

WebQuest Lesson Plan: KWEST TV Investigative Report: How Sharecropping Was Used to Keep Freed Slaves on the Farm

By Rick Vanderwall and Molly McGovern

Overview

With this lesson plan, students will present an investigative TV news report documenting abuses against African Americans who worked in southern plantations and farms as sharecroppers. After extensively researching the topic, students will write a script for a mock TV news script to present to the class. They can give their presentations as videotape, an in-class drama production, or a Power Point presentation, as any of these production methods can provide an effective learning experience.

Student Objectives

Students will:

- Apply their knowledge and understanding of the treatment of African Americans and create a mock TV news presentation to share with the class.
- Apply their knowledge and understanding of African-American roles in society during the Jim Crow period.
- Demonstrate their understanding of sharecropping through scripts and presentations.
- Demonstrate their writing skills and drama skills by writing and preparing this TV news report.

Skills Attained

Students will be able to:

- Comprehend of the use of sharecropping to control African-American farmers.
- Create a realistic TV report.
- Exhibit presentational skills, such as acting and script writing.
- Work cooperatively in groups to organize the production.

Materials Needed

- Computers and Internet for WebQuest
- Computers for typing scripts
- Props, costumes, stage drops
- Video Cameras
- VCRs

The Lesson

Anticipatory Set

Have students read the novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, and then assign them to groups that will work well together. Provide students with access to the WebQuest and other materials they will need to complete the activity. Then, have the groups assign to members each of the group roles, defined on the **WebQuest Handout**.

Procedures

1. Instruct student groups to research sharecropping using the links on the WebQuest.
2. Have the scriptwriters from each group begin writing the script that will eventually be presented to the class and according to the report format to which the group has agreed. Make sure students:
 - Have enough time to write the script and type it up, so each individual has a copy when they present it to the class.
 - Present factual information to the class not just a made up story.
3. Have students then produce the video, dramatic presentation, or Power Point and schedule their performance.
4. Instruct every student to complete the peer response form following each presentation.

Assessment

WebQuest Rubric

Use the following rubric to assess students' performance:

Grading Areas	Specific Grading Criteria	Percentage of Total Grade
Role Fulfillment	On-task behaviors	15%
	Timely task completion	
	Quality of work	
Group Function	Organization	15%
	Work completed on time	
	Positive group interaction	
Research	Correct information	30%
	Relevant information	
	Complete story: answered who, what, when, where, why	
Production	Script	30%
	Quality of performance/presentation	
	Overall Report quality	
Peer Response	Peer response forms	10%

Rick Vanderwall is the Chair of the Language Arts Department at Malcolm Price Laboratory School in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Molly McGovern is an English Education Student at the University of Northern Iowa.