Lesson Title: Is there a modern day Jacob Riis?

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Subject: U.S. History/ Social Studies

Grade level: 8th (easily adapted to other grade levels)

Time frame: 1-3 class periods depending on presentation time and class sizes

Lesson overview:

As a KNHP “Jacob Riis: How the other Half Lives” lesson development workshop participant I received an informational booklet that will accompany the Jacob Riis exhibit at the KNHP this fall. (On the cover is the now iconic image of “Little Katie” from the 52nd Street Industrial School circa 1891-1892.) The inside cover of the booklet contains a short biography of Jacob Riis and one line stood out for me: “By the time of his death in 1914, Riis was a national celebrity and world-renown spokesman on urban housing, public education, public health, and immigration.” Many celebrities today also use their time, talent, fame, and money to help others. My lesson intends to be a bridge for students between the social activism of Jacob Riis (which students will already be familiar with having done some background reading and visiting of the Riis exhibit at the KHNP’s Union Building.) and modern day celebrities and their social activism.

Objectives:

After completion of the lesson, students will be able to:

\*Identify and discuss a wide variety of modern social issues/problems

\*compare and contrast modern social issues with those of Jacob Riis’ NYC social issues

\*create a digital faux magazine cover that includes a photo of their chosen celebrity and student generated faux article titles relating to the social issue and possible solutions

\*present their completed magazine cover to the class and answer potential questions on the topic

Student materials:

\*Prior assignments/ notebook entries relating to Jacob Riis and his work as a photojournalist and social activist

\*Chromebook to view Jacob Riis photos at the Museum of the City of New York website, research modern celebrities and their social activism and to create a digital magazine cover using a program such as PowerPoint

\*Interactive notebook for class (students will draw their own 3-2-1 pyramid or get one from on the front table)

Note: 3-2-1 summary is a simple triangle divided into thirds horizontally. There are 3 boxes on the bottom, 2 in the middle, and 1 on the top. Students are given a topic (that then is added as a title) and then must fill in the boxes accordingly: The bottom 3 boxes are for 3 things students have learned about the topic. The middle 2 boxes are for people or vocabulary terms students learned about the topic. The top box is for 1 question they still have or 1 question they can answer about the topic.

\*Handouts with lesson requirements and scoring rubrics (Found at the end of this document.)

MDE Grade 8 Social Studies Content to be addressed (GLCEs):

\*U6.2 Investigating Topics, and Issue Analysis (P2)  
Use the historical perspective to investigate a significant historical topic from United States History Eras 3-6 that also has significance as an issue or topic in the United States today.

\*8 U6.2.1 United States History Investigation Topic and Issue Analysis, Past and Present – Use historical perspectives to analyze issues in the United States from the past and the present; conduct research on a historical issue or topic, identify a connection to a contemporary issue, and present findings (e.g., oral, visual, video, or electronic presentation, persuasive essay, or research paper); include causes and consequences of the historical action and predict possible consequences of the contemporary action.

\* P3.1 Identifying and Analyzing Issues, Decision Making, Persuasive Communication about a Public Issue and Citizen Involvement

\*8 P3.1.1   
Identify, research, analyze, discuss, and defend a position on a national public policy issue. • Identify a national public policy issue. • Clearly state the issue as a question of public policy orally or in written form. • Use inquiry methods to trace the origins of the issue and to acquire data about the issue. • Generate and evaluate alternative resolutions to the public issue and analyze various perspectives (causes, consequences, positive and negative impact) on the issue. • Identify and apply core democratic values or constitutional principles. • Share and discuss findings of research and issue analysis in group discussions and debates. • Compose a persuasive essay justifying the position with a reasoned argument. • Develop an action plan to address or inform others about the issue

\*P4.2 Citizen Involvement  
Act constructively to further the public good

\*8 P4.2.2  
Engage in activities intended to contribute to solving a national or international problem studied.

MDE Grade 8 English Language Arts Content to be addressed:   
R.CM.08.01 connect personal knowledge, experiences, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in text through oral and written responses.   
R.CM.08.02 retell through concise summarization grade-level narrative and informational text.   
R.CM.08.03 analyze global themes, universal truths, and principles within and across texts to create a deeper understanding by drawing conclusions, making inferences, and synthesizing.   
R.CM.08.04 apply significant knowledge from grade-level science, social studies, and mathematics texts.  
W.SP.08.01 in the context of writing use correct spelling conventions

Classroom Activities:

* Quick review of Jacob Riis and his work as a photojournalist, author, and social activist by viewing his photos on the Museum of the City of New York’s website. (Can also review the students’ experience at the Riis exhibit at the KNHP.) (5-8 mins.)
* Students create a 3-2-1 summary graphic organizer in their interactive notebooks on the topic of Jacob Riis and his photographs as seen at the KHNP exhibit and/or the Museum of the City of New York website dedicated to Riis. (5 mins.)
* Think-pair-share (5 mins.) on the topic of modern (current) social problems. (This should not be a problem, as many students watch a daily or weekly news program.)
* Discussion based on students’ favorite celebrities. Who are they? Why are they famous? What is their background? Do they have any social causes that students know of?   
  (5 mins.)
* Introduce the “Social Activism Magazine Cover” activity and give students the handouts with requirements and scoring rubric. (5 mins.)
* Allow time for students to research their favorite celebrities and find out if they have social causes. Begin planning magazine cover according to the requirements and scoring rubric. (Rest of class hour)
* See teacher examples of current magazines on hand such as National Geographic, Sports Illustrated, The Week, etc.) What do you notice about these covers? What are the features? What stands out?
* Teacher will post QR codes on the front board linking to 3 articles on celebrity activism.

Teacher resources:

“Jacob A. Riis.” *Museum of the City of New York*, www.mcny.org/exhibition/jacob-riis.

“MDE.” *MDE - Michigan Department of Education*, www.michigan.gov/mde/.

Sayej, Nadja. “Some Celebrities Care More About Helping The World Than Camera Time.” *Vice*, VICE, 30 June 2017, www.vice.com/en\_us/article/j5qq4p/some-celebrities-care-more-about-helping-the-world-than-camera-time.

Staff, Us Weekly. “Celebrity Activists!” *Us Weekly*, 8 Jan. 2018, www.usmagazine.com/celebrity-news/pictures/celebrity-activists-20141411/42158-2/.

“These 9 Celebrity Activists Used Their Star Power for Good in 2017.” *Global Citizen*, [Top 2017 Celebrities Impact Activism](http://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/celebrities-impact-top-2017-activism/).

\*Teacher may also want to have several current magazines on hand to use as reference for cover design, story lines, etc.

Name: Date: Hour: Due Date:

Social Activism Magazine Cover Activity

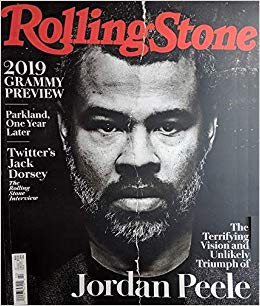
We have been lucky to visit the Jacob A. Riis: How the Other Half Lives” photography exhibit at the Keweenaw National Historic Park. Although he was a journalist by trade, Riis is best remembered for his 1890 book and lantern shows of the same title. His books and photographs showed us people (especially new immigrants) who were struggling to survive in America. Along with new problems of our modern times, many of the issues Riis brought to peoples’ attention *are still issues affecting people all over the world today.* Thankfully, there are still celebrities willing to use their time, status, money and influence to try and make the world a better place.

For this activity you will chose a celebrity that is known for their social activism and create a faux magazine cover highlighting the social cause and the celebrity. You MUST include the following on your magazine cover:

* magazine title (make it related to the social cause)
* a picture of the celebrity
* titles of 2 “articles” in the magazine (again, related to the cause & celebrity)
* 1 article title must be about a possible solution to the social cause

After your magazine cover is complete you will share it with the class in a brief (2-3 minute) presentation. This presentation MUST include:

* a completed PowerPoint slide of your magazine cover (follow the above requirements)
* a short statement about the celebrity and their connection to the cause
* a short statement on the impact your celebrity has made to the cause



Social Activism Magazine Cover

scoring rubric

Name:

Date:

Hour:

|  | excellent | average | needs improvement |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| magazine title | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| celeb picture | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| title of 3 articles(relative to social cause) | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| title of 1 article contains possible solution | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| creativity | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| neatness/ design | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| presentation | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| total pts. out of 25 possible |  | \* | \* |

Teacher comments:

