

- Looking for a videoconference project?
- Looking for an exciting culmination to a history study unit?



Then, History Mystery is just the video conference project for you!

Description:



This project is designed for 4th/7th grade students studying Texas history. Through video conference technology, students are able to meet other students while learning about important people and events from Texas' rich past. Prior to the video conference each classroom will create a presentation with clues about their ONE mystery event. The other classrooms, using maps, the Internet, textbooks, and other resources, will try to discover the mystery location presented by each participating classrooms.

Choose: the mystery event, person, location, invention or activity.

Dates: May 10-14, 2010

Project Time: 8:30-10:30 AM and 1:00 - 3:00 PM sessions available M-F

Website:

<http://texashistorymystery.pbworks.com>

Visit the site for more details, preparation materials, handouts, and an agenda. This project is best for one classroom at a time.

Online Registration open now through Friday May 1, 2009.

Email Angela Conrad, angela.conrad@humble.k12.tx.us or call (281)641-8365

For Teachers: Curriculum and Planning Packet

Do Right Away

1. Choose one event, person, invention, location, or activity to present. Include this in your registration form.
2. Choose the date you'll connect. Visit <http://texashistorymystery.pbworks.com> to see the current list of classrooms and dates.

Prepare Your Classroom Presentation

Each classroom should plan a five to seven minute presentation. For more information on what it can include, visit the Media Tips page. Talk to your technology or distance learning coordinator to determine the possibilities available to you in your distance learning room. Your technology coordinator can help you gather the necessary equipment and will be helpful to you in preparing your presentation.

Your students' classroom presentation should answer a combination of mystery questions. In answering the questions you will help other classes figure out your mystery. Use the research web links to help you find the answers, as well as other print resources you have in your school.

When creating your presentation, please recognize the need to **clearly communicate the clues**. If you are making a creative presentation, please make sure to clearly indicate which clue is being given. You don't need to present the clues in order, however, please do the country clues together and the city clues together; as the worksheet is double sided. This will help the efficiency of taking notes. If your clues are not in order, please clearly indicate which clue is being addressed and which section. Give the other classes time to find the clue and write it down.

To clearly communicate clues, **we highly recommend visual cues** of the clues. This could be a PowerPoint presentation to accompany the clues; using the document camera to present the text of the clues; or using large signs that students hold up while presenting. Visual cues assist in getting the spelling correct, understanding when students mispronounce location names, and help those taking notes get accurate information. When using visual clues, be sure to leave them on the screen long enough to allow copying.

When working on your presentation, you may wish to divide the questions among the students in your classroom so that all students participate in the research and presentation preparation.

Introduction

In addition, prepare a short (a minute or so) introduction about your school and your geographical location. The introduction time will be used to check audio at each site as well as give an idea of who is connected.

Video Releases

The event may be taped by Humble ISD and/or TETN for improvement of the project, as well as illustrations to post on the web for next year's project. In addition, many schools tape the program they participate in. Because of this, please make sure the students who appear on camera have permission from their parents/guardian. (Some schools have a video/photograph release form built into their registration process.)

Media Tips for Your Presentation

Each classroom should plan a five to seven minute presentation about one mystery person, location or event. The presentation may include photos, graphics, video clips, etc. The media used for your presentation will often depend on the equipment available for your video conference. Talk to your distance learning coordinator or technology coordinator to find the best options for presentations at your location.

- You may use printouts on a document camera that includes photographs.
- Or if there is a computer connected to your video conferencing system you may choose to design a HyperStudio stack, PowerPoint presentation or even a web page! However, remember that long PowerPoints can be boring. The students want to see each other too. Use balance and judgment in your decision.
- If you have a VCR attached you may even want to video tape the clues to share with others.
- No matter what you decide to do be sure to use a large text size so the words can be seen by other participants.
- Please avoid taped presentations. One of the curriculum goals for this project is to give students practice in oral speaking in a live connection. In addition, taped presentations are difficult to understand and hear when sent over compressed video. It also is easier for students to answer questions about their presentation if their research is fresh in their mind.

More tips for visuals for your presentation:

- Change the visual or the focus often.
- Don't leave the audience looking at the document camera or PowerPoint for too long. Show the students or presenter again. People can feel distanced if they are just looking at visuals and not people.
- Practice the presentation with the visuals.
- Have a backup plan if you are using a computer presentation (such as print copies of the presentation).
- Use horizontal or landscape paper using the 4x5 ratio for TV.
- Use blue ink on a light colored paper for easy reading.
- For computer presentations use a dark background with light colored thick./bold font (yellow text on blue background is great). (Hint: assign your students to watch the news one evening and take notes on the colors used for text and text background. Are they readable? These are generally good colors to use!)
- Use large fonts such as 24 pt or higher.

- Leave a 1.5 or more border/margin around the edge of the document.
- Be careful of colors: avoid red/hot pink and green, avoid solid blocks of white, black or red.

Preparation for the Event

Divide your students into teams. Each team will be responsible for discovering one mystery presented by the other classrooms. The students will have 10-15 minutes after the completion of all presentations to match the classrooms with their corresponding mystery, using books, atlases, the Internet, etc.

Go over the agenda with students so that they understand the process for the day. If possible, take along a poster of the agenda to post in your distance learning room to help students keep on track during the day. Files of the agenda with the different start times are available on the agenda page online.

Have students practice the presentation. Time the presentation to make sure it is 7 minutes or less. Emphasize speaking slowly, loudly and clearly. The biggest issue with this project is audio. Remind students that everyone else is listening carefully to their presentation to take notes. The goal is to have the other students clearly hear the clues and be able to record the information. Communicating the clues understandably is crucial! If students are reading clues, have them read from note cards instead of paper. Rustling paper during a video conference can make it impossible to hear the clue.

Make sure students understand the process for asking one question of each classroom. After the half hour is up each team will be allowed to ask each classroom one question. Each school should come up with a question for all the other classrooms. The questions should be 'eliminating' questions. In other words if the students believe the town or city is this or that, they pose a question that eliminates one. The questions should be "yes or no" questions only! In addition, do not ask, "Is your country Canada?" as this type of question gives it away for the rest of the schools.

Revealing The Answer

Prepare a visual to reveal the answer to your presentation. If possible write down the name of the person or event to show on the document camera or with a big poster so that other schools can easily tell whether or not they got it correct. Be creative here if you want!

Materials to Bring

- Bring all materials needed for your presentation. Bring research notes in case another school has specific questions about your mystery.
- Copy the note taking form for each student in the class. (Suggestion: if you have each student takes notes on each presentation, if a team figures out a mystery quickly they can help another team.)

- Bring any print materials for students to use in their research such as:
 - Globes
 - Atlases
 - Textbooks (i.e. Geography, The World and Its People by Glencoe has "At a Glance" pages that are helpful.)
 - Almanacs
 - World Book Encyclopedia
 - Worldmark Encyclopedia of Nations
 - Worldmark Encyclopedia (set) of Lands and People
 - Road atlas for Canada and Mexico
 - Goode's World Atlas
 - Wall Maps
 - Reference books from the library
- If students have handheld computers, use FlingIt to get the CIA factbook information on the specific countries in the region. Pages are available on the website that are set up for FlingIt.
- If students have laptops, have them bookmark the Internet resources to be used during the research portion of the event (you might even have them make that the homepage for the day).

If desired, arrange for the use of computers/Internet connection during the half hour students use to guess the mystery location.

Questions to Answer in Your Presentation

If you prefer, you may add additional information to your presentation. Be sure to keep the presentation to 7 minutes or less.

Mystery Clues

No specific guidelines are given for dropping clues at this time, other than to give at least 3 clues during the presentation.

Videoconference Agenda (AM Session)

See the website for additional agendas for the other start times.

8:30-8:45 Introductions and Instructions

8:45-9:15 Classroom Presentations
(5-7 min. each for 3 presentations)

9:15-9:35 The Quest: Searching for answers
(All sites mute.)

9:35-9:55 Question and Answers
This section will be tightly moderated.
Classroom A answers all questions.
Classroom B answers all questions.
Classroom C answers all questions.
Classroom D answers all questions.

9:55-10:05 Classroom teams 'reevaluate' their answers.

10:05-10:15 Each classroom presents their guesses.

10:15-10:30 Correct mystery locations revealed.

10:30 Congratulations and sign-off.

Videoconference Agenda (PM Session)

See the website for additional agendas for the other start times.

- 1:00-1:15 Introductions and Instructions
- 1:15-1:45 Classroom Presentations
(5-7 min. each for 3 presentations)
- 1:45-2:05 The Quest: Searching for answers
(All sites mute.)
- 2:05-2:25 Question and Answers
This section will be tightly moderated.
Classroom A answers all questions.
Classroom B answers all questions.
Classroom C answers all questions.
Classroom D answers all questions.
- 2:25-2:30 Classroom teams 'reevaluate' their answers.
- 2:30-2:40 Each classroom presents their guesses.
- 2:40-2:55 Correct mystery locations revealed.
- 2:55-3:00 Congratulations and sign-off.

Note Taking Worksheet

Student Names _____

Notes about Team # _____



Clue #1 _____

Clue #2 _____

Clue #3 _____

Clue #4 _____

MI Curriculum Connections: Middle School

Social Studies

Strand II: Geographic Perspective

Content Standard 1: All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of places, cultures, and settlements. (People, Places and Cultures)

1. Locate and describe the diverse places, cultures, and communities of major world regions.
2. Describe and compare characteristics of major world cultures including language, religion, belief systems, gender roles, and traditions.
3. Explain why people live and work as they do in different regions.

Content Standard 2: All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of ecosystems, resources, human adaptation, environmental impact, and the interrelationships among them. (Human/Environment Interaction)

1. Explain the importance of different kinds of ecosystems to people.
2. Locate, describe, and compare the ecosystems, resources, and human environment interactions of major world regions.
3. Locate major ecosystems, describe their characteristics, and explain the process that created them.

Content Standard 3: All students will describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of economic activities, trade, political activities, migration, information flow, and the interrelationships among them. (Location, Movement and Connections)

1. Locate and describe major economic activities and occupations of major world regions and explain the reasons for their locations.
2. Explain how governments have divided land and sea areas into different regions.
3. Describe the major economic and political connections between the United States and different world regions and explain their causes and consequences.

Content Standard 4: All students will describe and compare characteristics of ecosystems, states, regions, countries, major world regions, and patterns and explain the processes that created them. (Regions, Patterns and Processes)

2. Locate and describe major cultural, economic, political and environmental features of Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia and North and South America and the processes that created them.
4. Compare major world regions with respect to cultures, economy, governmental systems, environment, and communications.

Strand IV: Economic Perspective

Content Standard 5: All students will describe how trade generates economic development and interdependence and analyze the resulting challenges and benefits for individuals, producers, and government. (Trade)

1. Identify the current and potential contributions of national and world regions to trade.

Strand V: Inquiry

Content Standard 1: All students will acquire information from books, maps, newspapers, data sets and other sources, organize and present the information in maps, graphs, charts and timelines, interpret the meaning and significance of information, and use a variety of electronic technologies to assist in accessing and managing information. (Information Processing)

1. Locate and interpret information about the natural environments and cultures of countries using a variety of primary and secondary sources and electronic technologies, including computers and telecommunications where appropriate.
3. Interpret social science information about the natural environment and cultures of countries from a variety of primary and secondary sources.

Content Standard 2: All students will conduct investigations by formulating a clear statement of a question, gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources, analyzing and interpreting information, formulating and testing hypotheses, reporting results both orally and in writing, and making use of appropriate technology. (Conducting Investigations)

1. Pose a social science question about a culture, world region, or international problem.
2. Gather and analyze information using appropriate information technologies to answer the question posed.

Language Arts

Content Standard 3: All students will focus on meaning and communication as they listen, speak, view, read, and write in personal, social, occupational, and civic contexts.

1. Integrate listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing skills for multiple purposes and in varied contexts. An example is using all the language arts to prepare and present a unit project on career exploration.
3. Read and write fluently, speak confidently, listen and interact appropriately, view critically, and represent creatively. Examples include reporting formally to an audience, debating issues, and interviewing members of the public.

Content Standard 6: All students will learn to communicate information accurately and effectively and demonstrate their expressive abilities by creating oral, written, and visual texts that enlighten and engage an audience.

2. Demonstrate their ability to use different voices in oral and written communication to persuade, inform, entertain, and inspire their audiences.
4. Document and enhance a developing voice through multiple media. Examples include reflections for their portfolios, audio and video tapes, and submissions for publications.

Content Standard 10: All students will apply knowledge, ideas, and issues drawn from texts to their lives and the lives of others.

2. Perform the daily functions of a literate individual. Examples include acquiring information from multiple sources and then evaluating, organizing, and communicating it in various contexts.

Content Standard 11: All students will define and investigate important issues and problems using a variety of resources, including technology, to explore and create texts.

2. Explain and use resources that are most appropriate and readily available for investigating a particular question or topic. Examples include knowledgeable people, field trips, tables of contents, indexes, glossaries, icons/headings, hypertext, storage addresses, CDROM/ laser disks, electronic mail, and library catalogue databases.
3. Organize, analyze, and synthesize information to draw conclusions and implications based on their investigation of an issue or problem.

Technology

Content Standard 2: All students will use technologies to input, retrieve, organize, manipulate, evaluate, and communicate information.

1. Demonstrate skill using technologies to prepare, evaluate and synthesize information collected and stored (voice, data, video, graphics, etc).
3. Retrieve, communicate and input information using a technological system (voice, data, video, graphics, etc).
4. Evaluate information received through technologies.

Content Standard 3: All students will apply appropriate technologies to critical thinking, creative expression, and decision making skills.

2. Use technologies as tools for creative expression and communication of ideas (voice, data, video, graphics, etc).
4. Use technologies to organize thoughts in a logical process (voice, data, video, graphics, etc).