

PROJECT TITLE: Lincoln and His Use of the Telegraph.

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SCHOOL: Broadus Wood Elem. School
SUBJECT, GRADE LEVEL: History, 1st gr

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

1. **Teaching Thesis** It is a tricky thing teaching history to the very young, some of whom still confuse tomorrow and yesterday. The more you can connect subject matter to what they already know, the more it aids their comprehension. This set of lessons for first graders uses what they have already learned about Washington and about early mail delivery under Franklin and builds a sense of historical continuity in terms of invention and communication with what they see in the media about President Obama's use of technology. Some of the previously learned character traits of Lincoln (tenacity, interest in many things, leadership abilities) play a key role in their understanding of Lincoln's use of the telegraph. Through examining documents and images, discussion and activities, students will compare the communication methods and speeds of three time periods and will increase their knowledge of Lincoln as a more modern president.

Guiding Questions: Why was the telegraph an important invention?
How did using the telegraph help President Lincoln to lead the country?

2. Significance & Relevance:

Standards of Learning

History

- 1.1 The student will interpret information presented in picture timelines to show sequence of events and will distinguish among past, present, and future.
- 1.2 The student will describe the stories of American leaders and their contributions to our country, with emphasis on George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington Carver, and Eleanor Roosevelt.

OAH Historical Skills Taught:

Chronological Thinking

Students will distinguish between “long ago” (George Washington’s Presidency), “the past” (Lincoln) and “now” (President Obama) in terms of methods used to send messages. Using a timeline will help their understanding of the differences, and scaffold their beginning knowledge of the past as layered, rather than monolithic.

Historical Issues – Analysis and Decision Making

Students will compare communication methods from 3 time periods and analyze their uses and implications.

3. Suggested Grade Level and Length of Activities

Two lessons of 40 minutes each, designed for 1st grade.

4. Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to explain the importance of the telegraph as a breakthrough communication technology. Students will also be able to explain how the telegraph enabled President Lincoln to be a more effective President.

7. Lesson Plans

Lesson 1 (40 minutes)

Preparation

1. Bookmark this site for use at several computer stations, for students to type in their names and translate to Morse Code:

<http://www.omnicron.com/~ford/java/NMorse.html>

2. Bookmark video site to project from teacher computer. Play to 1:06:

<http://www.history.com/videos/the-telegraph-and-telephone#the-telegraph-and-telephone>

Lesson Introduction, 10 minutes

Tell the students that if you want to tell something to someone sitting next to you, it's easy and quick to talk to them, but if you need to write a letter it takes longer.

Explain that during the time of George Washington, people used messengers riding horses to carry letters and other information. Then ask students what are some ways people communicate today. Put the ideas they generate on large charts or a black board or white board.

Put the words "Long Ago" on one chart and put a picture of Washington at the top.

Put the words "Now" on one chart and put a picture of Obama at the top.

Main Part of Lesson 1, 20 minutes

Set the stage with a short class discussion of why people invent things. Tell the students that they are going to learn about the telegraph, an invention that allowed messages to be sent and received in a faster way than ever before. Show the movie about the invention of the telegraph.

Tell them you are going to play them the sound of the telegram code being beeped by the telegraph machine and ask them to tap their ear the minute they are able to hear it. (see "Other Resources" for the link).

Then discuss:

How fast was it compared to waiting for a horse to gallop miles?

Which gets there first: the sound of a beep or a man on a horse?

How fast was it compared to calling on a telephone or cell phone?

What if it cost a lot of money to send a telegram, and you lived in the time of Lincoln, what else could you do?

What would you use if you had some really important news to send fast during Lincoln's time?

What kind of news would be really important?

Ending Activity, 10 minutes

Exit slip for Lesson 1 assessment. Have students complete the sentence, "The telegraph was an important invention because.....".

Lesson 2 (40 minutes)

Preparation

If using Smartboard:

- Set up and orient the SMART board. (helpful site: <http://edtech.mst.edu/classroomtech/smartboard/orient.html>)
- Download SmartBoard files from wiki
- Review Timeline activity and move images down to bottom of screen, ready to place according to president.

If you don't have a Smartboard, you can still download free Smart Notebook software onto your laptop and project the activities. In that case, you would ask students which images to move to what place in the timeline.

You can also do a paper version of the activity by taping up a large piece of paper, writing the words "Long Ago" on the lower left, "Past" on the lower middle and "Now" on the lower right. Print copies of the images used in the SMART board activity, so that students can tape them on the timeline.

In either case, print exit slip for Lesson 2 and make copies.

Introduction, 15 minutes

Start with a circle discussion of what they learned last time. Tell them that one of the things that President Lincoln changed when he was president was the location of the main Telegraph Office. Ask the students if they think the President should have to go downtown and wait in line for really important news. Pass around the picture of Lincoln in the Telegraph Office and explain that during the Civil War, Lincoln was lucky that the Telegraph Office was moved to a building right next to the White House and he could walk over there several times a day. He was very kind to the workers there. Some of them were tapping the keys to beep messages to go out through the wires. Some were reading the code off the tape to write down for Lincoln what each message said. Paint a verbal picture for them of a very busy president, who needed to tell his army how fast to move and where to go next. Many first graders have heard the word "efficiency" in math; ask them what might be more efficient about the telegraph for President Lincoln. Read and discuss the telegraph from Lincoln to Grant when he wanted him to hang on and not give in ("...chew and choke...").

Main Part of Lesson, 15 minutes

Then have them do the SMART board timeline activity. Model with a think-aloud how they should explain why they are placing each image in a certain area of the timeline.

Final Assessment, 10 minutes

Exit Slip 2: Students can either draw lines to show which president goes in which box or they can draw or cut and glue. The grouping should show Presidents Obama and Lincoln together as technology-using more efficient leaders. Rubrics can be downloaded from the wiki.

8. Related Materials & Resources

All materials are on the wiki <http://lincolntelegraphtah.wikispaces.com/>
Screenshots of certain wiki pages are attached separately.

9. Technology Used

SMART board and free SMART notebook software
Resource Wiki

10. Differentiation

Modifications include embedded audio files in examples of the communication methods in the SMART board timeline activity.
Allow extra time for students who need it. Allow students who need more exposure to revisit activities. For students with writing disabilities or visual impairments, set up a VoiceThread (see below) using images and record them talking about what they have learned about Lincoln and the telegraph.

Extension activities:

Gifted students or upper elementary classes adapting these lessons can make slide shows with [Photopeach](#) using the images from Flickr or scanned or digital photos of their own drawings, with simple captions.

A good Photopeach tutorial:

<http://ehpsblogs.com/web2/2011/02/20/photopeach/>

Sorts can become the basis for some simple [VoiceThreads](#). See tutorial:

<http://thwt.org/voicethread.html>

You can also place images and documents in interactive timeline sites such as [Timetoast](#) or [Dipity](#).

For a good overview of these interactive timeline makers:

<https://instructionaldesignfusions.wordpress.com/tag/timetoast/>

It would be fun to have a modern version of a real telegraph machine for students to try; the simplest would be a circuit telegraph device that makes a beeping sound. A Scout troop, parent volunteer or older class or club can make one for you easily with a kit from Radio Shack.