

Silkworms Spinning Their Way into History

Purpose:

This lesson will give students a brief overview of how the domesticated insect, the silkworm, has impacted the history of China and other countries.

Target Grade Levels: 6th-8th grade

Essential Questions:

1. What are domesticated animals and why do humans domesticate them?
2. How does a domesticated animal (in this case the silkworm) become an important industrial resource?
3. What is the life cycle of the silkworm?
4. How did travel on the Silk Road spread information?

Rationale:

Students will learn how an important resource (the silkworm), figuring out how to use the resource (create silk), and trade helps to create history and increase trade.

Materials:

WebQuest

<http://www.kn.sbc.com/wired/fil/pages/websilkte.html>

Internet connection and computers

Paper, colored pencil, other supplies necessary for making posters and map for presentation

Activities:

Students will work in small groups (no more than 6 or 7 no fewer than 4) to solve the problem outlined in the webquest.

This unit is appropriate to do after students have had an introduction to the importance of travel and trade and their impact on cultures. They also should have some background on Ancient China.

It will probably take 1 to 2 class periods in the computer lab researching information, 1 or 2 class periods to prepare presentation, and a class period for presentations.

1. Go over the Introduction, Quest, Processes and Resources with the class already divided into groups. Using a projector and smartboard will work well. But if these resources are not available you can print out the website as a handout. Don't have the students on the computer yet, so that they have a better chance of hearing what you are saying.
2. Go over the rubric you will use to grade their projects so students are clear about the project requirements.
3. When students have chosen jobs for each member of their group they may start on their webquest.
4. I would suggest each group have a limit of pictures/maps that they may download.

5. Remind them to document where the pictures came from so they can give credit to the source.
6. Be sure that students are using the websites linked to in the webquest unless they have had considerable experience evaluating the merit of websites.

On presentation day be sure to review the rules of a good audience. Have everyone write down 1 question for each presentation and hand them to you. The teacher then chooses one or two questions for the group to answer.

Assessment:

Attached Rubric

Grade Adaptation:

In order to modify this lesson for lower grades:

- ♣ Work through the webquest together as a class using a projector to show the page to the entire class
- ♣ Have younger students do the life cycle and history of silkworms (these two areas are the most concrete)

In order to modify this lesson for higher grades:

- ♣ Have them find two other websites that contain information on their section and prove why they are acceptable resources.
- ♣ Have each individual write an essay answering the Quest question after all presentations

State Standards:

Social studies Standards (Grade 7)

History

Chronology

1. Group events by broadly defined historical eras and enter onto multiple-tier time lines.

Early Civilizations

2. Describe the enduring impact of early civilizations in India, China, Egypt, Greece and Rome after 1000 B.C. including: Scientific and cultural advancements;

People in Societies

Cultures

1. Analyze the relationships among cultural practices, products and perspectives of early civilizations.
2. Explain how the Silk Road trade and the Crusades affected the cultures of the people involved.

Geography

Location

1. For each of the societies studied, identify the location of significant physical and human characteristics on a map of the relevant region.

2. On a map, identify places related to the historical events being studied and explain their significance.

Economics

Markets

2. Describe the growth of cities and the establishment of trade routes in Asia, Africa and Europe; the products and inventions that traveled along these routes (e.g., spices, textiles, paper, precious metals and new crops); and the role of merchants.

Social Studies Skills and Methods

Problem Solving

3. Establish guidelines, rules and time lines for group work.
4. Reflect on the performance of a classroom group in which one has participated including the contribution of each member in reaching group goals.

Oral Presentation Rubric : Silkworms

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1	Total
Comprehension	Student is able to accurately answer almost all questions posed by classmates about the topic.	Student is able to accurately answer most questions posed by classmates about the topic.	Student is able to accurately answer a few questions posed by classmates about the topic.	Student is unable to accurately answer questions posed by classmates about the topic.	
Time-Limit	Presentation is 10 minutes long.	Presentation is 8-10 minutes long.	Presentation is 5-8 minutes long.	Presentation is less than 5 minutes OR more than 12 minutes.	score ___X 2=
Props	Student uses several props (including maps and poster) that show considerable work/creativity and which make the presentation better.	Student uses 1 prop that shows considerable work/creativity and which make the presentation better.	Student uses 1 prop which makes the presentation better.	The student uses no props OR the props chosen detract from the presentation.	score ___X 4=
Content	Shows a full understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.	score ___X 4=
Collaboration with Peers	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Does not cause "waves" in the group.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group but sometimes is not a good team member.	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others in the group. Often is not a good team member.	score ___X 2=
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	The student is somewhat prepared, but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.	

Posture and Eye Contact	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.	Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.	
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