

Potter's Fields: Understanding Socioeconomic Issues Through Cemetery Studies

In this lesson plan, students will evaluate the relationship between Jim Crow laws, socioeconomics, and cultural landscapes such as cemeteries.

Learning Goals:

Students will be able to:

- 1) Identify and explain the purpose of potter's fields
- 2) Analyze ways potter's fields can help historians understand the lived experiences of the poor.

Materials and Resources

Sway Presentation: *Potter's Fields: Understanding socioeconomic issues through cemetery studies*

Potter's Fields: Worksheet A

Potter's Fields: Worksheet B

Potter's Fields: Worksheet C

Collaboration board

Computer

Projector

Screen

Pencils/Pens

Collaboration boards provide students and teachers an opportunity to gather data for analysis. These boards can be simple white boards, cork boards, or even a designated space on a classroom wall!

Curriculum Connections

SS.912.W.1.3: Interpret and evaluate primary and secondary sources.

SS.912.G.2 : Understand physical and cultural characteristics of places

SS.912.A.1 : Use research and inquiry skills to analyze American history using primary and secondary sources.

SS.912.A.2.5 : Assess how Jim Crow Laws influenced life for African Americans and other racial/ethnic minority groups.

What is Sway?

Sway is a free Microsoft program that allows teachers to make visually enhanced lesson plans for students. You may use this sway presentation as a whole group or allow students to individually follow along on their own device.

Sway presentation can be active through this link:

<https://sway.office.com/f28tz9bxnbxSp84m?ref=Link>

Learning Activity 1: Brainstorming Hidden History

Distribute *Worksheet A: Understanding Potter's Field* or Engage the class collaboration board.

In Sway, advance to *Chapter 1: What is a potter's field?* After reviewing basic definitions, have the students read and consider the important questions asked in the text cards with their shoulder partner or group mates. Students may use *Worksheet A* or contribute ideas to the collaboration board.

In Sway, advance to *Chapter 2: The Jim Crow South and Economic Hardship*. As a class, ask students to consider ways historians can learn about the experiences of the poor. Introduce students to *Worksheet B: Jim Crow Laws*. Direct students to the link “[What are Jim Crow Laws?](#)”. Provide students approximately 10 minutes to review information on Jim Crow laws and complete their chart on *Worksheet B*. Teachers may have students highlight their groups relationship ideas on the collaboration board.

Learning Activity 2: Image Analysis

Advance to the next slide, *Potter’s Field and Tampa Bay*. With their shoulder partner or group members, students will review three images associated with potter’s fields in the Tampa Bay area. Students will complete *Worksheet C: Imagine Analysis* to record their thoughts for the guiding image questions.

Evaluation

Advance to the next slide, *Modern Issues with Potter’s Fields*. As a class, encourage students to think about *why it is important to preserve and learn more about potter’s fields and how their inclusion might change our understanding of the past?* Teachers may direct students’ attention to the class collaboration board for inspiration.

As a final evaluation, students will write a persuasive editorial letter to a local official or newspaper highlighting the significance of historic preservation for potter’s fields and local cemeteries.

