

Exodus: History Writ Large

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum Focus: World History

Lesson Duration: Two class periods

Program Description

Storied Liberation (21 min.) – Examines the ancient quest for freedom that took place in the burning sands of Egypt and its long-ranging influence. *Ramses' Biblical Role* (28 min.) – Looks at evidence that suggests this great Egyptian king was the unnamed pharaoh in the Book of Exodus.

Onscreen Questions

- Can science explain events that some people consider miracles?
- How can science and religion work to shed light on historical events?
- Why wasn't Ramses frightened of the 10 plagues?
- Why wouldn't Ramses include a military loss in his records?

Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Demonstrate understanding of basic facts about Moses and his role in the story of Exodus.
- Use Internet resources to locate artwork based on the life of Moses.
- Create a book highlighting five famous pieces of art that depict scenes from the life of Moses.

Materials

- *Exodus: History Writ Large* video and VCR, or DVD and DVD player
- Computers with Internet access and word processing program
- Access to a printer, preferably color
- Stapler, plastic binder, or some way for students to bind their pages into a book

Procedures

1. After watching *Exodus: History Writ Large*, review important facts about Moses and his role in the story of Exodus. What is the significance of the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses?

2. As a class, create a list of significant events in the life of Moses. For those students who are familiar with Moses, encourage them to add events that may not have been covered in the video:
 - The infant Moses is found along the river by the pharaoh's daughter
 - Moses attacks the Egyptian overseer who struck a Semite; flees to the desert
 - God calls out to Moses from the fire of a burning bush; tells him to set the Israelites free
 - Moses confronts Pharaoh; he asks Pharaoh to let his people go
 - Ten plagues (confrontation between Pharaoh and the god of the Israelites)
 - Moses leads Israelites out of Egypt and crosses the Red Sea (or "sea of reeds"); the parting of the sea
 - Moses leads Israelites through the barren desert
 - Moses strikes a rock in the desert, making water flow from it
 - Moses climbs Mount Sinai and receives the Ten Commandments from God; Moses presents them to the Israelites
 - Moses leads the Israelites to "the promised land" but dies before entering it.

3. Explain that Moses and the story of Exodus have influenced oppressed peoples for thousands of years. In fact, many famous painters have depicted scenes from Moses' life. Tell students that their assignment is to use the Web to find at least five paintings or other works of art depicting important scenes from the life of Moses and create an "Illustrated History of Moses." For each image, they should explain:
 - The name of the artwork and the year it was created
 - The name and nationality of the artist
 - Which event in the story of Moses is being depicted
 - A brief, personal statement about why the student selected that image

4. Share the following Web sites with students for their research:
 - Web Gallery of Art (click "Search" button on top menu, type "Moses" in the Title box, then click "Search")
<http://www.wga.hu/index1.html>
 - Scenes from the Life of Moses
<http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html?/html/b/botticel/4sistina/moses/index.html>
 - Links to Images of Moses (see "See Also" at bottom of page for links to significant events)
<http://www.textweek.com/art/moses.htm>

- Links to images of Baby Moses
http://www.textweek.com/art/baby_moses.htm
 - Links to images of Moses and the Burning Bush
http://www.textweek.com/art/burning_bush.htm
 - Links to images of the Egyptian Plagues
<http://www.textweek.com/art/plagues.htm>
 - Links to images of the Exodus
<http://www.textweek.com/art/exodus.htm>
5. If students come across unfamiliar events, the following Web sites provide information about the life of Moses:
- The Life of Moses (BBC)
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/world_religions/judaism_moses.shtml
 - Moses: the Bible Story of Moses, the Hebrew Law Giver (About.com)
<http://ancienthistory.about.com/od/israeljudaea/a/aa091499.htm>
6. Have students create one page per image, copying and pasting each image into a word processing program and typing the requested information. In addition, have them create a cover page with at least one image—either their own or one they found in their research. If possible, allow them to print their pages on a color printer. Have each student bind his or her pages into a book, making sure that the images are placed in order to reflect the timeline of events in Moses' life.
7. After students have completed their books, allow class time for students to pass around books and read about the images other students selected.
8. As a class, talk about the reasons that Moses has been depicted so frequently in art. What influence do you think these works of art had on society?

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students demonstrated a strong understanding of the Moses, the story of Exodus, and the role of the pharaoh Ramses; collected at least five appropriate images from the life of Moses, providing all the requested information for each one; created a clear, creative book, placing the images in the appropriate order.
- 2 points: Students demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the Moses, the story of Exodus, and the role of the pharaoh Ramses; collected four or five appropriate images from the life of Moses, providing most the requested information for each one; created a complete, adequate book, placing the images in the appropriate order.
- 1 point: Students demonstrated a weak understanding of the Moses, the story of Exodus, and the role of the pharaoh Ramses; collected less than four appropriate images from the life of



Moses, providing some of the requested information for each one; created a disorganized book, placing several of the images in the incorrect order.

Vocabulary

dynasty

Definition: A powerful group or family that maintains its position for a considerable time.

Context: Ramses' grandfather was the first pharaoh of his dynasty.

Exodus

Definition: The second book of the Old Testament, which tells the story of how Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt; a mass departure

Context: Exodus is a story of liberation, and it has been a source of inspiration to oppressed peoples around the world.

hieroglyphs

Definition: Pictorial characters in a system of writing

Context: Hieroglyphs suggest that Ramses buried as many as 50 of his 52 sons in a massive tomb in the Valley of the Kings.

liberation

Definition: The act of setting free; specifically to free from domination by a foreign power

Context: The story of Moses and the liberation of the Israelites has many meanings and interpretations.

plague

Definition: A disastrous evil or affliction; an epidemic disease causing a high rate of mortality

Context: In the Exodus story, the god of the Israelites casts ten plagues upon Egypt.

stele

Definition: A carved stone pillar usually inscribed and used as a memorial or monument

Context: The stele suggests that Ramses the Great was the unnamed pharaoh of the Exodus.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:



- World History: Era 2 – Understands the major characteristics of civilization and the development of civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley.
- Historical Understanding: Understands the historical perspective.
- Art: Visual Arts – Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Culture
 - Time, Continuity, and Change
 - People, Places, and Environments
 - Power, Authority, and Governance
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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