

Historical Role-Play

Lesson Snapshot

Related “My American Farm” Game



Ag Spin N Solve
Available at www.myamericanfarm.org

Grade Levels

- Third - Fifth

Content Areas

- Social Science

Standards

NSS-USH.K-4.1 Living and Working Together in Families and Communities, Now and Long Ago

NSS-USH.K-4.4 The History of Peoples of Many Cultures Around the World

NSS-USH.5-12.4 Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

NSS-USH.5-12.6 Era 6: The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)

National Social Studies and History Standards, National Council for the Social Studies

Objectives

By the end of this activity, the students will be able to:

- Demonstrate the evolution of agricultural practices over time, focusing on improvements in technology and changing use of animals in agricultural production.

Materials

- Historical Scene Cards – See template at end of this lesson
- Play microphone – Other props may be used to enhance the learning experience, but are not necessary.

- (optional) Computers and internet access – 1 per student or pair. This is only necessary if you wish to do the My American Farm game in class.

Preparation

- Visit the My American Farm online game (www.myamericanfarm.org) to preview the “Ag Spin N Win” game.
- Review the lesson. There are a couple of places where you will see an asterisk (*). These are areas where you can choose to modify the lesson. To determine if you need to make these modifications, ask:
 - » How much time would you like to allocate for the activity?
 - » How would you like students to demonstrate what they’ve learned?

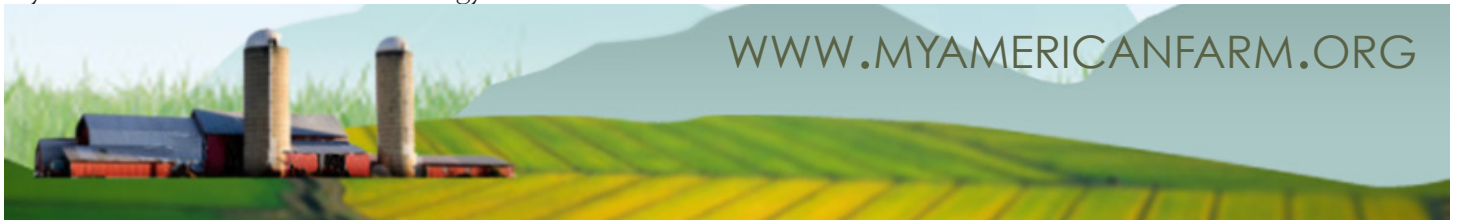
Introduction

Set Context for the Activity

Step I: Introduce “Agriculture”

- Ask students to mentally brainstorm the top items we must have to survive and share when ready. Capture ideas on the board in the front of the class in four unlabeled columns. (Food, Fiber/ Clothing, Natural Resources, Other) You know what the columns represent, and sort suggestions accordingly, but refrain from sharing the titles until all suggestions are shared.
- Ask students to create a label for each column, based on the items listed. Guide students as necessary and write titles above columns.
- Share with students that the first three columns (Food, Fiber/Clothing, Natural Resources) are all produced by the agriculture industry. Agriculture is our most





necessary industry!

- Share with students the following definition of agriculture:
 - » Agriculture refers to all of the industries and process involved in the production and delivery of food, fiber and fuel that humans need to survive and thrive.

Body

Main Content

Step 2: Introduce Activity and Set Historical Context

- Ask students to raise their hands in response to the following probing questions: *“How many of you have ever churned butter? Plowed a field by hand? Ridden a horse to town? Well how many of you have ever used a cell phone? Gone on the internet? Played a video game? Used a remote control?”*
- Connect student responses to the change in technology over time. *Many of our grandparents and great-grandparents had to do things very differently than we do today. Technology and changed, and as a result, so has the use of animals and manual labor in agriculture!*

Step 3: Historical Role Play

- Introduce students to the Historical Role Play activity.
 - » Students will be broken into teams of 4-5 students.
 - » Each team will receive a Historical Scene Card, which includes important information about agriculture during a specific time-period in history.
 - » Each team will select one member to act as a reporter, reporting live from their time-period in history. The rest of the team will act as characters in the news report, depicting the important facts listed on the Historical Scene Card.
 - » Give each team approximately 10 minutes to prepare their short skit.

- Have teams present their “news reports” in order, while the educator acts as the news anchor, facilitating transition between reports.
- * This is a higher-level activity and may be modified by editing Role Play cards or selecting fewer historical events.
- * For more historical information, and some great images from the past, check out the following resource from Ag in the Classroom:

Economic Research Service (2000, September). Growing a nation: a history of American agriculture. Retrieved from <http://www.agclassroom.org/gan/timeline/index.htm>

Step 4: “Ag Spin N Win” Game

- At this point you may elect to have students play “Ag Spin N Win”, available at www.myamericanfarm.org. Students can work individually or in pairs.
- Inform students that they will be jumping into a fun game, in which they will learn more about agricultural facts and technology.
- * You may choose to have students play this game before you arrive, after you have left, or at home with adult permission.

Wrap Up

Review, Assess, Challenge

Step 5: Review Relevant Concepts

- After students have returned to their seats, have students close their eyes and place one hand on their desk, in a closed fist. Direct students to silently recall 3 important facts about how agriculture has changed over time. When they have 3 things in mind, students are to silently give you a thumbs-up. After a majority of thumbs are up, have students share what they recalled.

Step 6: Assess Learning

- Ticket out The Door: Have students pull out a small piece of scratch paper, and write down 3 important things they remember about how agriculture has changed over time. Collect as students leave.





* If students are not immediately leaving, encourage the classroom teacher to conduct this assessment at the end of the day.

Step 7: Challenge

- Remind students that throughout history, farmers have cared for animals and worked hard to provide food, fiber and natural resources for others. Challenge students to look for ways they use technology in their life, and brainstorm ideas for new technology which could improve agriculture, and the students' every-day life.

Enrichment

- Encourage students to interview one person who is at least two generations older than the student. Ask them about changes in agriculture they have observed over time.
- Create a visual timeline in class using the information covered in this lesson.

Teaching Notes

Foundation Contact Information

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=== HISTORICAL SCENE CARDS ===

Economic Research Service (2000, September). Growing a nation: a history of American agriculture. Retrieved from <http://www.agclassroom.org/gan/timeline/index.htm>

EARLY SETTLEMENT (1600'S AND 1700'S)

- The first permanent English town in the New World is Jamestown, Virginia in 1607.
- Farmers make up 90% of population in the New World
- Oxen and horses are used for power.
- Wooden plows are used, and planting is done by hand.
- Hay and grain is cut with a sickle, which is a large rounded knife.

EARLY 1800'S

- Cotton replaces tobacco as the main crop in the south.
- Steamboats become important for trading agriculture products.
- It takes 300 hours to produce 5 acres of wheat using a walking plow and seeding by hand.
- John Deere begins making steel plows.
- Pig farmers develop new breeds of pigs called the Poland-China and Duroc-Jersey.

MID 1800'S

- The Potato Famine occurred in Ireland. People lost their crops of potatoes and began to starve, so many of them moved to the United States.
- The gold rush brought many people to the western United States.
- Agriculture machinery begins to be made in factories, which means farmers need
- Farmers start using horses on the farm instead of people pushing plows and doing work. This is called the first American Agriculture Revolution.

LATE 1800'S

- Refrigerated freight cars on trains make shipping food easier.
- The first gasoline tractor is built by John Froelich.
- Blizzards, followed by drought and too much grazing on land cause great problems for cattle ranchers in the northern Great Plains.
- It now takes only 50 hours to produce 5 acres of wheat.
- A horse-drawn combine is used to harvest wheat.

EARLY 1900'S

- George Washington Carver finds new uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes and soybeans.
- Farmers start researching how to breed plants that don't get diseases.
- The Wright brothers demonstrate the first airplane.
- The Great Depression and Dust Bowl cause farmers to move west and develop new ways to take care of their land.
- It now takes only 20 hours to produce 5 acres of wheat.

MID 1900'S

- Frozen food becomes popular.
- Farmers and ranchers begin using tractors instead of horses to work the land.
- It now takes just over 7 hours to produce 5 acres of wheat using a tractor.
- One farmer produces enough food for about 26 people.
- Agriculture products begin to be shipped using cargo planes instead of trains.

LATE 1900'S TO TODAY

- Norman Borlaug gets the Nobel Peace Prize for finding better ways to produce crops, especially wheat.
- Agriculture scientists learn how to transfer genes from the DNA of one plant to another.
- Farmers make up approximately 2% of the population of the United States.
- Anti-smoking campaigns affect the tobacco industry.
- One farmer supplies enough food for about 100 people.
- It takes just over 3 hours to produce 5 acres of wheat.