

Lesson Plan 2: STEP BY STEP

Grade Level: 4-8

Overview:

As a way to summarize the important events of Cabeza de Vaca or another conquistador's exploration, expedition, or conquest, the students will create "Step Books".

Objectives:

The students will:

- Review or research the story of Cabeza de Vaca or another conquistador.
- Write summary paragraphs and develop illustrations to show the major events of this individual's life.

Related National Standards:

History:

- Knows the features of the major European explorations that took place between the 15th and 17th centuries (e.g., the routes and motives of Spanish, French, Dutch, and English explorers; the goals and achievements of major expeditions; problems encountered on the high seas; fears and superstitions of the times; what sailors expected to find when they reached their destinations).
- Understands aspects of the Spanish exploration, conquest, and immigration to the Americas in the centuries following Columbus (e.g., Spanish interactions with the Aztecs, Inca, and Pueblo; the expeditions of Cabeza de Vaca and Francisco Vasquez de Coronado in the American Southwest; the conquest of Spanish America).

Language Arts:

- Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process.
- Writes expository compositions (e.g., presents information that reflects knowledge about the topic of the report; organizes and presents information in a logical manner).

Art:

- Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts.

Materials:

Drawing paper in graduated lengths and various colors, if possible Crayons, felt pens and other art materials

Procedure:

1) Ask the students what it means to do something “step by step,” explaining it means to do first one thing, then another, in a very specific order. Then ask students what other meaning the word “step” has— and develop the concept of stairsteps, or graduated lengths. Explain to students that they will be following a specific process (going step by step) to develop a step book which has graduated lengths of pages. Their book will be about one of the conquistadors who explored the Americas in the 15th - 17th centuries.

2) The first step in making a Step Book is to prepare the pages. (Teachers or classroom volunteers might wish to do this ahead of time for the students.) Each Step Book will consist of 6 different sized pieces of paper stapled together across the top. The bottom sheet of drawing paper should be 8 1/2 x 11 inches in size. On top of this sheet, place another piece of paper 8 1/2 x 10 inches long in a different color, if possible. On top of this, place another piece of paper 8 1/2 x 9 inches long, and so on... until you have a stack of 6 pieces of paper of the following lengths: 8 1/2 x 6 inches, 7 inches, 8 inches, 9 inches, 10 inches and 11 inches. Staple them together along the top.

3) The top piece of paper (which may be cardstock, if desired) will be used for the students to design an interesting cover and title for their book. The title should be written in bold, black ink along the bottom 1 inch of this top page.

4) On the second piece of paper (8 1/2 x 7 inches long) the students are to write the title: “Who Was ... (name of conquistador)?” in bold, black ink along the bottom 1 inch of this page. On this page, they will then write a paragraph or two and draw an illustration to answer this question. Other criteria, including biographical information, dates, place of birth, nationality, employment, etc. may be specified for these paragraphs.

5) On the third piece of paper (8 1/2 x 8 inches long) the students are to write the title: “What Did ... (name of conquistador) Want to Accomplish?” They will then write 12 paragraphs to explain and illustrate the goals of this conquistador and how this expedition related to other expeditions that had already taken place.

6) In the same manner, the fourth piece of paper should be titled: “Where Did ... (name) Go?” across the bottom, and the students will draw a map of his route. A paragraph on this page should explain basic information about the cultures of the native peoples the conquistador met during the expedition.

7) The fifth piece of paper should be titled: “What Were the Major Events?” Paragraphs and illustrations should focus on the major events, accomplishments, risks, defeats, methods used, etc. of the conquistador in this expedition.

8) The sixth piece of paper (which could also be cardstock) should be titled: "What Was (name's) Significance?" These final paragraphs should include the importance of the conquistador, the short-term and long-term effects of the expedition, and the student's own personal opinion about the conquistador.

9) When finished, ask the students to share their Step Books with each other. Use them to develop generalizations about the characteristics of the Spanish exploration and conquest of the Americas and of the individuals who were involved in the conquest.

Assessment Recommendations:

Teachers can assess the students' Step Books by looking at how completely the students communicate their knowledge about the conquistador, structure the information in a logical, step-by-step sequence, demonstrate their knowledge of correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, usage, and paragraphing, and accurately and artistically draw their maps.

Extension and/or Adaptation Ideas:

Shorten or lengthen the number of pages in the Step Books. Have the students work together in groups to make their books. Ask the students to use a word-processing program to make their books.

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