

**“It’s News to Me!”**  
**Teaching with Colorado’s Historic Newspaper Collection**  
**Model Lesson Format**

**Lesson Title:**

Tracking History: Colorado Trains 1900-1910

**Subject and Grade Level:**

American History or Language Arts, Grades 4-12

**Focus of Lesson:** A brief explanation of what students are to learn in this lesson (content and/or skills). What is the purpose of the lesson?

In this lesson, students will learn about Colorado from 1900-1910 through exploration of the history of trains and train travel during that time. Students will hypothesize, infer, summarize and synthesize as they read, and discuss and write about their reading. Throughout the lesson, students will develop their skills in searching history databases, evaluating importance of and recording new information, and applying their learning in writing.

**Standards Assessed:** Which standards will you be assessing in this lesson? Identify the content area, the standard number and any key components or benchmarks that are applicable.

**History Standard 2:** Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.

**History Standard 2.1:** Students know how to formulate questions and hypotheses regarding what happened in the past and to obtain and analyze historical data to answer questions and test hypotheses.

**Reading and Writing Standard 4:** Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. In order to meet this standard, students will make predictions, analyze, draw conclusions, and discriminate between fact and opinion in writing, reading, speaking, listening, and viewing; use reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing to define and solve problems; recognize, express, and defend points of view orally and in writing; evaluate the reliability, accuracy, and relevancy of information.

**Assessment:** Explain the assessment. (Include the formal 'assessment assignment' and any forms, worksheets, etc. in the Materials Section)

1. Students will form a focused hypothesis based on background knowledge gained in reading an article with the class. They will gather information through reading articles and analyze whether or not the information supports or contradicts their hypothesis. (See attached worksheet)

2. After reading articles and sharing information that's collated as a class, students will choose one of the following writing assignments. Information learned must be incorporated into the writing piece.

- a. Write a 'compare and contrast' essay about train transportation of 1900-1910 and that of today. What do your findings reveal about our culture then and today?
- b. Write a dialogue that could have happened between two passengers on a train in Colorado between 1900 and 1910. Use the vocabulary of the time.
- c. How are one train's contents like a photograph of life in 1900-1910? Write two or three paragraphs explaining your thinking.

**Standards Addressed:** Which standards will you be addressing (but not assessing) in this lesson? Identify the content area, the standard number and any key components or benchmarks that are applicable.

**Information Literacy Standard 1:** The information literate student accesses information efficiently and effectively.

**Reading and Writing Standard 1:** Students read and understand a variety of materials. In order to meet this standard, students will use comprehension skills such as previewing, predicting, inferring, comparing and contrasting, re-reading and self-monitoring, summarizing, identifying the author's purpose, determining the main idea, and applying knowledge of foreshadowing, metaphor, simile, symbolism, and other figures of speech; make connections between their reading and what they already know, and identify what they need to know about a topic before reading about it; adjust reading strategies for different purposes such as reading carefully, idea by idea; skimming and scanning; fitting materials into an organizational pattern, such as reading a novel chronologically; finding information to support particular ideas; and finding the sequence of steps in a technical publication

**Time:** The number of class periods required for the lesson as well as the length of class period.

Total of 5 class periods of about 45 minutes each

**Materials / Teacher Preparation Section:** List the technology, handouts, chart paper, text resources, etc. needed to complete the lesson. Include what you need to do to prepare ahead of time for your students to complete the lesson.

**Lesson planning document:**  
Possible procedures (see below)

**Technology needed:**

Computers with Internet access for students to work in pairs, networked printer, technology support for functions in Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection

**Handouts:**

Article: "Over One Hundred Lives Lost in Train Wreck Near Pueblo"

Worksheet for Hypotheses, three per pair of students

Writing Assessment Rubric

**Text resources:**

Optional secondary resources about history of trains and train travel

**Possible Procedures:** Enumerate the procedure teachers can follow to teach the lesson to students. Provide the URL for the digital primary sources that you will use.

**Class 1:****Introduction to Keyword Searching and Article Analysis**

Students will learn to search by keyword, time period, region and specific newspapers. They will also learn how to display newspaper articles.

1. Introduce students to *Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection*.
2. Demonstrate searching by keyword 'trains.' Select one publication or all.
3. Demonstrate searching by time period 1900-1910.
4. Demonstrate searching by region.
5. Have students practice searching each of these ways, then combine by searching by keyword during 1900-1910 in a specific region.

Exploration time is important to build interest and prepare students to focus on the upcoming lessons.

**Class 2:****Building Background Knowledge and Forming Hypotheses**

The teacher will lead the class in reading the article "Over One Hundred Lives Lost in Train Wreck Near Pueblo," (Littleton Independent, August 12, 1904, p. 6) and collect information in four categories: movement of people, movement of goods, social life and challenges of train travel. This information will be recorded on chart paper, one chart for each heading. Based on this information, pairs of students will form one focused hypothesis that addresses one of these areas.

1. Students read the article in pairs.
2. Students mark the article by underlining or highlighting text that contains information for the identified categories.
3. Teacher leads discussion to collate all students' findings. Teacher can choose to help students become aware of their use of inferring as a thinking strategy.
4. Teacher demonstrates writing of a focused hypothesis, for example, "Many people used trains to travel quickly from one town to the next," not "People traveled on trains."

5. Student pairs write one hypothesis on one of the 4 categories.

**Class 3:**

Searching the Collection for more information

Students will search articles from 1900-1910, reading at least three articles while completing a worksheet on hypothesis for each article. Advertisements may be used as well.

1. Students use a separate worksheet for each article, writing the same hypothesis on each worksheet.
2. Students read each article, recording information that supports or contradicts their hypothesis on the appropriate worksheet.

**Class 4:**

Teacher will lead a discussion on information students gained and whether or not their hypotheses were supported in their reading. New information will be added to the charts from the second session.

1. Students share their new learning, and discuss as a class whether or not their hypotheses were supported. What surprises did they find? What information was the most interesting to them? Did students find information that contradicted other information found by different students? Why would this be?
2. Teacher records information on charts and helps students to summarize their learning.

**Class 5:**

Students choose one of the writing assignments listed in assessment section for their assessment. This is where they have to synthesize and apply what they learned. See the attached rubric.

1. Teacher presents the writing choices and shares rubric with the class.
2. Students make their choice and write.

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