with historical evidence).*

**Lesson Plan Objectives**

Students will capture their own “historical” image and share it with a partner.

Students will then write a historical narrative of their partner’s image, share that narrative with their partner, and then participate in a class wide discussion exploring the nature of subjective and objective historical (or literary) interpretation.

**Targeted Audience, Materials, Time**

**Targeted Audience:** 8th Grade ELA and SS students.

**Materials:** Mobile phones with camera and ability to text, email, or share pictures, paper, pencil, question prompts, 3G service or wifi to share if needed.

**Time:** 2 days (1 to allow for pictures to be taken, 1 for in class).

**Instructional Steps**

1. Preface activity by providing students with a 24 hour window to take a picture of their choice via their mobile phones, saving said image for the next class period.
2. Encourage students to be creative, to move beyond the stationary obvious (e.g. no glass of water on the kitchen table, hairbrush on the nightstand, stop sign at the street corner). Explain to students that their image choice should capture a narrative, a non-specific narrative if possible. The more unique the photograph, the more interesting the project’s results.
3. The following class period pair students into twos whereby students exchange (via text message) their images; I would not sit student’s next to one another at the juncture for the temptation to *let on* might be too overwhelming, defeating the purpose of the project. Have the peer interpreter jot down his/her immediate reactions, ensuring that the photo’s owner provide no detail or origin of the image’s content.
4. Students are to compose a 2-3 paragraph *history* of their peer’s photograph during class time.
5. After the *peer history* is complete, pair students into *shared-phone* couplings. Have the image’s owner listen to the subjective history composed by his/her peer.
6. Have the image’s owner share the literal history of the photo.
7. Allow image creator and interpreter to share a laugh... hopefully!
8. Bring the attention of the class back to a whole-group format and explore the nature of subjective and objective historical (or literary) interpretation. Prompt with questions such as:
   1. On a scale of 1-10, how close was the interpreted history to its literal history?
   2. What might account for these discrepancies, large or small?
   3. What is the nature of the differences of interpretation, even when two individuals are looking at the same image?
   4. Do we bring our own histories to our interpretations?
   5. How might *history be interpretive*?
   6. How does this exercise support the *subjective* or *objective* nature of history?
   7. How should we *use* this newfound knowledge in our historical/literary studies?

**Assessment Piece**

For this lesson, we will assess the students’ understanding of the subjective nature of history. This will be done formatively during the discussion part of the lesson. What we will be looking for is whether or not students were able to effectively and sufficiently discuss what they learned from this lesson. We will also collect a summary from each student pairing after we have completed the discussion where each student discusses what takeaways they learned from the entire lesson. We will grade this summary as either complete or incomplete, with no specific letter grade.

**Reflective Summary**

Students had plenty of prior knowledge and application practice with mobile devices, so bringing them into the classroom was simple from a use-of-technology standpoint. Mobile devices, being so ubiquitous today, are perfect tools for classroom adaptation because there is virtually universal access by students with few limitations, which allows for the lesson to focus solely on content objectives. As often happens when working with adolescents and technology, there were concerns about proper usage and school-appropriate content, but since not only their grade but also that of a partner was dependent upon their participation, no issues arose. Students seemed engaged in the activity, and there was evidence that being able to use their own personal technology outside of the school setting enhanced their participation and their reflective and critical thinking skills during the activity. The technology made it personal and authentic, and it connected something students do often socially (taking and sharing pictures) with academic application and discussion.

Ultimately, student reception to the assignment’s directions superseded our expectations. After explaining that students return to the next class period with a creative, narrative photo, students exchanged images with their assigned partners via text messaging. Although the pre-exchange of phone numbers proved to be a forgotten spoke in the assignment’s wheel, after we sorted out this dilemma, the class was off and composing. Engaging in the activity more secretly than the project specs had anticipated, there left no doubt that the imagined historical narratives had no basis in the photo’s actual origins. Some of the images included the mundane --Dad asleep on sofa, apparent family dog standing alert in a backyard-- but others invited more adventurous peer interpretation --a close-up of a pair of hands wrapped around a steering wheel, the unidentifiable contents of a cistern. Regardless of shared image, the students seemed to enjoy and make effective use of their task. The collaborative pairs shared many a laugh at the historical direction their original images took on.

As a whole, the discussion was a vital part of the lesson plan. While the workload of the lesson is carried by student collaboration and interaction in the first part, the discussion served as a way for the teacher to formatively assess students to make sure the majority of them mastered the objectives. By comparing and contrasting “made up” histories with the literal history of images, students opened up conversations surrounding historical bias, author point of view, viewer interpretation, and subjectivity vs. objectivity. Students began to explore and discuss how personal interpretations and point of view play a large role in historical accounts and literary works. The teacher was able to generate a lot of discussion regarding Churchill’s quote, “...history will be kind to me for I intend to write it” as well as the just as famous quote “History is written by the victors.” At the end of the discussion, the teacher was satisfied with the outcomes of the lesson plan, and it was apparent that the majority of students understood the importance of historical subjectivity and objectivity when analyzing historical narratives, literature, and primary and secondary documents.

The formative assessment that we used for this lesson was a perfect tool for gauging students’ understanding of the subjective nature of history. Using formative assessments for this assignment was a great idea in hindsight. The students were able to discuss freely without the pressure of performing for a summative grade. We made sure that each student had an opportunity to discuss what they learned from the lesson, and every student seemed to make an effective connection that history is subjective and people can make their own histories. We also collected summaries at the completion of the lesson from every student. The teacher checked for completeness, and that allowed students to write freely, without the pressure of another grade. The teacher was able to assess how well the students made connections between writing their own historical accounts and historical subjectivity along with basic writing conventions.