

Exploring U.S. Veterans' Stories: Researching and Writing Biographical Narratives by, Jennifer Clark

Objective:

Students will be able to research and write biographical narratives using primary and secondary sources about U.S. World War II Veterans buried in Higginsville National Cemetery.

Standards Addressed:

- B. Explain connections among historical context and peoples' perspectives at the time in the United States' history.
- C. Develop a research plan, identify appropriate resources for investigating social studies topics, and create and present a research product that applies an aspect of United States history post-C. 1870 to a contemporary issue.

Assessment:

Students will present their biographical narratives to the class, demonstrating connections between historical context and peoples' perspectives at a particular time in the United States' history.

Key Points:

- Understanding the importance of primary and secondary sources in historical research
- Analyzing the life and experiences of a U.S. Veteran through their service and post-service life
- Making connections between historical events and personal narratives
- Demonstrating research skills in identifying and utilizing appropriate resources

Opening:

- Engage students by presenting a brief overview of the Legacy Memorial (VLM) website and its significance in honoring U.S. Veterans.
- Show a short video clip or images of Higginsville National Cemetery.
- Ask students: "Why is it important to remember and honor the stories of U.S. Veterans?"

Introduction to New Material:

- Discuss the significance of primary and secondary sources in historical research.
- Present the life story of Willard J. Hans Jr. as an example.
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BhW37mEQv_y9DRSdQnkE9z6QgJFdDKdVx-Ds8CxcgMGw/edit?usp=sharing
- Address the misconception that historical research is only about dates and events, not personal stories.

Guided Practice:

- Provide students with a list of questions to guide their research on a chosen U.S. Veteran.
- Model how to gather information from different sources and create a timeline of the Veteran's life.
 - William Louis Jolly “Bill” Dee Section, WWII CA Row c, Site 57
 - [Resources](#)
 - William Charles Dittman, WWII Section G Site 581
 - [Resources](#)
 - Floyd Junior Dunn WWII Section CB Row B Site 108
 - [Resources](#)
- Scaffold questioning from basic factual inquiries to deeper analytical questions.
- Monitor student progress by circulating the classroom and providing guidance as needed.

Independent Practice:

- Instruct students to choose a U.S. Veteran buried in Higgensville National Cemetery and conduct research using primary and secondary sources.
- Task students with drafting a biographical narrative highlighting the Veteran's service, experiences, and post-service life.
- Encourage students to include relevant historical context in their narratives.

Closing:

- Have students share a summary of the U.S. Veteran they chose to research.
- Reflect on the connections between individual stories and broader historical events as a class.

Extension Activity:

- For early finishers, provide the option to create a visual representation (poster, slideshow, etc.) of their chosen U.S. Veteran's story.

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