



John Brown: Hero or Traitor?

Objective: Students will explain the events of John Brown's raid, leading to Western Virginia's separation from Virginia after secession, and examine whether John Brown was a hero or traitor.

GRADE LEVEL

Eighth Grade

TIME REQUIRED

Five days

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. Why was John Brown passionate about freeing slaves?
2. What events led to John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry?
3. How would you describe John Brown's character?

STRATEGIC VOCABULARY

religion

slavery

abolitionist

arsenal

hero

traitor

LESSON ACTIVITIES

Day 1

1. Begin the lesson by posting and reviewing the guiding questions and strategic vocabulary.
2. Access the article about John Brown at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/668>.
3. Read the article, stopping at key strategic vocabulary that is to be covered in the lesson. Ask students what they think the word means based on how it is used in the article. Create a word wall using each term and the definition created by the class.
4. Click on the video on the right side labeled "October 16, 1869." (<http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/media/29117>). Watch the video with the class.
5. Students are to create a presentation called "John Brown: Hero or Traitor." Pass out and go over the attached rubric.
6. Students may work with a partner or on their own.



Day 2

1. Review the guiding questions and strategic vocabulary.
2. Access the “John Brown” article at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/668>.
3. To further the story of John Brown, click on the video on the right side labeled “In the Jefferson County Courthouse...” (<http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/media/29125>).
4. Discuss the video with students.
5. Students continue to work on their projects for the remainder of class.

Day 3

1. Students are to complete the project on this day. Depending on the level of your students, you may need an additional day.

Day 4

1. Students begin presenting their projects to the class.

Day 5

1. Students finish presenting their projects to the class. Each student should be able to answer the question: Hero or Traitor?
2. Once all students have completed their presentations and listened to other presentations, they will write a position paper detailing why they took the position they did.

WEST VIRGINIA NEXT GENERATION CONTENT STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES

SOCIAL STUDIES

SSS.8.22: Demonstrate an understanding of the American Civil War including its causes, effects and the major events that led to West Virginia statehood.

- Explain the effect of key events leading to western Virginia’s separation from Virginia after secession (e.g., First and Second Wheeling Conventions and John Brown’s Raid).
- Describe the moral, ethical and legal tensions that led to the creation of the new state of West Virginia and how these tensions were resolved (e.g., Virginia vs. West Virginia 1871).
- Compare and contrast the military strategies of the North and South with regard to specific events and geographic locations in West Virginia (e.g., the Battle of Philippi, Rich Mountain, Droop Mountain, Battle of Scary Creek and Battle of Carnifex Ferry).
- Identify significant contributions of men and women of West Virginia during the Civil War and identify the roles of ethnic and racial minorities.

SS.8.2: Evaluate how citizens can influence and participate in government at the local, state and national levels and assume the role of an active citizen participating in the democratic process (e.g., lobbying, voting, community service, letter writing and school elections).



SS.8.13: Label the four major physical geographic regions, major rivers, landforms, natural/manmade borders, points of interest, and bordering states on selected maps.

Lesson plan created by Chris Lewis, Hamilton Middle School, cmlewis@access.k12.wv.us.



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85 Points

Name(s):	
Geography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maps • Pictures of where the raid took place 	/10
History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe John Brown's past • What led up to the raid? • Describe the raid 	/15
Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was John Brown a hero or traitor? • Why do you think so? 	/30
Bibliography <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three sources. • Must include <i>e-WV</i> 	/30
Total	/85

- **No looking at your presentation. (Look at your audience when you speak.)**
- **Presentation is to be no longer than three minutes.**

Comments:



