A Christmas Carol

WebQuest Description: Students will collect and interpret facts about the setting of the play in order to create a historical newspaper.

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum: English / Language Arts

Keywords: A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens, Victorian England

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Introduction

A Christmas Carol takes place in London, England during the 1800's. In the play, a miserly, old man named Scrooge is visited by three ghosts as a warning to change his greedy ways. We encountered many references to Victorian England that may appear strange to you, such as Plum Pudding, Smoking Bishop, bed-curtains, and various social customs. You will act as historians by gathering and interpreting facts about Victorian England and Charles Dickens. This will help you to better understand the plot, characters, and the conflicts that we read about. It will also help you to understand the theme that Charles Dickens may have been trying to convey through his writing. You will then act as journalists by synthesizing the information to create news articles appropriate for the time period.

Tasks

You will work as part of a group to create a Victorian London newspaper. You will be individually responsible for writing one article about one topic. As part of a group, you will work to create one, unified newspaper. Together, you will choose a title for your newspaper, the date the newspaper could have been printed, and a way to put the articles together in a presentable fashion.

Process

First, you will be assigned to a group of four-six students. Part 1 You will be assigned a topic to research for your group's newspaper. You will then create a news article that addresses your topic. Remember, the article must be written as though it could appear in a newspaper in London in the 1800s. It may be historical fiction, but you must use a minimum of ten facts found in your research, and you must display an understanding of the time period. Please use the word document to take notes on your topic. The youngest member will research Workhouses and Living Conditions. The second youngest member will research Victorian England Pasttimes. The second oldest member will research Victorian England Christmas. The oldest member will research Charles Dickens.

Resources:
- Workhouses
- Life in Victorian England
- Children in Victorian England
- Living Conditions
- Decorating the Home
- Christmas Tree
- Gifts
- Traditions
- Authors
- Video on Dickens
- Short Bio on Dickens
- Parlor Games
- Sports
- Board Games
- Dancing

Part 2 Your group will also include in your newspaper a section on Victorian England vocabulary and a food section that has a menu for Christmas dinner. You will need to submit two words that they learn about as they research their individual section for the newspaper. You will need to have the definition and example sentence for each of your words. Some suggested words include: bed curtains, shilling, bah humbug, charwoman, and impropriety. As a group, you will be also be researching about foods creating a menu for Christmas dinner.

Resources:
- Foods
- Dickens' Christmas

Part 3 Now that your research is complete, you will create your Victorian Era newspaper. You may use either Publisher or Word to create your newspaper. Your newspaper must include: Title of Newspaper, Date, Volume #, Price

Four articles with catchy titles

Vocabulary Section with words and definitions

Menu for Christmas Dinner

At least two examples of pictures and clip art

Names of Writers

Evaluation

Your group will be evaluated on your completed newspaper. Your group must have all components in the paper.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and Score</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content of Article</strong></td>
<td>The article does not establish a clear purpose and/or does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic. Minimal supporting details and accurate facts are included.</td>
<td>The article establishes a clear purpose and demonstrates a general understanding of the topic. More supporting details and accurate facts are needed.</td>
<td>The article establishes a clear purpose and demonstrates a clear understanding of the topic. Supporting details and a four to six accurate facts are included.</td>
<td>The article establishes a clear purpose and demonstrates a clear understanding of the topic. Supporting details and a minimum of 7-10 accurate facts are included.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>The article does not contain paragraphs or a logical structure.</td>
<td>The article contains paragraphs, but is not arranged logically or does not include relevant details.</td>
<td>The article contains paragraphs with some supporting details. Most details are presented in a logical sequence.</td>
<td>The article contains paragraphs with clear topic sentences and supporting details that are presented in a logical sequence.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>The article contains run-on sentences and fragments and several errors that hinder comprehension.</td>
<td>The article contains basic vocabulary and sentence structure, and contains some errors that hinder comprehension.</td>
<td>The article contains appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure, and contains errors that do not hinder comprehension.</td>
<td>The article uses sophisticated vocabulary and sentence structure, and contains virtually no errors.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper Layout</strong></td>
<td>The newspaper is missing 3 or more required parts and is not in a logical format.</td>
<td>The newspaper is missing 2 of the required parts. It is somewhat easy to locate information.</td>
<td>The newspaper is missing 1 of the required parts, but is in an easy to follow format.</td>
<td>The newspaper contains all required parts and is eye pleasing to the reader.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

By completing this lesson, you have become more knowledgeable about the time period of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Hopefully this gives you a better understanding of the theme of *A Christmas Carol*.

**Teacher Page**

This webquest can be used prior to or after reading a version of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*. It will enable the students to learn about the time period in which Dickens' wrote and the setting of the story.

**Standards**

Common Core Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.9 Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

**Credits**

Other