

Unit Title: Harvesting the River

Objective: The basic research done with the help of pre-printed worksheets prepares students for the challenge of the final performance task. In this task, students will write two news articles or editorials from two different points of view - allowing the student to analyze the information presented in the Web site and synthesize it into a public policy action plan or personal historical perspective of one of the participants of the era.



Grades: High School

Subject/Topic Area: US History / The Illinois River and its Communities

Key Concepts: natural resources and their affect on the economy and culture, historical analysis, Illinois and US History, conservation, persuasive writing

Time Frame: one week

There is a wealth of information on the “Harvesting the River” exhibit, and it requires several class periods to view everything. This lesson gives students the chance to explore as much of the Website as possible, and focuses their learning to promote enduring understanding. This is done with the use of Internet worksheets.

“Big Ideas” in this unit:

- role of natural resources
 - economically
 - culturally
- impact of technology
- general understanding of the ecology of a freshwater river
- critical thinking about different needs of different members of a community
- use of different sources as research tools (Internet, independent research, local resources)

What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?

Students will know:

- what technological, ecological, and economic changes the Illinois River towns went through in the early 1900’s
- the general ecology of a freshwater river

Students will be able to:

- research on either the Internet, or using outside sources, and make value judgments about the material based on its source
- write a persuasive essay and write from the point of view of another individual

What enduring understandings are desired?

Students will understand:

- 1) industrialization greatly impacts the economy, environment, and social stratification of a community.
- 2) natural resources play an important role in the development and continued success of a community.
- 3) different people within the same community can have different needs, and it is not always easy to determine what is best for the “whole.”
- 4) the ecosystem of a freshwater river is dependent upon many factors, and impacts the community around it.
- 5) there are different sources available for use in historical research, and you must take into consideration what that source is.

What essential questions will guide this unit and focus teaching and learning?

- How do changes in transportation and technology affect the environment? The economy? Can there be good changes as well as bad?
- What aspects of a community’s culture depend on its natural resources? (i.e. economy, politics, art, diet, etc.)
- How do you judge the validity of an information source, and why is it important to do so?
- How do you reconcile a difference between what a community wants, and what is best for the “common good”?
- Should there be limits placed on the use of natural resources, and if so, by whom?

Sequence of Learning Experiences and Instruction:

Learning experiences:

- Guided Internet Research papers (3)
- Group work (peer assessment through participation rubrics for group discussion)
- Work on Department of Natural Resources site
- Performance tasks/ Writing assessment rubrics

Day One:

- establish ground rules for internet research
- establish goals of the unit
- hand out the final performance task and corresponding writing assessment rubrics
- have students explore the opening page and the “Harvesting” section of “Harvesting the River”
- complete guide worksheet individually and then discuss in small groups

Day Two:

- review findings of previous class period and the goal of the unit
- have students explore the “Transportation” section of “Harvesting the River”
- complete guide worksheet individually and then discuss in small groups

Day Three:

- review findings of previous class periods and the goal of the unit
- have students explore the “History” section of “Harvesting the River”
- complete guide worksheet individually and then discuss in small groups

Day Four:

- work on newspaper articles and use the Department of Natural Resource Websites for
- any additional information (see bottom of this page)
- finish rough drafts

Day Five:

- turn in and evaluate final performance task articles and responses

Extensions: If you would like to take this project beyond the classroom, you could do so in many ways.

Science: There are many Web sites with lesson plans for testing the water quality where you live, or how much water your family or school uses. Or, how have we changed our practices today to protect the environment?

Social Studies: To continue the social science aspect you could find out more about your own town’s history during the early part of the century. What natural resources are important to your community? What local sources of information do you have available? (Are there any historical societies you could contact?)

Language Arts: Locate and conduct an interview with local members of the community who were alive during the time period that your class is studying.

ISBE Learning Standards:**Late High School:****Language Arts**

3.C.5a: Communicate information and ideas in narrative, informative and persuasive writing with clarity and effectiveness in a variety of written forms; adapt content, voice and tone to the audience, purpose and situation.

Social Science

14.D.5: Interpret a variety of public policies and issues from the perspectives of different individuals and groups.

16.A.5a: Analyze historical and contemporary developments using methods of historical inquiry (pose questions, collect data, make and support inferences with evidence, report findings).

16.C.5b(US): Analyze the relationship between an issue in United States economic history and the related aspects of political, social and environmental history.

16.E.5a(US): Analyze positive and negative aspects of human effects on the environment in the United States including damming rivers, fencing prairies and building cities.

Additional Resources:

Department of Natural Resources Website - several lesson plans on river ecology - geared towards younger high school students. Very useful - includes teacher guides and additional links to more information.

<http://dnr.state.il.us/lands/education/CLASSRM/AquaticILLessons/TOC.htm>

Name: _____
Date: _____

Guided Study of “Harvesting the River: Harvesting”
Worksheet 1

Today you are going to do some research on the Internet and learn more about the impact of technology and resources on our lives. Start by going to the Illinois State Museum Website at <http://museum.state.il.us/exhibits/harvesting>

Find the link to Exhibits and click on it. Once at the Illinois State Museum Online Exhibits page, find the link for “*Harvesting the River.*” Click on that link. After reading the introduction, proceed to the section entitled Harvesting.

Now - take advantage of all this part of the site has to offer - there is a lot to see. Each time you click on underlined or highlighted words you will go to a link with additional information on that subject. Also, make use of the images, videos, and audio selections, which also have subsections that lead you to more information. You can also perform a specific search here. When searching the site, stay within the Harvesting section, and search for the answers to the questions below.

1. What natural resources were important to towns along the Illinois River, and in what ways were these resources important to the community?
2. What were these products used for?
3. What influence did technology, the idea of supply and demand, and the environment have on the “harvesting”?
4. What types of primary source materials did you find in this section, and how were they helpful to your understanding?

Name: _____
Date: _____

Guided Study of “Harvesting the River: Transportation”
Worksheet 2

Today you are going to do some more research on the Internet in order to learn even more about the impact of technology and resources on our lives. Start, again, by going to the Illinois State Museum Website at <http://museum.state.il.us/RiverWeb/harvesting>

Proceed to the section entitled **Transportation**. Once again, when searching the site, try to stay within the section you are assigned to - in this case, Transportation. Again, there is a lot of information out there, so use your time wisely and focus your search by answering the questions below.

1. What influences did the Illinois River have on the growing transportation system of western Illinois from the 1830s to the 1930s?
2. Did changes in technology affect the role of this geographical feature?
3. How did changes in transportation technology affect trade, travel, and the economy of the area?
4. What types of primary source materials did you find in this section, and how were they helpful to your understanding?

Performance Task(s):

There are two parts to your final performance task.

First, you will take on the role of a journalist in the 1890s - 1920s who has been thinking about the future, and quite frankly, you're worried. You realize that the livelihood of your town depends on the Illinois River, and you've noticed that the wildlife isn't quite as plentiful as it used to be, and that the river is starting to look dirty.

Write a newspaper article/editorial in an effort to persuade your town to change how it treats the river.

- What are they doing that is causing this problem?
- Is it important that changes be made? why? how?
- How will this affect the way you live?
- Are there any other options/what are the alternatives?
- How will this effect your town culturally and economically?

In the second part of the performance tack, **you will take on a second role and reply to your newspaper article** from the perspective of this new role.

Possible roles are:

Commercial duck hunter
Commercial fisherman
State game warden
Farmer
Worker at the ice company
Operator of the ferry service (Joe Gaskill and John Raisor)
Owner of a gun club
Member of a gun club
Steamboat captain
Businessman in town
Common laborer
Button factory worker
Mussel fisherman
Railroad company executive
Local legislative representative
Town mayor
Hotel employee

You will need to analyze the roles these individuals play in the community and the stakes they have in the situation. Make notes on these in order to organize your essay.

Writing Assessment Rubric

**Points
Possible**

**Points
Earned**

Focus:

Is the main idea (topic) well-defined, adequately defined, or poorly defined?

Support and Elaboration:

Are there adequate details?

Do all the sentences and details stick to the topic?

Does the writer's choices of detail reflect the amount and quality of research they have done?

Organization:

Is there a title?

Is there an introduction?

Is there support and development?

Is there a conclusion?

Are the ideas presented in a clear and logical manner?

Are effective and appropriate transitions used?

Application:

Has the writer been able to use the information to suit the purpose of the task? (i.e. persuasion, empathy, description)

Does the writer exhibit a strong working knowledge of the material through their writing?

Does the writer make use of more than one source?

Does the writer take into account the validity of his/her sources?

Conventions/Mechanics:

Did the writer take obvious care in proofreading their essay?

Integration:

Are all the above basic features evident?

Are they all equally well-developed?

Comments:

Final Score: _____