

The Alamo before and after

TRICENTENNIALTHEME: Heritage and Diversity

SUBJECT: History

GRADEBAND/LEVEL: High School/Grade 9-12

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TEKS:

World Geography US

History 113.43.5A-B6A-B

113.41.3D



DESCRIPTION:

This project is designed to teach students the history of the Alamo prior to the Texas Revolution and help students recognize that even though the Battle of the Alamo took place in 1836 people today still think about and debate questions and issues surrounding the event. Students will review disparate opinions about the battle by contemporary commentators and evaluate the commentators' accuracy or reasoning.

LESSON OBJECTIVES:



Understand the history of the Alamo prior to the Texas Revolution.



Analyze how people today still hold strong opinions about long-ago historical events.



Think critically about the issues surrounding the Battle of the Alamo are still being debated.

MATERIALS/PREPARATION NEEDED:

Computer with Internet access

Resources:

Alamo de Parras: The Untold Story of the Alamo's Early History

<http://www.sonsofdewittcolony.org//adp/history/hframe.html>

(Alamo de Parras is a member-supported compendium of Alamo and Texas revolutionary information and exchange on the Internet for use by school children, historians, and anyone interested in the Alamo. The staff of the ADP site includes leading historians, archaeologists, and educational consultants.)

Alamo de Parras "War Room"

<http://www.sonsofdewittcolony.org//adp/archives/archives.html>



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ENGAGE (Opening Activity - Access Prior Learning / Stimulate Interest / Generate Questions):

To begin with, direct students to Alamo de Parras: The Untold Story of the Alamo's Early History (<http://www.sonsofdewittcolony.org//adp/history/hframe.htm>) and encourage students to read through the history of the Alamo. Then ask students what they learned about the Alamo that they may not have known prior. Discuss as a class.

EXPLORE (Probing or Clarifying Questions):

Now direct them to click on "War Room" (<http://www.sonsofdewittcolony.org//adp/archives/archives.htm>).

There students will find an archive of Alamo questions that have been posted each month since 1997 and numerous responses to each question by ordinary people and by history buffs. Encourage students to select a few questions and read some of the comments posted in response to each.

EXPLAIN (Concepts Explained):

Urge students to discuss how they as open-minded readers should evaluate the posted responses to a given question at this site. Here are some questions you will probably want your students to raise:

- Do any of the writers state their credentials?
- Does the writer sound rational, or does he or she sound highly emotional? Do we tend to believe a writer who sounds rational, or do we have more faith in an emotional writer?
- Does the writer seem to know what he or she is talking about? What makes you say so?
- What information that you didn't know before does the writer provide?
- How can you confirm whether the writer has the facts straight or not?
- What have you noticed about the logic--or lack of logic--in the writer's argument?

ELABORATE (Applications and Extensions):

Now that students have surveyed the War Room in a general way, ask each student to go back for a more thorough analysis. Each student should select one of the posted questions and read all the responses it attracted. Each student should then write a report that

- Summarizes the variety of opinions expressed in response to the question;
- Evaluates the validity of the different positions;
- Suggests what additional research the student will have to do, if any, to resolve the different opinions expressed;
- And concludes by telling whether the student's own thinking has been affected by the posted responses-- and how.

EVALUATE:

You can evaluate your students' written reports using the following three-point rubric:

- Three points: report significantly addresses all four parts of the assignment (see Procedures); report is completely coherent and unified; report is error-free in grammar, usage, and mechanics
- Two points: report fairly well addresses all four parts of the assignment; report is mostly coherent and unified; report has only a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics
- One point: report does not address all four parts of the assignment; report lacks coherence and unity; report has many errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

You can ask your students to contribute to the assessment rubric by having them determine the minimum number of sentences they should write for their summaries of the posted responses.