

Lesson Title: *Spoon River Anthology* Material Culture Phase

Lesson Type: 50 minute lecture

NCSS themes:

THEME TWO -- Time, Continuity, and Change:

...assist learners to understand that historical knowledge and the concept of time are socially influenced constructions that lead historians to be selective in the questions they seek to answer and the evidence they use;

...have learners apply key concepts from the study of history such as time, chronology, causality, change, conflict, and complexity to explain, analyze, and show connections among the patterns of historical change and continuity;

...provide learners with opportunities to investigate, interpret, and analyze multiple historical and contemporary viewpoints within and across cultures related to important events, recurring dilemmas, and persistent issues, while employing empathy, skepticism, and critical judgment;

THEME THREE -- People, Places, and Environment:

...challenge learners to examine, interpret, and analyze the interactions of human beings and their physical environments;

...challenge learners to consider, compare, and evaluate existing alternative uses of resources and land in communities, regions, nations, and the world;

THEME FIVE -- Individuals, Groups and Institutions:

...help learners understand the concepts of role, status, and social class and use them in describing the connections and interactions of individuals, groups, and institutions in society;

...help learners analyze group and institutional influences on people, events, and elements of culture in both historical and contemporary settings;

Illinois Learning Standards:

IL.16.A STANDARD: Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation.

IL.16.A.EC > Recall information about the immediate past.

IL.16.A.1a > Explain the difference between past, present and future time; place themselves in time.

IL.16.A.3a > Describe how historians use models for organizing historical interpretation (e.g., biographies, political events, issues and conflicts).

IL.16.A.4a > Analyze and report historical events to determine cause-and-effect relationships.

IL.18.A STANDARD: Compare characteristics of culture as reflected in language, literature, the arts, traditions and institutions.

IL.18.A.EC > Recognize similarities and differences in people.

IL.18.A.4 > Analyze the influence of cultural factors including customs, traditions, language, media, art and architecture in developing pluralistic societies.

IL.18.A.5 > Compare ways in which social systems are affected by political, environmental, economic and technological changes.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson the students will:

1. Be able to explain the basics of *Spoon River Anthology*.
2. Be able to list two examples of material culture.
3. Be able to understand the proper etiquette of a cemetery visit.

Material/ Equipment:

- Computer with internet connectivity
- PowerPoint slideshow
- Copy of *Spoon River Anthologies*
- Packets of *Spoon River Anthology* epitaphs
- Material culture pictures
- Cemetery List copies

Procedures:

Pre-Class Prep-

Insure that:

- have copies of Packets of *Spoon River Anthology* epitaphs (one for each student)
- load and check movie clips
- check the computer and load the PowerPoint presentation
- have *Spoon River Anthology* book
- material culture pictures are ready
- have copies of Cemetery list (one copy for each student)

Anticipatory Set

- Ask the students, "Think of the scariest place that you wouldn't want to be at midnight. Where would that be?"
- Show the following graveyard scene from "Night of the living dead"
- Ask the students
 - o "Have you guys all seen that?"
 - o "What makes graveyards so scary to us?"

- Explain to students that not all graveyards are scary and by visiting them we can actually learn a lot of information.
- Show a picture of a graveyard and tombstone. Then ask the following questions:
 - o “What can you see written on the tombstone?”
 - o “So then what can we infer about this person?”
- Explain that today we are going to be discussing a book that looked at peoples’ gravestones and made up stories about them. Then we are later on going to be doing that ourselves.

Statement of Objectives

By the end of this lesson you should know:

1. Be able to explain the basis of *Spoon River Anthology*.
2. Be able to list two concepts of material culture.
3. Be able to understand the proper etiquette of a cemetery visit.

Outline of Lesson Contents

1. Explain to the students what *Spoon River Anthology* is.
 - a. A book containing the epitaphs of the people from the town Spoon River which is in Illinois.
2. Pass out the packet of the two epitaphs of *Spoon River Anthology*’s.
3. Read the two epitaphs to the class out loud. The epitaphs are found on pages 121 and 159.
4. Then ask the following questions. The questions will lead into a discussion about the *Spoon River Anthology*:
 - “Edgar Lee Masters wrote this book, why did he choose the town Spoon River?”
 - “Do you think he has an overall positive view of the people he is writing about?”
 - “Why do you think he choose these specific people to write about?”
5. Next, show the pictures of the following material items one by one in this order: clothing, lunchbox, postage stamps and gravestones.
6. When holding up a picture ask the students:
 - “What is this?”
 - “What is/was this used for?”
 - “What time period do you think this is from?”
7. Tell the students that these are all what we would call material culture. Material Culture is any artifact left by past cultures.
8. Explain to the students that we will be doing a cemetery survey. At the cemetery we will gather data in order to create an anthology concerning people who died during World War I.
9. Explain what a cemetery list is.
 - a. Hand out an example cemetery list to the students.
10. What students should look for and record.
 - a. Name of deceased
 - b. Birth and death dates

- c. Epitaphs (the inscriptions on headstones)
 - d. Images on the gravestone (cross, star of David)
 - e. How clean is it? (This matters because family members will clean gravestones somewhat)
11. Explain to the students what the proper conduct is while in a cemetery.
- a. Follow standard procedures listed above on what to record.
 - b. Treat the gravestones with respect.
 - c. Check with cemetery administrators to make sure rubbing is allowed.
 - d. No running or horseplay.
 - e. Do not leave trash or litter behind.

Evaluation:

- A. Evaluation of the lessons effectiveness will be done informally by reviewing the objectives at the end of the lesson.
- B. Evaluation of the students will be done through how well they responded to the questions.

MIVCA Checklist:

Meaningful- This lesson is meaningful because it involves students' personal experiences with other individuals who have been deceased.

Integrative-

Value Based- This lesson is value based because it challenges the students to treat the gravestones with respect and courtesy.

Challenging-

Active-