

Cultural History along the Natchez Trace Parkway



On-Site Lesson:

Role Playing on the Natchez Trace Parkway (code 3 4RP)

➤ **Grade Level:**

3rd & 4th

➤ **Subject Area:**

Social Studies
Language Art

➤ **Setting:**

Historical site
along the Natchez
Trace Parkway (call
662-680-4027 for
site info.) and
classroom

➤ **Duration:**

45 minutes for
activity, 30
minutes for trail,
one class period
for the paragraph

➤ **Skills:**

Hiking, role-
playing, mapping
skills, writing skills

➤ **Vocabulary:**

Boatmen,
Kaintuck

Summary: If necessary, this lesson can be done in two parts, one at school and the second on a Natchez Trace trail. First, the students will role-play boatmen, American Indians, outlaws, and bears and then second, they will walk down a short trail.



Materials Needed:

Flag football belts or substitute for every student (3 flags for every student), 1 MS state map, 1 AL state map, and 1 TN state map, 1 map of the Natchez Trace Parkway, paper, pencils, and crayons .Natchez Trace History timelines and maps may be obtained free of charge by calling 662-680-4027 or 800-305-7417.

Instructional Information

3rd Grade Tennessee Grade Level Expectations Language Arts:

Writing:

0301.3.1 Write on a predetermined topic to a specified audience

0301.3.2 Write for a variety of purposes: to entertain, persuade, inform, demonstrate knowledge, answer questions, tell a story, or respond to literature.

0301.3.11 Using complete sentences, develop a logical, coherent paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence.

Logic:

0301.5.1 Distinguish fact from opinion.

0301.5.2 Distinguish cause from effect.

3rd Grade Tennessee Grade Level Expectations Social Studies:

Learning Expectations:

1.01 Understand the diversity of human cultures.

1.02 Discuss cultures and human patterns of places and regions of the world.

1.03 Recognize the contributions of individuals and people of various ethnic, racial, religious, and socioeconomic groups to the development

of civilizations.

Accomplishments:

3.1.01 Understand the diversity of human cultures.

a. Recognize that changes in culture occur through the spread of people, languages, ideas, and goods.

3.1.02 Discuss the cultures and human patterns of places and regions of the world.

b. Compare ways in which people from different cultures think about and deal with their physical environment and social conditions.

3.1.03 Recognize the contributions of individuals and people of various ethnic, racial, religious, socioeconomic groups to the development of civilizations.

b. Retell the heroic deeds of characters from folktales and legends.

3.1.04 Understand the contributions of individuals and people of various ethnic, racial, religious, and socioeconomic groups to Tennessee.

b. Explain the significance of selected individual writers and artists and their stories, poems, statues, paintings and other examples of cultural heritage from regions in Tennessee and around the world.

Geography:

3.3.01 Understand how to use maps, globes, and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process and report information from a spatial perspective.

a. Show how the spatial elements of point, line, and area are used on a map or globe.

3.3.02 Recognize the interaction between human and physical systems around the world. e.

Understand how technology allows people to adapt the environment to meet their needs.

3.3.03 Demonstrate how to identify and locate major physical and political features on globes and maps.

a. Locate the major cities of Tennessee and the world on a map or globe.

d. Explain how change affects region and place over time.

History:

3.5.01 Identify major people, events, and issues in Tennessee, United States, and world history.

a. Identify the heroic deeds of characters from state, national, and global histories.

b. Identify historical figures that helped to shape regions.

3.5.02 Understand the place of historical events in the context of past, present and future.

a. Describe the order of events by using designation of time periods such as ancient times and modern times.

b. Describe how individuals, events, and ideas cause regional change over time.

c. Use vocabulary related to chronology, including past, present and future.

3.5.03 Explain how to use historical information acquired from a variety of sources.

a. Create and interpret timelines.

b. Identify factors that cause development and change in communities.

4th Grade Tennessee Grade Level Expectations Language Arts:

GLE 0401.5.1 Continue to develop logic skills to facilitate learning and to enhance thoughtful reasoning.

GLE 0401.5.2 Use logic to make inferences and draw conclusions in a variety of oral and written contexts.

4th Grade Tennessee Grade Level Expectations Social Studies:

Culture:

4.1.01 Understand the diversity of human cultures. a. Describe cultures of Native American tribes.

b. Explain how European settlers created a new culture.

4.1.02 Discuss cultures and human patterns of places and regions of the world. a. Explore similarities and differences in how groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns. b. Compare how people from different cultures think about and handle their physical environments and social conditions.

4.1.03 Recognize the contributions of individuals and people of various ethnic, racial, religious, and socioeconomic groups to the development of civilizations. a. Show different cultural regions on a map identifying such things as religion, language, and ethnicity. b. Identify the reasons for the establishment of Spanish missions in early American history.

4.1.04 Understand the contributions of individuals and people of various ethnic, racial, religious, and socioeconomic groups to Tennessee. a. Identify the similarities and differences within and among selected racial, ethnic, and religious groups in Tennessee. c. Summarize the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the development of early Tennessee.

Geography:

4.3.01 Understand how to use maps, globes, and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process and report information from a spatial perspective. c. Locate the routes of early explorers of North America on a map.

4.3.02 Recognize the interaction between human and physical systems around the world.

a. Explain how physical and human characteristics of places and regions within the state and the United States developed. b. Explain how the major river systems affected the development of early settlements.

Learning Objectives: The students will 1) have a better understanding of the Old Natchez Trace and the struggles people traveling on it had to overcome in the 1800s, 2) compose text, 3) use social studies tools

Teacher Set: If necessary, this lesson can be done in two parts in two places. The teacher will orient the students with an official map of the Natchez Trace Parkway and the official Natchez Trace Historic Timeline. State maps may compliment this exercise.

While the flag-football type game would be more effective if played at a trailhead, it may be played at the school. The trail hike will be used to stimulate imagination and establish a mental picture with descriptive words. The best trails to use are portions of the sunken or Old Natchez Trace trail.

Prior to playing the game, the teacher will need to obtain “flags” and write character assignments on slips of paper. The students should keep their characters secret. In the flag-football type game, the students will role-play boatmen, American Indians, outlaws, and bears. The slips of paper will also tell students whose flags they may take.

Slips of paper should read:

Boatman – Take American Indians and bear
Bear - Take boatman and outlaw
Outlaw – Take American Indian and boatman
American Indian – Take outlaw and bear

There should be as many pieces of paper as students with the characters divided more or less evenly. So if there are 20 students in the class there would be 5 slips of paper that said boatmen, 5 that said bear, etc. The students will draw the names from a “hat”. The game will be played in a large outdoor area.

Teacher Overview: Boatmen, or Kaintucks, floated down the Mississippi River on flatboats to Natchez, Mississippi where they sold many different items. They broke apart their boats and sold the wood too. They could not use their boats for the trip home as paddling upriver was too difficult. Some had to go as far home as Pennsylvania. The Natchez Trace is the route many chose to take because it was a direct route to Nashville, Tennessee. Over the years, American Indians had made trails from frequent use and the boatmen followed their paths. Eventually, the Natchez Trace turned into a sometimes dangerous road. Sometimes the boatmen and American Indians did not get along. The boatmen felt the American Indians were getting in their way and the Indians felt the boatmen were invading their homeland.

Outlaws were sometimes another difficulty. After selling all of their goods and the wood from their boats, the boatmen were carrying a lot of money. Outlaws knew that the boatmen had large amounts of money and would steal from them while they were asleep. Sometimes the outlaws would even kill the boatmen for the money. Some of the first serial killers are believed to have started their killing sprees on the Natchez Trace. The Harpes brothers were very vicious outlaws and murders. These two men killed anyone and everyone who stood in the way of what they wanted, even their own children.

There were also natural obstacles such as snakes, bears as well as hunger and fatigue. The most common threat however, would have been from the weather, especially heavy rains that caused floods.

Student Instruction: The students will locate the Natchez Trace Parkway and the Old Trace (gray line on official map). The students will locate the trail they will visit. Students will locate the time

period on the timeline when the boatmen used the Natchez Trace. The students will receive the instructions to the game, learn the boundaries of the game field and receive their flags and game character assignments.

When walking the trail, the students will be encouraged to share words that describe the trail and the trail surroundings. They should try to imagine what it would have been like to travel the Old Trace two hundred years ago.

Student Task: Sunken Trace Game Instructions:

1. The students will learn the boundaries of the game play area.
2. The students will attach their flags to themselves.
3. The students will secretly choose a slip of paper that will assign their character. They will be either a boatmen, American Indian, outlaw, or bear.
4. Students will learn who can take which flags.
5. The student will learn how to make enact a “stand-off”.

Boatmen may take flags from American Indians or bears.

Bears may take boatmen or outlaw flags.

Outlaws may take American Indian and boatman flags.

American Indians may take outlaw and bear flags.

Initially, the students should not tell each other the role he or she is playing because people did not know who they were meeting when they were traveling the trace.

To steal a flag: A student will approach another student and say, “You’re Sunk!” This is called a stand-off. The two students in the “stand-off” will reveal their paper slips to each other. If the “attacker” can steal a flag from this type of character, they may do so (only ONE flag at a time). However, if able, the “attacked” student may also take a flag from the would-be attacker. They may not enact a stand-off with the same student more than one-time in a row.

After everyone is assigned a role, the students will begin to roam within the boundaries set by the teacher at the site. They will initiate stand-offs and collect flags. The goal for the students is to steal as many flags as possible from other students, while protecting their own flags.

When a person loses all of his or her flags, that person is “dead” or out. When someone “dies”, they will sit and wait until the end of the game. When there is just one student left with flags or after everyone has “died”, the game is over.

The teacher will then take the students on a short hike to show the students the traveling conditions and terrain the boatmen, outlaws, and American Indians had to overcome. Before they enter the trail, the students will be told they should look around and think of words that describe the areas they are seeing. The teacher should stop after each 2 or three minutes of walking and have the students share some of their descriptive words.

OPTION for a milder/low key game: Instead of flags, the students will carry 3 cards scripted with their “character name”. When there is a “stand-off”, the students quietly collect the cards from other students rather than try to steal flags.

Student Assessment: Fair play in the game. Participation in the hike descriptions. Quality of text composition.

Suggestions for re-teaching: To reinforce the lesson, the teacher will assign the students to draw a picture of the Natchez Trace and write a paragraph about what the student saw while on the trail.

Extension: For an interpretive program on the boatmen of the Natchez Trace Parkway, call 662-680-4027 or 1-800-305-7417 for information.

Name: _____

Directions: Draw a picture of what you saw while on the Natchez Trace and then write a paragraph about your picture. Put the title of your picture on the line in the box.


