

Memorializing an American Tragedy

By: **Kali Alford**

Grade Level: High School

Content Area: Social Studies/ ELA

Standards: SSSocIC1, SSSocIC2, SSUSH16, SSUSH22,

Number of Lessons: Project completed over the course of 3 week unit

Brief Description of lesson/project: In memorializing an American tragedy, how do we represent multiple perspectives that may exist, and why is it important to do so? The aim of this project is to prompt students to consider the various dynamics of memorializing a national tragedy. Students will debate and form an opinion on the following questions:

- Is there a fair way to tell the whole story of a tragedy when multiple perspectives exist?
- What factors do historians consider when erecting a memorial to a tragedy?
- How do historians choose which perspectives of a tragedy to represent?
- In order to faithfully represent the nature of the tragedy, how does a historian balance his or her own passions with the consensus opinion that existed at the moment of the tragedy?

Methodology

1. Teacher will organize students in groups of 5-6 and assign each group a tragedy associated with a perceived minority group within America.
2. Students will then conduct research to gain a broader understanding of the event. While conducting research students will complete research guides to demonstrate evidence of understanding (see appendix).
3. Following the research, each group will identify and discuss the various perspectives that exist within the telling of their tragedy and decide which to include in their memorial exhibition.
4. As groups have outlined their plan, assigned roles and submitted documentation to teacher (see appendix), each student will be required to create a curator's journal (see appendix) that shows their analysis of 8 primary sources associated with the tragedy and 10 reflections that illustrate their thought process while completing the project.
5. With a broader understanding of the events and various perspective associated with their assigned tragedy, students will design and create a memorial to their assigned tragedy.
6. Each memorial will be created using an 18x36 fiberboard panel. The finished memorial cannot contain words other than the name of the event, the date of the event(s), and the location of the event.
7. Each memorial will be displayed during a class "museum walk." Teacher will display a historical context (see appendix) near each display for students who did not research the event(s).
8. During the walk students will leave post-it notes near each memorial asking a question about the group's approach to memorializing the tragedy.
9. Following the walk, each group will be given 10 minutes to present their memorial and answer the post-it questions.
10. Projects and journals will be evaluated using performance rubric.



More Info @ bit.ly/alfordlesson



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