

Einstein and His Times

Suggested Grade Level(s): 8-10

Estimated class time: 6-7 days

Summary

The students will read about and research the major historical events that occurred throughout the year 1919. They will use different readings and articles to understand and describe what life was like during this time. In addition, the students will present their case whether they agree or not that Albert Einstein should be voted “Man of the Year” for 1919.

Objectives

- The students will identify and describe the prevalent events that took place in 1919 in order to gain perspective of the world view at that time
- Students will explain whether Einstein should be chosen as “Man of the Year” for 1919 because of his contributions to the scientific world.

National Standards

National Social Science/World History Standards

- NSS-WH.5-12.8 Era 8: A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900-1945
The student in grades 5-12 should understand
 - reform, revolution, and social change in the world economy of the early century.
 - the causes and global consequences of World War I.
 - the search for peace and stability in the 1920s and 1930s.
 - the causes and global consequences of World War II.
 - major global trends from 1900 to the end of World War II.

National Language Arts Standards

(From the National Counsel of Teachers of English)

- NL-ENG.K-12.3 EVALUATION STRATEGIES
Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
- NL-ENG.K-12.7 EVALUATING DATA
Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of

sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

- **NL-ENG.K-12.8 DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS**
Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Knowledge Prerequisites

Student should be familiar with some of the different events that took place in 1919 such as prohibition, women's suffrage, and the treaty created after World War I ended.

Teacher Background

The teacher should be familiar with the resources the students can utilize to study the historical events and scientific events that took place around the year 1919.

Materials

- The Internet
- Resources pertaining to the year 1919 such as articles and reference books

Procedure

I. Engagement

Article: "The Influenza Epidemic and How We Controlled It"

- Students read article
- Students discuss the environment and social status at the time of the epidemic - the year 1919

(Differentiated lesson: Substitute article entitled "Life at Camp Funston")

- Students can read letters written by an Army Sergeant to his wife describing the situation at the time
- Students also discuss the environmental and social issues of the time with this article

II. Exploration

Cooperative Grouping

- Assign each group a different topic from 1919 that they must become "experts" on
- Students create a product such as a poster or paper of the information from that period to present to the class
- Students can use resources from the library, textbooks, or articles given by the teacher for this activity

III. Explanation

Students create a graphic organizer based on the year 1919

- place 1919 in the middle bubble of a word web
- students can use electronic resources from the library, encyclopedias, or history textbooks to find the historical events of 1919
- students draw lines stemming from the 1919 bubble to the outer parts of the web identifying events that took place that year

IV. Extension

Students identify the significant moral issues of the year 1919 and decide if Congress dealt with them effectively: women's suffrage, Prohibition, Treaty of Versailles, Black Sox Scandal, influenza epidemic, etc.

- Students discuss/debate how they believe Congress should have handled these situations at the time
- Teacher plays the role of Congress; students play role of the people in the debate

V. Evaluation

Students write a five-paragraph persuasive essay called "Einstein – Man of the Year? Why or why not?"

- Students write a five-paragraph essay describing whether or not they believe Einstein deserves the title of "Man of the Year" for 1919.
- Students should describe Einstein's contributions to science (including the Theory of Relativity) at the time and how significant these contributions were in comparison to the other important contributions of the year.