

Bigotry is the disease of ignorance: How does Jeffersons relationship with the slave trade shape our perspectives?

General

Grade Level

High School

Author Info

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Type of Lesson

Document Analysis

Duration

60 minutes

Objectives

Overview

The aim of this lesson is to further problematize student's understanding of Jefferson through analysis of a range of written historical sources. By exploring Jefferson's own plantation at Monticello and the relationship he had with his slaves, students understanding will be challenged further. Through an analysis of different source, students will tackle a number of questions based around key ideas such as trustworthiness, usefulness and the cross-referencing of sources.

Prior Knowledge

This lesson is intended as the fifth in a series; by this stage students should have an understanding of Jefferson and his more positive attributes. Students will have also conducted an inquiry into life on Mulberry Row which will begin to challenge this interpretation. Students should also have an understanding of the slave trade in detail, specifically the role of the British Empire and the middle passage.

State Standards

English Key Stage Three History Standards

Key Concepts

Interpretation

Key Processes

Historical Enquiry

Using Evidence

Communicating about the past

Personal Learning and Thinking Skills

Effective Participators

Self-Managers

Independent Enquirers

Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Analyse primary source documents effectively.

Complete written answers to a high standard using both evidence and knowledge.

Peer-assess answers to source documents, giving both praise and constructive feedback.

Technology Connections/outcomes

This lesson links closely to the transatlantic slave trade; although intended as part of an investigation into Jefferson's life, this lesson could fit into an already established unit of study that focuses on plantation life, with Jefferson's Monticello as a case study.

Additional Learning Outcomes

Students will utilise their developed contextual knowledge and use this in conjunction with written evidence to answer complex source questions. Students will answer questions around issues such as trust, usefulness and cross-referencing. Finally, students will reflect on their own work through peer assessment.

Essential Questions

Key Question – ‘Bigotry is the disease of ignorance’: How does Jefferson’s relationship with the slave trade shape our perspectives?

Procedures

1. 10 min

As students are drawing on all of the knowledge they have learned throughout this lesson, it would be a purposeful start to ask students about their initial thoughts about Jefferson and how these have changed as their learning has developed. This could be a whole-class discussion or carried out through pairs to fours (where students begin in pairs discussing, then two pairs form a group of four there the discussion continues, allowing students to add new insights and ideas).

2. 10 min

Students use the sources in the attached PDF. Students should be encouraged to think carefully about incorporating the following three elements into their answer: 1. Ensure they use the language of the question (e.g. discuss *usefulness* in *usefulness* questions); 2. Use evidence from the source mentioned and 3. Link evidence to contextual knowledge not mentioned in the source. A modelled example of this would perhaps be a worthwhile step at this stage if the class has not met similar success criteria before.

3. 30 min

Students should work through the sources and questions on the attached PDF document. It would perhaps be an interesting idea to have students complete one of these under timed conditions, then move to the plenary (below) before carrying out the rest of the questions. This way, students will have a greater understanding of the skills the questions demand and have a greater sense of confidence in approaching the remainder of the activity.

Another method of approaching this could be to have students work in groups of three – the students each take one of the three skills and they need to contribute their piece to the answer. Moving through the questions, students then swap skills to get an insight into each of these.

4. 10 min

Selecting one question, the students should peer assess their work. To do this, they will be given three different coloured pencils. Each element of the answer will be assigned a colour and the students will colour in the appropriate parts of the answer they are assessing. By doing this, both students will be able to easily identify both the strengths and areas for improvement in their answers.

Related Assets

Handouts and Downloads

- [Who was the real Thomas Jefferson? – Unit of Study Overview](#)
- [Slave Relationships – Source Investigation](#)

Assessment

Homework

As this is intended as the last lesson of the unit, students could be given the assessment question to plan and prepare.

Assessment

Formative: students will peer assess parts of the work undertaken in the lesson, giving both a positive comment and constructive piece of feedback to help aid development. Teacher's reading of both the answer and these comments will help to build a greater understanding of the quality of work being produced and the level of student understanding around the approach to the task.

Summative: any or all of the questions could be targeted for grading/levelling.

Accommodations

Accommodations – Students with Special Needs

By Resource: it is important that all students are encouraged to attempt all questions, however, the sources can be modified to make the language simpler and more accessible for students that require this.

Accommodations – Advanced Learners

By Task: More-able students could be challenged to draw on other sources used in the teaching of the unit to add extra weight to the arguments they are completing their answers.

By outcome: More-able students should complete work to a high standard, demonstrating all of the aspects required in each answer. This key focus for gifted students should be around linking and connecting the source content and provenance with their developed contextual knowledge.