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TEACHING LITERACY
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THROUGH HISTORY
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Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address

by Tim Bailey

UNIT OBJECTIVE

This unit is part of Gilder Lehrman’s series of Common Core State Standards–based teaching resources. These units were written to enable students to understand, summarize, and analyze original texts of historical significance. Students will demonstrate this knowledge by writing summaries of selections from the original document and, by the end of the unit, articulating their understanding of the complete document by answering questions in an argumentative writing style to fulfill the Common Core State Standards. Through this step-by-step process, students will acquire the skills to analyze any primary or secondary source material.

While the unit is intended to flow over a five-day period, it is possible to present and complete the material within a shorter time frame. For example, in a high school class or advanced middle school group, the first and second lessons can be used to ensure an understanding of the process with all of the activity completed in class on day one. The teacher can then assign lessons three and four as homework. The concluding lesson five is completed in class on day two.

LESSON 1 OBJECTIVE

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and gain a clear understanding of the content of Franklin Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the students will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary using the author’s words and then restating that summary in the student’s own words. In the first lesson this will be facilitated by the teacher and done as a whole-class lesson.

INTRODUCTION

Tell the students that they will be learning what Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his First Inaugural Address by reading and understanding Roosevelt’s own words. Resist the temptation to put the speech into too much context. Remember, we are trying to let the students discover what Roosevelt had to say and then let them develop ideas based solely on his words.

MATERIALS

- [Franklin D. Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address](#) (abridged) (PDF)
- Teacher Resource: Complete [First Inaugural Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) (PDF), transcribed from [Inaugural Address of Franklin D. Roosevelt](#), March 4, 1933 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1933) in the Gilder Lehrman Collection
- [Summary Organizer #1](#) (PDF)
- Overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device

PROCEDURE

1. All students are given an abridged copy of Franklin D. Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address and are asked to read it silently to themselves.
2. The teacher then "share reads" the address with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while the teacher begins reading aloud. The teacher models prosody, inflection, and punctuation. The teacher then asks the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while the teacher continues to read along with the students, still serving as the model for the class. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
3. The teacher explains that the students will be analyzing the first part of the First Inaugural Address today and that they will be learning how to do in-depth analysis for themselves. All students are given a copy of Summary Organizer #1. This contains the first selection from Franklin Roosevelt's address.
4. The teacher puts a copy of Summary Organizer #1 on display in a format large enough for all of the class to see (an overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device). Explain that today the whole class will be going through this process together.
5. Explain that the objective is to select "Key Words" from the first section and then use those words to create a summary sentence that demonstrates an understanding of what President Roosevelt was saying in the first paragraph.
6. Guidelines for selecting the Key Words: Key Words are very important contributors to understanding the text. Without them the selection would not make sense. These words are usually nouns or verbs. Don't pick "connector" words (are, is, the, and, so, etc.). The number of Key Words depends on the length of the original selection. This selection is 162 words so we can pick six or seven Key Words. The other Key Words rule is that we cannot pick words if we don't know what they mean.
7. Students will now select six or seven words from the text that they believe are Key Words and write them in the box to the right of the text on their organizers.
8. The teacher surveys the class to find out what the most popular choices were. The teacher can either tally this or just survey by a show of hands. Using this vote and some discussion the class should, with guidance from the teacher, decide on six or seven Key Words. For example, let's say that the class decides on the following words: presidency, truth, endure, prosper, fear itself (if the students want to select two words together, you can allow it if it makes sense to do so; just don't let whole phrases get by), leadership, and victory. Now, no matter which words the students had previously selected, have them write the words agreed upon by the class or chosen by you into the Key Words box in their organizers.
9. The teacher now explains that, using these Key Words, the class will write a sentence or two that restates or summarizes what Roosevelt was talking about. This should be accomplished through class discussion and negotiation. For example, "My presidency will tell the truth about our situation so that we will not only endure but prosper. We will overcome fear itself and through leadership we will achieve victory." You might find that the class decides they don't need the some of the words to make it even more streamlined. This is part of the negotiation process. The final negotiated sentence is copied into the organizer in the third section under the original text and Key Words sections.

10. The teacher explains that students will now be putting the summary sentence into their own words, not having to use Roosevelt's words. Again, this is a class negotiation process. For example, "With honest leadership our country will be great again."
11. Wrap up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. If you choose, you could have students use the back of their organizers to make a note of these words and their meanings.

LESSON 2

OBJECTIVE

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and gain a clear understanding of the content of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the students will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary using the author’s words and then restating that summary in the student’s own words. In the second lesson the students will work with partners and in small groups.

INTRODUCTION

Tell the students that they will be further exploring what Franklin Roosevelt was saying in the second selection from his First Inaugural Address by reading and understanding Roosevelt’s words and then being able to tell, in their own words, what Roosevelt said. Today they will be working with partners and in small groups.

MATERIALS

- [Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address](#) (abridged) (PDF)
- [Summary Organizer #2](#) (PDF)
- Overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device

PROCEDURE

1. All students are given an abridged copy of Franklin Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address and are asked to read it silently to themselves.
2. The students and teacher discuss what they did yesterday and what they decided was the meaning of the first selection.
3. The teacher then “share reads” the second selection with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while the teacher begins reading aloud. The teacher models prosody, inflection, and punctuation. The teacher then asks the class to join in with the reading after a couple of sentences while the teacher continues to read along with the students, still serving as the model for the class. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
4. The teacher explains that the class will be analyzing the second part of Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address today. All students are given a copy of Summary Organizer #2. This contains the second selection from the address.
5. The teacher puts a copy of Summary Organizer #2 on display in a format large enough for all of the class to see (an overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device). Explain that today they will be going through the same process as yesterday but as partners and small groups.
6. Explain that the objective is still to select Key Words from the second paragraph and then use those words to create a summary sentence that demonstrates an understanding of what Roosevelt was saying in that selection.
7. Guidelines for selecting the Key Words: The guidelines for selecting Key Words are the same as they were yesterday. However, because this paragraph is much longer than the last one at 250 words, they can pick up to ten Key Words.
8. Pair the students up and have them negotiate which Key Words to select. After they have decided on their words both students will write them in the Key Words box of their organizer.
9. The teacher now puts two pairs together. These two pairs go through the same negotiation-and-discussion process to come up with their Key Words. Be strategic in how you make your groups to ensure the most participation by all group members.
10. The teacher now explains that by using these Key Words the group will build a sentence or two that restates or summarizes what Roosevelt was talking about. This is done by the group

negotiating with its members on how best to build that sentence. Try to make sure that everyone is contributing to the process. It is very easy for one student to take control of the entire process and for the other students to let them do so. All of the students should write their negotiated sentence into their organizers.

11. The teacher now asks for the groups to share out the summary sentences they have created. This should start a teacher-led discussion that points out the qualities of the various attempts. How successful were the groups at understanding Roosevelt's address and were they careful to only use Roosevelt's Key Words in doing so?
12. The teacher explains that the group will now be putting their summary sentence into their own words, not having to use Roosevelt's words. Again, this is a group negotiation process. After they have decided on a sentence it should be written into their organizer. Again, the teacher should have the groups share out and discuss the clarity and quality of their attempts.
13. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. If you choose, you could have students use the back of their organizers to make a note of these words and their meanings.

LESSON 3

OBJECTIVE

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and gain a clear understanding of the content of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the students will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary and then restating that summary in the student’s own words. In this lesson the students will be working individually unless you think that they need another day of additional support from a partner or small group.

INTRODUCTION

Tell the students that they will be further exploring what President Roosevelt was saying in the third section of his First Inaugural Address by reading and understanding Roosevelt’s words and then being able to tell, in their own words, what he wrote. Today they will be working by themselves on their summaries unless you have decided otherwise.

MATERIALS

- [Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address](#) (abridged) (PDF)
- [Summary Organizer #3](#) (PDF)
- Overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device

PROCEDURE

1. All students are given an abridged copy of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address and then are asked to read it silently to themselves.
2. The students and teacher discuss what they did yesterday and what they decided was the meaning of the first and second selections.
3. The teacher then “share reads” the third selection with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while the teacher begins reading aloud. The teacher models prosody, inflection, and punctuation. The teacher then asks the class to join in with the reading after a couple of sentences while the teacher continues to read along with the students, still serving as the model for the class. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
4. The teacher explains that the class will be analyzing the third selection from Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address today. All students are given a copy of Summary Organizer #3. This contains the third selection from the address.
5. The teacher puts a copy of Summary Organizer #3 on display in a format large enough for all of the class to see (an overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device). Explain that today they will be going through the same process as yesterday, but they will be working by themselves.
6. Explain that the objective is still to select Key Words from the third paragraph and then use those words to create a summary sentence that demonstrates an understanding of what Roosevelt was saying in that selection.
7. Guidelines for selecting the Key Words: The guidelines for selecting these words are the same as they were yesterday. Due to the length of this passage (219 words), they can pick eight or nine Key Words.
8. Have the students decide which Key Words to select. After they have chosen their words they will write them in the Key Words box of their organizers.
9. The teacher now explains that, using these Key Words, the student will build a sentence that restates or summarizes what Roosevelt was talking about. They should write their summary sentence into their organizers.

10. The teacher explains that they will now be putting their summary sentence into their own words, not having to use Roosevelt's words. This should be added to their organizers.
11. The teacher now asks for students to share out the summary sentences they have created. This should start a teacher-led discussion that points out the qualities of the various attempts. How successful were the students at understanding what Roosevelt was talking about?
12. Wrap up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. If you choose, you could have students use the back of their organizers to make a note of these words and their meanings.

LESSON 4

OBJECTIVE

Students will be asked to “read like a detective” and gain a clear understanding of the content of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the students will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary and then restating that summary in the student’s own words. In this lesson the students will again be working individually.

INTRODUCTION

Tell the students that they will be further exploring what President Roosevelt was talking about in the fourth section of his First Inaugural Address by reading and understanding Roosevelt’s words and then being able to tell, in their own words, what he said. Today they will be working by themselves again on their summaries.

MATERIALS

- [Franklin D. Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address](#) (abridged) (PDF)
- [Summary Organizer #4](#) (PDF)
- Overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device

PROCEDURE

1. All students are given an abridged copy of the First Inaugural Address and then are asked to read it silently to themselves.
2. The students and teacher discuss what they did yesterday and what they decided was the meaning of the first, second, and third selections.
3. The teacher then “share reads” the fourth selection with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while the teacher begins reading aloud. The teacher models prosody, inflection, and punctuation. The teacher then asks the class to join in with the reading after a couple of sentences while the teacher continues to read along with the students, still serving as the model for the class. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English Language Learners (ELL).
4. The teacher explains that the class will be analyzing the fourth selection from President Roosevelt’s First Inaugural Address today. All students are given a copy of Summary Organizer #4. This contains the fourth selection from the address.
5. The teacher puts a copy of Summary Organizer #4 on display in a format large enough for all of the class to see (an overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device). Explain that today they will be going through the same process as yesterday and they will again be working by themselves.
6. Explain that the objective is still to select Key Words from the fourth paragraph and then use those words to create a summary sentence that demonstrates an understanding of what President Roosevelt was saying in this last selection.
7. Guidelines for selecting the Key Words: The guidelines for selecting these words are the same as they were yesterday. However, because this selection is the longest of all (264 words) they can select ten Key Words.
8. Have the students decide which Key Words to select. After they have chosen their words they will write them in the Key Words box of their organizers.
9. The teacher now explains that by using these Key Words they will build a sentence that restates or summarizes what President Roosevelt was saying. The students should write their summary sentences into their organizers.

10. The teacher explains that they will now be putting their summary sentence into their own words, not having to use Roosevelt's words. This should be added to their organizers.
11. The teacher now asks for students to share out the summary sentences that they have created. This should start a teacher-led discussion that points out the qualities of the various attempts. How successful were the students at understanding what Roosevelt was talking about?
12. Wrap up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. If you choose you could have students use the back of their organizers to make a note of these words and their meanings.

LESSON 5

OBJECTIVE

This lesson has two objectives. First, the students will synthesize the work of the last four days and demonstrate that they understand what Franklin D. Roosevelt was saying in his First Inaugural Address. Second, the teacher will ask questions of the students that require them to make inferences from the text but also require them to support their conclusions with explicit information from the text in a short essay.

INTRODUCTION

Tell the students that they will be reviewing what Franklin D. Roosevelt said in the First Inaugural Address. Second, you will be asking them to write a short argumentative essay about this address; explain that their conclusions must be backed up by evidence taken directly from the text.

MATERIALS

- [Franklin D. Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address](#) (abridged) (PDF)
- Overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device

PROCEDURE

1. All students are given an abridged copy of the address and are asked to read it silently to themselves.
2. The teacher asks the students for their best personal summary of selection one. This is done as a negotiation or discussion. The teacher may write this short sentence on the overhead or similar device. The same procedure is used for selections two, three, and four. When they are finished the class should have a summary either written or oral of Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address in only a few sentences. This should give the students a way to state what the general purpose or purposes of the address were.
3. The teacher can decide to have the students write a short essay now addressing one of the following prompts or do a short lesson on constructing an argumentative essay. If this is the case, save the essay writing until the next class period or assign it for homework. Remind the students that any arguments they make must be backed up with words taken directly from Roosevelt's First Inaugural Address. The first prompt is designed to be the easiest.

PROMPTS

1. Who does President Roosevelt blame for the current situation, what role does the government play in solving the dilemma, and what role do ordinary American citizens have in the nation's recovery?
2. According to President Roosevelt, what are the nation's real problems and what measures will be taken to solve those problems?
3. The President states that he will use "broad Executive power" to confront the situation. Why does Roosevelt think this will be necessary and what might he do with this power according to his speech?