Comparing Author’s Text of 19th and 21st Century Legislation and Re-Writing the Bill in their own Words

Lesson Overview

Overview: After a discussion on the legislative process for drafting and approving legislation, students will receive a copy of two bills focusing on education. The first bill is a U.S. House of Representatives Bill from 1870; the second is a Senate Bill from 2011. The students will analyze two documents guided by a Written Document Analysis form. From there, students will do a comparison of the language and style of the bill and provide a written analysis that compares and contrasts the style of writing of the two authors. Students will then be asked to incorporate key ideas from the two documents and rewrite the two bills in their own words that will lead to passage.

Grade Range: 6-8

Objective: After completing the lessons in this unit, students will be able to:
- Understand author’s style when creating a bill for State or Federal Law.
- Compare and contrast author’s style of writing and point of view.
- Develop knowledge of key components required for federal legislation.
- Understand how the writing of a bill is important for the passage of a bill.

Time Required: Two class periods of 45 minutes

Discipline/Subject: Social Studies

Topic/Subject: Government, Law

Era: Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1877

Standards

Illinois Learning Standards:
Common Core Standards for Language Arts and Literacy History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Studies
Reading Standards for Informational Text 6–12, Grade 7
2. Determine two or more central ideas in a text and analyze their development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.
3. Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events).
4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
9. Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts.

Materials

Handouts: LOC Items

Analysis Tools: Written Document Analysis

Library of Congress Items:
Title of Source: House Bill 1326
Creator of Source: 41st Congress
Date of Creation: February 25, 1870
URL of Source: http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llhb&fileName=041/llhb041.db&recNum=4577

Comparing Author’s Text of 19th and 21st Century Legislation and Re-Writing the Bills in their own Words.
Title of Source: Senate Bill 280
Creator of Source: 112th Congress
Date of Creation: February 3, 2011
URL of Source: http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c112:S.280:

Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedure Step #</th>
<th>Resource or Material Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Teacher will discuss the process legislator’s use when creating a bill. Teacher will explain the writing style and author style. Also how political affiliations can affect the different styles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Students will receive a copy of H.R. 1326 and S. 280 (Bill S.280 is available in pdf from link in materials)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Teacher will re-teach the procedures for using a Written Document Analysis. Then students will receive two copies of the Written Document Analysis.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Students will be given 15 minutes to read through the two bills.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Once the class has read through the bills they will be placed into groups of three (class of 26, each student will be numbered off 1-8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Each group will be given 5 minutes to discuss the Written Document Analysis for the two bills, then individually complete the Written Document Analysis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Individual students write a two paragraph grammatically correct essay, describing how the documents are similar and how they are different. Students will address the author’s “style” as discussed earlier in class. (Writing style associated with politically affiliations and geographical affiliations). Students will be given 10 minutes to complete the essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Students must turn in the essay before the end of the class period. Essay will be evaluated using a teacher-created points-based rubric.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Students will move back into their previous groups of 3. Student groups will draft their own copy of a bill using content from the two documents read in class. The bill will be written in language that would be understood and passed by current 7th grade in Illinois. Students will be given 15 minutes to draft bill and appoint a representative to eventually present the bill to the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Presentations will be given on Day 2 of lesson plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Groups will present using their group representative appointed in the previous class day. Groups will be given 4-5 minutes for their presentation of the group-created bill.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Groups will use peer-evaluations to assess group member’s work. Teacher will use a points-based rubric to grade group presentation as well as using the peer evaluations in the rubric.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation

Informal: Peer evaluations used to group work. Group creation of the bill used for participation credit.

Formal: Points-based rubric to evaluate the essay with the Written Document Analysis. Rubric will incorporate grammar, correct assessment of author’s writing style, proper use of the Written Document Analysis. Points-based rubric to evaluate the group presentation. Rubric will incorporate peer evaluation, participation of group to create bill, preparedness, and group recognition of time (4-5 minute presentation).

Extension

An extension for this activity would be to invite State Senator Kyle McCarter to present to the seventh grade class discussing how a bill becomes a law in the state of Illinois and how the author of the bill’s writing style and political philosophies and beliefs are incorporated within the bill.

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Comparing Author’s Text of 19th and 21st Century Legislation and Re-Writing the Bills in their own Words.
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H. R. 1326.

41st CONGRESS,
3d Session.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

FEBRUARY 25, 1870.

Read twice, referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and ordered to be printed.

MARCH 30, 1870.

Reported back by Mr. Hoar with amendments, ordered to be printed, and the further consideration postponed to the second Tuesday of December next, after the morning hour.

DECEMBER 13, 1870.

The further consideration postponed to the third Tuesday in January next, after the morning hour, and made a special order from day to day until disposed of.

A BILL

To establish a system of national education.

Whereas the Constitution of the United States, as recently amended more completely to carry into effect the great principles for which it was ordained, has recognized the right of large numbers of the people, heretofore excluded, to take part in the government, by whose votes the most important and vital public questions may be determined; and whereas the education of all the citizens, so as to fit them, as far as possible, for an intelligent participation in public affairs, becomes, therefore, an object of national interest and concern, and indispensable to the general welfare; and whereas an adequate provision for the education of the people is one of the first and most important duties of government: Therefore,

1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
That there shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, within and for each State, a State superintendent of national schools, who shall receive a salary of three thousand dollars per annum, and who shall hold office for the term of four years from the date of his appointment, unless sooner removed by the President.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That the State superintendent shall divide his State into as many divisions of convenient size as the number of Representatives in Congress to which said State is entitled, which divisions shall be the same as the districts into which said State shall be divided for the choice of representatives, unless for special reasons it shall seem advisable otherwise to divide the State. The Secretary of the Interior shall appoint for each of said divisions a division inspector of national schools, who shall reside within said division, and who shall hold his office until removed by the Secretary of the Interior, and who shall receive a salary of two thousand dollars per annum.

Sec. 3. And be it further enacted, That said divisions shall be divided by the State superintendent into school districts of convenient size, having reference to the number of children dwelling therein, and their convenience in attending school. The Secretary of the Interior shall appoint some suitable person to be local superintendent of national schools within each school district. The compensation of said local
superintendents shall be fixed by the Secretary of the Interior by such general regulations as he shall prescribe. But no local superintendent shall receive more than at the rate of three dollars per day for the time he is actually employed in the duties of his office. The divisions and districts shall be distinguished by such numbers or other names as the Secretary of the Interior shall prescribe. Whenever, in the opinion of the State superintendent, any portion of the territory embraced within any division is so sparsely settled that it is impracticable to establish permanent schools therein, such portion of territory need not be included in any school district.

Sec. 4. And be it further enacted, That such number of schools shall be kept in each district as the State superintendent shall direct: Provided, That there shall be opportunity afforded to every child dwelling therein between the ages of six and eighteen to attend school for at least six months in each year, subject to such regulations and restrictions as shall be necessary for the discipline of the schools.

Sec. 5. And be it further enacted, That it shall be the duty of every local superintendent to select the place for the school-house within his district, which he shall purchase or hire in the name of the United States. No contract for such purchase or hire shall be concluded without the written approval of the State superintendent. In case no suitable place can be obtained with the consent of the owner, the
division inspector may appropriate a tract for such purpose by filing a description of the same, by metes and bounds, in the clerk's office of the district court of the United States wherein the same is situated, together with an estimate of the damages caused to any person by taking the same, which appropriation and estimate shall be first approved by the State superintendent and shall then be recorded by said clerk in a book to be kept for that purpose. From the date of said filing, the title of said tract of land shall vest in the United States. Said division inspector shall cause notice to be given of said appropriation and estimate to all persons known to be interested in the tract appropriated, and shall also cause a copy of said notice to be posted upon said tract within thirty days from the filing of said appropriation, and estimate as aforesaid. Any person interested in said estate, aggrieved by the estimate of his damages, may apply by petition to the district court wherein said land is situated, setting forth a description of the land and the fact that he is so aggrieved; and the judge of said court shall thereupon cause due notice to be given by the petitioner to the State superintendent; and if it shall appear to said court that the petitioner is interested in the land so taken, it shall appoint three disinterested and discreet men to be commissioners to revise the estimate of the damages occasioned to the petitioner as aforesaid, the report of whom,
or the majority of whom, returned into said court and accepted thereby, shall be final and conclusive between the parties to the matter of said damages. The court may, for good cause shown, set aside the report of said commissioners, and recommit the matter to them, or to new commissioners, at its discretion.

Sec. 6. *And be it further enacted*, That the school-books to be used in all the national schools shall be such as are prescribed by the said superintendent, under the direction of the Commissioner of Education. They shall be furnished by the State superintendent to the division inspector, and by the latter to the local superintendent, for the children within his district, and by him distributed to them at cost: *Provided*, That if any child is unable to pay the cost of the books needed and used by it the same shall be furnished gratuitously.

Sec. 7. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be the duty of the local superintendent to provide for the care and protection and repairing of the school-houses, and to procure fuel therefor, where necessary. If it shall be necessary to erect a school-house in any district, the local superintendent shall contract for the same, the contract therefor to receive the approbation of the State superintendent before it shall be binding.
Sec. 8. And be it further enacted, That the local superintendent shall select and contract with a teacher or teachers for the schools within his district, at a rate and for a period of time to be approved by the State superintendent.

Sec. 9. And be it further enacted, That the Commissioner of Education shall prescribe forms of register of the attendance, conduct, age, and other particulars respecting the pupils in each school, and shall furnish blanks for the same. The same shall be kept by the teachers in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Commissioner and shall be returned to the State superintendent. The State superintendent shall make abstracts of said returns and return them annually to the Commissioner of Education, at such time as the latter shall prescribe, and shall also make a report stating the condition and means of education in his State, with such suggestions as shall seem to him important. In the performance of all the duties provided by this act, the local superintendent shall be subject to the directions of the division inspector, the division inspector to those of the State superintendent, and the State superintendent shall be subject to the directions of the Commissioner of Education.

Sec. 10. And be it further enacted, That no books shall be used in any of the national schools, nor shall any instruction be given therein, calculated to favor the particular tenets of any religious sect.
Sec. 11. And be it further enacted, That it shall be
the duty of all instructors of youth to exert their best
devote to impress on the minds of children and youth
committed to their care and instruction, the principles of piety
and justice, and a sacred regard for truth, love of their
country, of liberty, humanity, and universal benevolence,
sobriety, industry and frugality, chastity, moderation, and
temperance, and those other virtues which are the ornaments
of human society and the bases upon which a republican
constitution is founded; and it shall be the duty of such
instructors to endeavor to lead their pupils, as their ages and
capacities will admit, into a clear understanding of the ten-
dency of the above-named virtues, to preserve and perfect a
republican constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty, as
well as to promote their future happiness, and also to point
out to them the evil tendency of the opposite vices.

Sec. 12. And be it further enacted, That it shall be the
duty of the division inspector to visit as often as once a year
each school in his district, to keep himself informed, as far as
may be, of the condition of the schools therein, and exercise
a general care and oversight of the same, and to make report
of the condition of all schools within his division annually to
the State superintendent.

Sec. 13. And be it further enacted, That the Com-
mmissioner of Education shall annually report to Congress the
condition of the national schools in each State, together with
such suggestions concerning the same as he shall deem im-
portant. He shall also, from time to time, prescribe such
rules as he shall think fit for the government of the State and
local superintendents and division inspectors in accomplishing
the purpose of this act.

Sec. 14. And be it further enacted, That the Secretary
of the Treasury shall prescribe such rules, in conformity to
law, as shall in his judgment be necessary to provide for the
payment of teachers, for land, school-houses, and other objects
herein provided for; and may require such vouchers from any
of the officers herein provided for as may be necessary to
insure security in the application of moneys so paid.

Sec. 15 And be it further enacted, That a direct tax
of fifty millions of dollars is hereby laid upon the United
States, and the same shall be apportioned among the States,
respectively, in the manner following.

Sec. 16. And be it further enacted, That said tax shall
be assessed and collected in the mode prescribed for the col-
lection of the direct tax in the forty-fifth chapter of the acts
of the first session of the thirty-seventh Congress and the acts
in addition thereto: Provided, That the assessors and collect-
ors who are now, or may hereafter be, charged by law with
the duty of assessing or collecting the internal revenue shal
assess and collect the tax herein provided, and the collection
9 districts for the assessment and collection of the direct tax shall be the same as are now, or may hereafter be, estab-
lished for the assessment and collection of said revenue. The dwelling-house and lot of land on which the same stands, constituting the homestead of any house-holder having a family, and actually owned by him or her, shall be exempted from such tax to the value of one thousand dollars.

Sec. 17. And be it further enacted, That all sums of money assessed and raised in each State by virtue of this act shall be expended therein for the purposes of education, as in this act declared.

Sec. 18. And be it further enacted, That any State may lawfully assume, collect, assess, and pay into the treasury of the United States, the direct tax, or its quota thereof, imposed by this act upon such State, according to the provisions of said forty-fifth chapter of the acts of the first session of the thirty-seventh Congress.

Sec. 19. And be it further enacted, That this act shall take effect on the first day of July, eighteen hundred and seventy-one. Any State may, at its election, in lieu of the tax provided for by this act, provide for all the children within its borders, between the ages of six and eighteen years, suitable instruction in reading, writing, orthography, arithmetic, geography, and the history of the United States.

If any State shall, before said last-named day, by a resolve

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of its legislature, approved by the governor, engage to make
such provision, and shall notify the President of the United
States thereof, all future proceedings for appointing the officers
provided for herein, or for the assessment or collection of the
aforesaid tax within such State, shall be suspended for twelve
months from said date. If, at the expiration of said twelve
months, it shall be proved to the satisfaction of the Pres-
ident of the United States that there is established in said
State a system of common schools which provides reasonably
for all the children therein who dwell where the population is
sufficiently dense to enable schools to be maintained, suita-
ble instruction in the aforesaid branches, no further steps
shall be taken for the appointment of officers or the assess-
ment of the tax therein; otherwise, he shall proceed to cause
said tax to be assessed and said schools to be established
within such State forthwith thereafter.
**WRITTEN DOCUMENT ANALYSIS**

### First Look

Type of Document (Check):
- [ ] Newspaper
- [ ] Map
- [ ] Report
- [ ] Congressional Record
- [ ] Letter
- [ ] Telegram
- [ ] Memorandum
- [ ] Census Report
- [ ] Patent
- [ ] Press Release
- [ ] Advertisement
- [ ] Other

Unique Physical Characteristics of the Document (check one or more):
- [ ] Interesting Letterhead
- [ ] Typed
- [ ] Notations
- [ ] Seals
- [ ] Received stamp
- [ ] Other

Date(s) of the Document;

Author (or Creator) of the Document:

Position (Title):

For what audience was the document written?

### Document Content Information

List three phrases or statements that caught your attention or you think are important.

1.

2.

3.

Why do you think this document was written?

What in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.

Why do you think this document was saved?

Was the document meant to be viewed by the public or a specific person or group?

List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written.

1.

2.

Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document.

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