

The Lost Colony of Roanoke

WebQuest Description: This lesson aligns with topics you are studying in US History. Please follow the WebQuest instructions and complete the tasks.

Grade Level: 3-5

Curriculum: Social Studies

Keywords: Roanoke, colonies, colonists, settlements, English

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Introduction

In this WebQuest you will become historical detectives tasked with solving a mystery that has gone unsolved for over 400 years: the fate of The Lost Colony of Roanoke Island. In the late 16th century, English artist John White led a group of 115 colonists to start a new colony on Roanoke Island off the coast of North Carolina. After founding the colony in 1587, White returned to England to get more supplies. He hoped to only be gone for three months, but it was three years before White was able to return. When he did, every single person in the Roanoke colony had disappeared, including his wife, daughter and granddaughter. The only clue White found was the word CROATOAN carved into a post, as well as the letters CRO carved into a tree. Before leaving White had left instructions that if the colonists left the settlement, they were to carve the name of their destination, along with a Maltese cross if they left due to danger. The fate of those first colonists remains unknown to this day and is one of America's most intriguing unsolved mysteries. Archaeologists, historians, and other researchers continue to work to resolve the mystery. Today you will join them.

Tasks

You will conduct research on the major theories regarding what really happened to the lost colonists of Roanoke Island. You will gather evidence from an online source related to the mystery that discusses the colonists' possible fate. You will imagine yourself to be one of the colonists and compose a journal entry expressing your thoughts and emotions upon John White's departure for England.

Process

1. You will view a video on The Lost Colony.
2. You will conduct research related to the Roanoke mystery. The Roanoke Symbaloo consists of 27 tiles, each linked to an online source (i.e. article) about The Lost Colony. Each student will be assigned one source (tile) to analyze.
3. Read and study the Main Theories page (attached).
4. Open the red tile in the bottom right corner of the Roanoke Symbaloo. Read and study the article discussing five main theories.
5. Open your assigned tile to read the source, searching for sentences that discuss theories of what may have happened to the colonists.
6. Copy onto the Research Documentation page (attached) word for word, all such sentences. Place quotation marks around them. Place in parentheses the tile color and number/letter representing the source e.g. (yellow 1), in the source column.
7. Hint: Read carefully the last paragraphs of articles. That is where the theories are often discussed.
8. You will compose a journal entry when your research is done. Imagine yourself to be one of the colonists, Write several paragraphs expressing your thoughts and emotions as John White departs for England. You will write upon the Journal Entry page (attached), in first person narrative style (i.e. "I feel..."). * Remember that the colonists are terrified of the Native Americans, low on food and supplies, faced with the worst drought in centuries; caring for children and infants. Most of all, they are in a foreign land with no means of going home.
9. You will then divide into six groups: groups 1-3 will consist of 5 students; groups 4-6 will consist of 4 students (total 27).
10. Each member of the group will read their journal entry to the others.
11. The entire group will select the entry they consider the most moving. The group will select one member (not the author) to read that journal entry aloud to the entire class. Please note: This lesson may be extended. Time permitting, each student will present his/her research (quotes) to the class. Students will then compose a second journal entry. They will write a message to anyone who might come looking for them, to explain where they've gone and why. They will choose the one theory they find the most plausible to explain the fate of the colonists.

Evaluation

Review the rubric before you begin your work. Collaboration Rubric

Category and Score	0	1	2	3	Score
Building Background Knowledge	No information about the first year on Roanoke Island was mentioned.	One hardship about the first year on Roanoke Island was mentioned.	Two-Three hardships about the first year on Roanoke Island was stated.	Four or more hardships about the first year for the colonists on Roanoke Island was stated.	25
Explaining the mystery	The mystery of the Lost Colony was not mentioned.	A single statement about the Lost Colony was mentioned.	The Lost Colony was stated with a short background but was not completely clear on details.	The history of the Lost Colony was stated with details that was clear to understand.	25
Selection of Theory	No single theory was chosen.	The theory was chosen and the name of the theory was presented but not defined.	The theory was defined but the name of the theory was never stated.	The name of the theory was stated with a description of the theory.	25
Supporting Theory	No evidence to support the theory was stated.	One piece of factual evidence was provided to support the theory.	2-5 factual pieces of evidence were provided to support the theory	6 or more factual pieces of evidence were provided to support the theory.	25
Total Score					100

Conclusion

We may never know what really happened to the colonists of Roanoke Island. Their fate has been a mystery for more than four hundred years. It is as though our country has lost a part of its own history - the story of the first English settlement in America. There are those who still seek the answers, even after all this time. Historical detectives like you must continue the quest. Continue your research. Don't give up. You may be the one to finally solve the mystery of The Lost Colony, and lay their ghosts to rest.

Teacher Page

"As teachers of history and social studies teachers, I am convinced that we can regularly experience the motivating effects of having students ask questions, think, and interact while inquiring into historical events, issues, people, and ideas. To deeply involve our students in the study of history, inquiry is indeed the best way to get there. And posing historical questions as mysteries is an excellent way to involve the students in discovery."

Michael Yel, TeachingHistory.org
 This WebQuest involves basic research skills. It requires students to practice online research (simplified), read and review source materials, find relevant information, and attribute sources to authors (simplified). It requires writing, imagining, and empathetic thinking to compose a journal entry. It requires cooperative group work. Please note: This lesson may be extended. Time permitting, each student will present his/her research (quotes) to the class. Students will then compose a second journal entry. This time they will write a message to anyone who might come looking for them, to explain where they've gone and why. They will choose the one theory they find the most plausible to explain the fate of the colonists.

Standards

ISTE Technology Standards: 3. Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others. 6. Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals. AASL Nine Information Literacy Standards for Student Learning: 1. The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively. 2. The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently. 9. The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information. South Carolina Grade Level Standards for Social Studies: Standard 4.1 The student will demonstrate an understanding of political, economic, and geographic reasons for the exploration of the New World. Standard 4.2 The student will demonstrate an understanding of how the settlement of North America was influenced by the interactions of Native Americans, Europeans, South Carolina Grade Level Standards for English Language Arts: Inquiry Based Literacy Standards (I) Standard 3: Construct knowledge applying disciplinary concepts and tools, to build deeper understanding of the world through exploration, collaboration, and analysis. Reading Informational Text (RI) Meaning and Context Standard 5: Determine meaning and develop logical interpretations by making predictions, inferring, drawing conclusions, analyzing, synthesizing, providing evidence, and investigating multiple interpretations. Writing (W) Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imaginary experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences. Communication (C) Meaning and Context Standard 1: Interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, communicate meaning and develop logical interpretations through collaborative conversations; build upon the ideas of others to clearly express one's own views while respecting diverse perspectives.

Credits

Other