

TITLE OF THE LESSON

US History Unit 1 Lesson 1 – The Historical Compelling Why  
*How Have Individuals Created Diverse Experiences in Society?*

---

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One Class Period

---

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

National Council for the Social Studies: Curriculum Standards for the Social Studies

I. Culture

e. demonstrate the value of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion, within and across groups.

IV. Individual Development & Identity

a. articulate personal connections to time, place, and social/cultural systems.

h. work independently and cooperatively within groups and institutions to accomplish goals.

---

MATERIALS

Quad Toolboxes (See **Quad Toolbox Strategy** for Recommended Materials) – Teacher Created

**Quad Toolboxes Strategy** – Teacher Page

**Sketchbooks Strategy** – Teacher Page

**Springboard Strategy** – Teacher Page

**Compelling Why Strategy** – Teacher Page

**Sample US History Course Syllabus** – Teacher Page

**Question Series 1** – Teacher Page

Marker Board and Dry Erase Marker

Styrofoam Cups

Small Styrofoam Plates

Assorted Seed Packets of different planting depths and germination periods (Fruits, Vegetables, and Herbs)

Small Buckets of Potting Soil (number needed depends on number of Quad groups)

Plastic Spoons

Open Windowsill or Counter Space

Several Jugs Room Temperature Water

Sketchbooks or Sketchbook Folders (inform students of materials they need to bring to class)

---

PRINTED MATERIALS

**Springboard 1** – Student Page

*Cultural Resource: Still Life and Street*, 1937 M.C. Escher Woodcut – Primary Source Image

US History Course Syllabus – Teacher Must Create

---

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To understand a “Compelling Why” for what makes history valuable and applicable to the lives of today’s high school students
  - To meet and get to know fellow classmates
  - To be introduced to and become familiar with the interactive, hands-on design of the class
  - To be introduced to and become familiar with the Student Sketchbook, the student performance tool included with the unit design
- 

EXPLANATION OF LESSON

**SETTING THE STAGE**

The ultimate goal of the first unit in the United States History curriculum is to establish an integrated classroom of questioning historians. In order to accomplish this, the initial set of lesson plans requires a high degree of classroom and material preparation. Prior to teaching the lesson be sure to review the teacher pages indicated above. Also, the learning standard should be written on the board daily because each day students should include a standards connection in their Sketchbook reflections. Please realize that the strategies and systems being introduced will become easier to maintain as students become more familiar with them. This curriculum is intended to fold levels of thinking and learning, creating *Origami for the Mind*. In order to accomplish this, it is extremely important to introduce all printed materials in a unique, eye-catching way. Students are continually

being asked to perform higher level thinking, therefore each printed introduction should expand students' understanding of how knowledge is acquired. Each lesson contains suggestions on the introductions of materials. These introduction methods are certainly alterable, but please keep in mind that introductions must be attention-getting in order to spur students into higher learning levels.

---

#### FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

##### SPRINGBOARD: “OPPOSING CHOICES”

\*\*Be sure to review the [Springboard Strategy](#) prior to teaching the lesson so that you are familiar with the function of the Springboard\*\*

1. Greet and Instruct – Greet students near the door of the classroom. As you are welcoming students to the class, hand each student a folded colored index card. They should do the following two things once they have taken a seat:
  - a. Name Card – Instruct them to use the markers found in the [Quad Toolboxes](#) found at each desk grouping to create a name card. The name card should include their first and last name in clear writing and should be displayed on the upper right corner of their desk.
  - b. Springboard 1 – Instruct them to choose any seat in the room they would like and to begin working on the card they will find on the desk (a natural seating chart will be determined later within the Learning Activities for the day). The Springboard cards found on the desk should be copied in assorted colors. Springboard 1 contains a series of opposing choices which students are to quickly choose between. The layout of the choices spirals toward the center of the card, enhancing student interest in completing the cards.
2. As students take their seats in the Quads around the room. Be ready to assist students who are unsure of what they are supposed to be doing.
3. Name Card – Students should first create a name card. As you are walking around the room, check off students' attendance as they complete name cards.
4. Springboard 1 – When students are finished with the name cards, they should begin working on the Springboard 1 card they found at their desks. Remind students to carefully fill in the correct circles with a pencil. If students have questions on the choices, instruct them to answer as best they can. This procedure is used occasionally within the Springboard as skills practice for taking standardized tests. Instruct students to write their names on the back of the Springboard. Watch carefully for students' to complete the Springboard so that you are ready to begin the Compelling Why discussion.

##### COMPELLING WHY

\*\*Be sure to review the [Compelling Why Strategy](#) carefully prior to teaching the lesson so that you can create the Compelling Why. Question Series Lesson 1 provides questioning options, but you must be ready to respond according to students' ideas in order to successfully lead a Compelling Why. Keep in mind that the Compelling Why should be an introductory discussion, so limit the time frame for interaction to 10-15 minutes.\*\*

SUBJECT REASON: Discovering What it Means to Be Human

UNIT STRAND: The Value of Individuality

*What is the Role of the Individual in Society and How Has That Role Changed Over Time?*

LESSON THREAD: *Are people defined as much by the things they aren't as by the things they are?*

CONCRETE CONNECTIONS: Summer activities, Preparing for the return to school

##### LEADING THE DISCUSSION

1. As soon as a majority of students have completed Springboard 1, be ready to begin leading students through the Compelling Why.
  2. Question Series – Get students' attention by asking if they are ready to begin exploring history. Tell them to turn the Springboard over. It will be needed later in the class period. Lead student discussion through **Question Series Lesson 1**.
- 

#### ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP



**LEARNING ACTIVITY #1: QUAD LIFE ORIENTATION**

**TIME FRAME--15 MINUTES**

**Multiple Intelligence (MI)--Interpersonal**

**GOAL—Establish a cooperative environment among students sharing quad space**

1. Distribute copies of *Cultural Resource: Still Life and Street, Woodcut by M.C. Escher, 1937*.
2. Explain Toolbox – Bring students’ attention to the [Quad Toolboxes](#) found in their groups. Describe the supplies found within the toolboxes, the color coding system, and the responsibilities of each quad to maintain the toolbox found in their quad. Don’t assign students to report on toolboxes yet because their seating arrangement will be more permanently established in Lesson 2.
3. Assign Roles – Instruct quads to select group roles (see *Group Roles* below).
4. Examine and Identify – Tell quads to carefully examine the woodcut. First quads should create a list of their first impressions. This involves listing all words and phrases which come to mind when viewing the wood cut. Next, instruct quads to create a dual list showing what the people in the wood cut are doing in comparison to what they aren’t doing.
5. Present and Discuss –Begin by asking quads to volunteer to share their lists. Ask first for impression words and phrases. Ask students to identify which of the impressions are concerned with human activities. Are the activities ones which contemporary society continues to practice or not? Next, ask Quad Record Keepers to share the dual lists each quad created. After each quad has shared their observations, ask the class to share what they have learned about life in the 1930s. True historical understanding is reached by noticing details.
6. Collect and Post – After drawing discussion to a close, collect quad discussion records and post them somewhere in the classroom. Encourage students to look through the records when time is available. The next activity will serve as an ongoing instrument for teaching students the value of being observant. Paying close attention to details is what creates individuality.

**LEARNING ACTIVITY #2--PLANTING SEEDS OF INDIVIDUALITY**

**TIME FRAME--20 MINUTES**

**MI--INTRAPERSONAL, SPATIAL, NATURALIST**

**GOAL--Establish students’ commitment to the classroom and understanding of individuality by placing each student in charge of a garden plot. The plants are intended to illustrate how individuals emerge from layers of history.**

**\*\*Note: This activity requires planting seeds. So be sure that a sunlit place is available for seeds to grow. The seeds are representative of historical individuals, so ideally the seeds should remain within the classroom where students can observe them daily.**

1. Distribute Materials – Immediately after picking up the quad writing, give each quad: a bucket containing potting soil, several plastic spoons, a stack of Styrofoam cups, a stack of Styrofoam plates, and an assortment of seeds. Tell students to leave the materials alone until you have given them instructions.
2. Instructions – Once all planting materials have been distributed, tells students to flip over their Springboard cards and select two Styrofoam cups. Instruct students to choose at least 5 different Springboard choices to artistically represent on each styrofoam cup. Student should also integrate their name into the cups’ designs. An assortment of art supplies can be found in the toolboxes. Walk around the room offering help to any students who have questions.
3. Cups and Plates – Once students have completed the decorating of both cups, assist them in poking a pencil hole through the bottom of each cup. Then a cup should be placed on each plate .
4. Choosing Seeds – Instruct students to consider the seed packets carefully and choose to plant a type of seed in each cup which matches with the choices illustrated on the outside of the cup. Ideally, each student will want to be independent in their choices. If friends choose similar seeds, do not worry because it will help to separate them when the seating arrangement becomes apparent in Lesson 2. Remind students to carefully read the

planting instructions found on the back of the seed packets, paying particular attention to the recommended planting depth. Rulers are available in the toolboxes to ensure correct planting depth.

5. House Plants – As students complete planting direct them to a clear windowsill or counter where their plants can be housed. The planted seeds can be watered once they have reached their final destination.
6. Making Observations—Once students have returned to their desks begin asking discussion questions about their observations on the different vegetable seeds. Students should conclude that there is a great deal of variety in seed size, color, and planting depth.
7. Historical Connections—Provide students with a brief explanation of how growing seeds mirror the emergence of individuals in history. There are a few historical leaders that consistently stand out, like large colorful seeds that sprout early. There are an equally powerful number of individuals whose emergence is more gradual, so that determining when they surface in history is a mystery. Finally, there are backbone individuals who at first appear to have minor or no effect on the world around them, but in reality they have enabled the colorful leaders to be successful. The work of these individuals may be hidden underground, but often forms the roots of invaluable political and social movements. Discovering details on these individuals requires true historical research. Once their stories have emerged from the sands, true insight into the individualism of the time period can be seen.
8. Clean Up – Tell finished students to assist in cleaning up the planting materials and the toolboxes.

**LEARNING ACTIVITY #3: US HISTORY COURSE SYLLABUS**

**TIME FRAME: 5-10 MINUTES**

**MI: VERBAL**

**GOAL: Now that Students are Intrigued with the Class, the Presentation of a Class Syllabus Should Receive a Much More Responsive Audience.**

1. Distribute the Class Syllabus to students.
2. Review – Quickly read through the syllabus with students, being sure to emphasize the need for students to bring Sketchbook materials for the next class period. Answer student questions as they arise.
3. Parent and Student Signatures – Explain the final requirement page of the syllabus.
4. Class Calendar—Post the **US History Unit 1 Calendar** for students. Explain that it houses sketch page titles, daily assignments, and project deadlines that they are responsible for. If they are absent, it is up to them to refer to the calendar, pick up any necessary materials, and make up the work. Absence is no excuse for not doing the work!
5. Turn In – Tell students to write their name on the back of the Springboard and turn it in to an assignment in-box, where student work can be turned in. This is simply for safe keeping until the next class period, when the Springboard will be used to help sort students.
6. Closing Reflection—Ask students to share their ideas on the ties between their activities. As students share encourage them to build a discussion off each others' observations. Suggest that understanding historical events involves understanding and building off the observations and conclusions made by others. Thank students for their participation.

---

**HOMEWORK**

- 1) Take class syllabus home for parents/guardians to review and sign. Due Lesson 2.
  - 2) Bring Sketchbook materials for the next class period.
- 

**GROUP ROLES**

Quad Facilitator—One student in each quad should be selected to lead quad discussions for this unit.

**Quad Record Keeper**—One student should be selected in each quad to maintain a discussion record during quad discussions.

**Quad Presenter**—One student should be selected to share group notes when class discussion is held.

**Quad Ambassador**—One student should be selected to maintain necessary communications with other quads when needed.

---

## DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

### Sketchbook: Springboard 1

Note: Students will be creating a dual portfolio through this unit.

#### Sketchbook Portfolio

The second portfolio initiated in this class is the Sketchbook Portfolio. This portfolio is designed to be a highly intrapersonal account of the daily learning process. Almost every day students will be asked to express their learning and understanding into their Sketchbook. The establishment of a learning portfolio is so valuable to students because it fosters creativity and self-confidence in every page. Within days of beginning the Sketchbook Portfolio, students value it as an extension of their personal identity. Unlike the Formal Portfolio, the Sketchbook is designed to exist with the student at all times. It is extremely successful with students who struggle in taking notes because they are encouraged to work within their own design plans rather than within a rigid note structure. The layout of the sketch pages is highly colorful and includes student illustrations. It is a documentation of all the bends and breaks that student experiences within a learning period.

Portfolios are the evidence that teachers and students are engaged in the learning process. They exist for the benefit of all involved with the education process. These two portfolio systems work ideally to ensure student success and mastery of material.

#### Formal Portfolio

The Formal Portfolio will contain only pieces of writing which have progressed through the entire writing process, formal project work, exams, and odyssey reflections which demonstrate mastery of historical analysis skills. The purpose of this Formal Portfolio is to highlight the final stage of the learning process, the end achievement. If students have a portfolio from previous years, the formal portfolio items can simply be added to this ongoing collection. If students have been working through the ESubjects Curricula they should have a formal portfolio already started. Ask students to bring in their portfolio from previous years, as this will be an opportunity for you to gain insight into their skill level and writing style. They should keep these portfolios in the classroom all the time. If your school already has a portfolio system in place, you may want to adhere to that system, or check with other members of your department to determine where portfolio collection is at in your school. Formal portfolios are an essential summary of students' education, so go out of your way to ensure that each of your students has a formal portfolio. Begin new portfolios for students who do not have them. 8 1/2 x 11 inch folders are ideal for the start of a formal portfolio. Finally, be sure all formal portfolios are kept in a secure but accessible location so that continual building of student mastery is documented.