

Lesson Plan

Historic Children's Voices

American Antiquarian Society

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Subject: Reading Language Arts

Grade Level: Incarcerated adults studying General Education Development (GED) Adult Basic Education (ABE) English as a Second Language (ESL) and Commonwealth Secondary Diploma (CSD) representing multiple levels within each group.

Objective: To harness the impact of historical documents with the goal of developing, renewing, and energizing parent/child relationships and writing skills in general. Students will examine historical documents, analyze them in group discussions and utilize them as writing prompts.

Materials: Online resources from the collection of Historic Children's Voices website of the American Antiquarian Society

Day 1: Jokes & Riddles Jokes for a Million -

https://gigi.mwa.org/imagearchive/fileName/217783_0006.tif

Introduce the concept of writing jokes and riddles by sharing some common children's jokes and riddles. Example: "What's black and white and read all over" a newspaper "What lion never roars?" A dandelion. Explain "play on words, double meaning, etc.

Review together the booklet Jokes for the Million and explain why some jokes may not make sense; word usage and meaning changes over time.

Assignment: Write three riddles or jokes and send them to your children. Don't include the answers and use the jokes or riddles as phone conversation starters. Ask them to have some jokes or riddles ready for your next conversation.

Day 2: Newspapers self printed - Penfield Extra: Little Nellie's Little Paper

[-https://www.libraryweb.org/~digitized/newspapers/penfield_extra/Vol.III.pdf](https://www.libraryweb.org/~digitized/newspapers/penfield_extra/Vol.III.pdf)

Introduce the concept of self publishing newspapers and table top printers in the 1800s.

Share the account of Nellie Williams who, at 12 years old, took over her father's newspaper printing business when he went off to war.

Review the document together and compare and contrast the content as it relates to today's newspapers. Have the students work in groups to develop a prison newspaper. What kind of content is important? humor, self help, education, news, accomplishments, opinion pieces, faith topics, problem solving etc.

Assignment: Draft a design of a prison newspaper and explore who might help you to actually launch a prison newspaper. Prepare to share with the class and collaborate to develop a team that can bring a prison newspaper to fruition.

Day 3 Poetry - Newly Gathered Flowers -

<https://catalog.mwa.org/vwebv/search?searchArg=Bixon%2C%20Frank%20Printz%2C%20approximately%201870-1929.&searchCode=NAME%2B&searchType=4u>

Introduce different types of poetry, discuss why people write poetry and review the poem document, "Newly Gathered Flowers." Discuss several poems and explore vocabulary with which students may be unfamiliar. Make a class poem by starting one line and having each student add a line until all students have participated. Read the poem to the class demonstrating the simplicity of poem writing.

Assignment: Write a poem about your child and send it to them in the mail. In your next phone conversation discuss the poem and ask them to write one for you.

Day 4 Faith and Morality - "An Address Delivered Before the Hawes Juvenile Association for the Suppression of Profanity." -

<https://catalog.mwa.org/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=242257>

Ask students what they feel passionate about and about anything that they would be willing to make a sacrifice. Talk about values, beliefs and religious convictions and why people feel passionate about certain topics. Ask them about what they feel strongly. Review the document "An Address Delivered Before the Hawes Juvenile Association for the Suppression of Profanity." Analyze and discuss why the writer felt so passionate about his beliefs.

Assignment: Write an essay about something you feel very strongly. Take the main points of your essay and write a letter to your child, sharing why you believe what you believe about the topic.

Day 5 Fairytales - The Kings Daughter -

<https://catalog.mwa.org/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=216474>

Introduce fairytales by asking students to share the fairytales unique to their culture that they enjoyed growing up. Review the story of the The Kings Daughter and emphasize that it was written by an eight year old. Discuss what makes the story compelling. Students are seated at six tables. Generalize six fairytales so that each fairytale has 10 sentences and print them. Cut up the sentences and give 10 sentences to each table. Have them work together to correctly assemble the fairytale. Talk about sentence structure and context clues that helped students to correctly assemble the fairytale. Discuss how students knew the beginning and ending of the fairytale.

Assignment: Write a fairytale and send it to your child. Discuss it in your next phone conversation.