Exploring the History of the English Language

WebQuest Description: This WebQuest is an exploration of the English Language; how it began and how it has changed over time.

Grade Level: 9-12

Curriculum: English / Language Arts

Keywords: English, Old English, Middle English, Modern English, Language, Words, History

Published On: 

Last Modified: 2015-02-08 10:35:25

WebQuest URL: http://zunal.com/webquest.php?w=269725

Introduction

Is it true that English is the dominate form of communication for aviation, navigation, medicine, and education? Is English the most widely spread and spoken language? If it is then why and how did the language start? How could this language change in the future?

Tasks

Your task is to create an online brochure filled with information about a specific time in the history of the English language. You will work with a group to locate historical events, identify important people, locate important examples of literature, trace the origins of words, and create an informative presentation for your peers.

Process

Choose a group of people to work with on this project. You will need to be a member of a group of five people. Each of you will have a specific job. So decide on who will be one of the following in your group. Once your group is complete, then you will be assigned a topic to research. The job choices for each group are:

- Anthropologist: This role researches important people or groups of people involved with the time period.
- Historian: This role researches important events from the time period.
- Linguist: This role researches vocabulary from the time period.
- Media Specialist: This role researches audio/visual samples, is the person responsible for final submission of the presentation, and provides the oral introduction to the group's presentation.
- Professor: This role researches important literary works from the time period.

Each group is responsible for one of the following periods of the history of English. The information below the time periods is required to be displayed on your two page brochure and presented to the class. Include a link to an audio and/or video clip in a section of your brochure. When you present your brochure then everyone in the class will be able to hear what your era of English sounds or sounded like.

Pre-English (from about 55BC to 600)

Old English (from about 600 to 1100)

Middle English (from about 1100 to 1500)

Early Modern English (from about 1500 to 1800)

Shakespearean English and its Influence (from about 1592 to about 1616)

Use of English in Business (from about 1900 to present day and the future)

American English (from about 1650 to present day)

The Effects of the Industrial Revolution on English (from about 1800 to about 1900)

English as a Global Language (from about 200 to the present)

Important historical events

Influential people or groups of people

Examples of important literature (more than just the name of the literature, find or create images)

Words that originated from that particular time period (trace the history of the words, provide context of use)

Audio sample (someone reading a text from that time period and using authentic pronunciation, for the modern time periods find examples of regional dialects)

Visual/Graphic/Video

New Page Content Goes Here.
Category and Score | Incomplete | Emerging | Basic | Proficient | Score
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
Locate, organize and describe information from a variety of sources | Several pieces of required information and descriptions are not complete. | Minimal information is collected. | Required information is present but not completely thorough. | Research is evident. Information is organized and clearly expressed. | 25 %
Synthesize information and compose brief essay. | Written description is under 100 words and severely lacks reasonable and well-supported details. | Written description has fewer than 100 words or lacks well-supported, reasonable details. | Written description is at least 100 words and provides reasonable details but not clearly communicated. | Written description is 100 words and provides reasonable, well-supported details that are clearly communicated. | 25 %
Grammar and Punctuation | Writing has 7-10+ mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or word use. | Writing 5-6 mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or word use. | Writing and organizer has 1-4 mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or word use. | Writing and organizer has no mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or word use. | 25 %
Participate in the group and contribute to final product. | Student does not participate in group work. | Student does work and contributes but without helping any other group member. | Student works with the group, contributes to the final project, and helps others in the group. | Student is diligent about maintaining group dynamics, and fully participates in final project. | 25 %
Total Score | 100 %

Conclusion

After creating a brochure detailing the important events and changes in the English language, share your group's finished product with the class.

Teacher Page

Students complete this web quest in order to gain a basic understanding of the background of the English language: how it evolved, how it changed because of cultural and historical events, and why it is such a complicated language. Students also teach each other about the different time periods in the development of the language, and gain a greater appreciation for the importance of using English.

**Standards**
English 9-12

**Credits**
I used a web quest created by Craig Steestra as a starting point for this project.

**Other**