



LESSON ONE: Black Sam and the Whydah

DURATION

40 - 50 minutes

OVERVIEW

Students will practice discerning the fiction from the facts by examining the lives of three legendary, yet very real, Cape Cod historical figures. By reading aloud the story of these characters in the form of a classic oral narration, students will learn the story of common sailor and eventual pirate captain, Samuel Bellamy, as well as his love, Maria Hallett, and his partner and financier, Paulsgrave Williams.

SKILLS AND LEARNING STANDARDS

The following language arts reading standards are addressed:

- 3-RI-1.** Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
- 3-RI-2.** Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
- 3-RI-3.** Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, mathematical ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect
- 4-RI-5.** Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
- 4 & 5-RF-3.** Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.
- A.** Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context
- 4-RF-4.** Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
- A.** Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
- B.** Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression on successive readings.
- C.** Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
- 5-RI-5.** Describe how an author uses one or more structures (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, to present information in a text.

The following history and social science concepts, skills, and learning standards are addressed:

- 3-CS-1.** Explain the meaning of time periods or dates in historical narratives (decade, century, 1600s, 1776) and use them correctly in speaking and writing. (H)
- 5-CS-1.** Identify different ways of dating historical narratives (17th century, seventeenth century, 1600s, colonial period). (H)
- 5-CS-2.** Interpret timelines of events studied. (H)
- LS-3.7.** After reading a biography of a person from Massachusetts in one of the following categories, summarize the person's life and achievements. (H, C)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

How can personal motivations impact an individual's decisions and actions? How can global or societal circumstances impact an individual's decisions and actions?

OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of the lesson students will be able to:

- Define time frame terminology such as *decade*, *century*, *1700s*.
- Construct timelines.
- Discuss the biographies and local folklore of Cape Cod figures Samuel Bellamy, Maria Hallett and Paulsgrave Williams.
- Differentiate between fact and fiction.

MATERIALS

1. Short story, "The True Story of Black Sam and the Whydah" (provided in **Unit Materials** package).
2. Pen or pencil and notebook or lined paper

METHODS

Students will read "The True Story of Black Sam and the Whydah" aloud as a group, with a different student narrating each paragraph. Students will answer "true or false" questions and construct a general timeline at the completion of the reading.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The story of Sam Bellamy, Maria Hallett and Paulsgrave Williams has survived as an oral tradition for over three hundred years. Some students may even be familiar with the folk legends or ghost stories of the "Witch of Wellfleet" or "Black Bellamy." While obviously prone to exaggeration and superstition, these tales—passed down from generation to generation—have helped keep the story alive and around long enough to be analyzed by researchers and scholars.

The lesson material, "The True Story of Black Sam and the Whydah," gives an accurate account of these Cape Cod figures, but aims to tell the story in a similar fashion to the oral tales and campfire stories that have circulated around Cape Cod for hundreds of years.

LESSON

Warm-up

To get students thinking about local history teachers can ask students to share their own ancestral or community folklore. Did their grandparents or relatives ever share stories about the past? Do they know any local legends? Do they believe these tales to be true?

Activity

Teachers will distribute copies of the reading material, "**The True Story of Black Sam and the Whydah**" (**Material A**) to each class member.

To demonstrate an effective oral narrative, teachers will read the first paragraph or two of the short story, emphasizing a gradual pace, pauses at punctuation and clear annunciation. After an adequate example, students will volunteer to each read a paragraph apiece. The narrator will read the current passage aloud while the rest of the class listens or reads along silently.

After the passage, students will examine whether the statement is "true or false," based on the reading. If the statement is "false" students should rewrite it to be accurate.

When the class has completed the story, students will construct a timeline using the dates from the story. After writing down all the dates, students can then add important events to the timeline.

Wrap-up

After students have completed their timeline, they will compare how the order of events in their chronological timeline differs from the order of events in the narrative they just read. The class can discuss why authors or speakers tell stories (even true ones) in an order of events different from when they actually happened.