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Descriptive Data:

I teach 7th and 8th grade US History in a K-8 building located in Rochester New York. My 8th grade course starts with Reconstruction and concludes with the Obama Administration. Throughout both my 7th and 8th grade courses, the theme of power, authority and change is well defined and constantly revisited in each unit. It is my intent with these projects to give students the opportunity to probe these themes in greater detail. My goal is to create an 8th grade project where students explore these themes in extensive examinations of power and change within a topic they've studied in my class. I will start this project with a class-wide reading of *The Raid* by John Steinbeck.

Essential Questions:

- 1) How have officials in government and in business used their authority to control large groups of people?
- 2) Which groups and or individuals have been most effective in circumventing traditional power structures in order to create meaningful social change in American society?
- 3) Which tactics have proven most effective for people outside of traditional power structures to enact progressive change in American society?
- 4) How did John Steinbeck use the tools available to him to change America?

Learning Targets:

- 1) Analyze ways people in positions of power within government and business use their authority to control people.
- 2) Examine how people outside of government have used the tools available them to enact meaningful change in the United States.
- 3) Evaluate the best methods to enact change in the United States.
- 4) Analyze how John Steinbeck used literature and journalism to change the United States.

Project Introduction:

Grade 8:

- 1) The class will read, examine and discuss *The Raid* as a starting point into our examination of power, authority and change in American history. After reading the short story as a class, students will create presentations (powerpoints or campaign speeches with a campaign poster) on *The Raid* by John Steinbeck. In their campaign students will be asked to persuade the rest of the class to either join the side of the union organizers or the angry anti-union mob. This will encourage students to think about

the events in the short story from the perspective the characters within it. Throughout this beginning part of the project, students will explore the tactics used by the government to break up unions and destroy their ability to organize. Students will already have background knowledge of the topic having explored union organization and suppression during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.

2) Students will then choose one example of government/business suppression of Americans from 1870-present. Examples are: The Red Scare, southern governors during the Civil Rights Era, business leaders during the Gilded Age and Japanese internment camps during WW2. Students will be given the opportunity to create presentations (Powerpoints/Prezis, a one act play about the group, a descriptive menu, a descriptive 12 song play list, skits or campaign speeches) about this group.

3) Students will then compare and contrast the group they chose from step 2 to a group that used a specific set of tools to improve the lives of Americans. Examples are: civil rights leaders from the 1960s, unions, Greenpeace, etc) Students will be given the opportunity to create presentations (Powerpoints/Prezis, a one act play about the group, a descriptive menu, a descriptive 12 song play list, skits or campaign speeches) about this group.

-Students cannot repeat the same kind of final product more than once. For example, if a student decides to organize a skit about Japanese internment during WW2, the student will have to complete a separate final product for the other two components of this project.

4) Final component of the project- students will write a 2-3 page essay examining how government and business leaders have used power to control people. The paper will also examine how citizens have organized on the grassroots level to resist elites. Students will evaluate which tactics work the best for protest groups. Finally students will discuss a specific issue in their own community that they believe should be addressed and make a “soapbox” speech examining the importance of the issue and how they intend to address it using the tools available to them.

Assessment:

1) Students will create either a power-point presentation or a campaign speech/poster in which they examine issues of power, authority and tactics exhibited in *The Raid*.

2) Students will create a skit with props discussing a time when business/ government officials used specific tactics to oppress and control a group of people.

4) Students will create a 2-3 page essay comparing, contrasting and evaluating the different strands of power, authority and change throughout this project.

5) Students will make a “soapbox” speech about an issue in their community that concerns them and how they plan on addressing the issue.

NY State Learning Standards addressed in this project:

1) 8.2 A CHANGING SOCIETY: Industrialization and immigration contributed to the urbanization of America. Problems resulting from these changes sparked the Progressive movement and increased calls for reform.

(Standards: 1, 2, 4; Themes: MOV, SOC, TECH, EXCH)

2) 8.3 EXPANSION AND IMPERIALISM: Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, economic, political, and cultural factors contributed to a push for westward expansion and more aggressive United States foreign policy.

3) 8.5 GREAT DEPRESSION: Economic and environmental disasters in the 1930s created hardships for many Americans. Amidst much debate about the appropriate role of government, President Franklin D. Roosevelt helped to create intensive government interventions in the United States economy and society.

(Standards: 1, 3, 5; Themes: TCC, SOC, GOV, ECO)

4) 8.8 DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE: After World War II, the population of the United States rose sharply as a result of both natural increases and immigration. Population movements have resulted in changes to the American landscape and shifting political power. An aging population is affecting the economy and straining public resources.

(Standards: 1, 3, 4, 5; Themes: ID, GEO, SOC, GOV, ECO)

Common Core Learning Standards:

1) CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

2) CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

3) CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.