



History of Coal Mining in West Virginia

Objective: Students will understand how deeply connected the mining industry is to the history of West Virginia. Students will also learn about the various ways miners have worked.

GRADE LEVEL

Eighth Grade

TIME REQUIRED

Two to three class periods

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How and when did coal mining start in West Virginia?
2. What are the benefits of the coal industry?
3. What problems have resulted from the coal industry?

STRATEGIC VOCABULARY

mechanization
surface mining
underground mining
company towns
operators
speculators
ventilating
implements
apprenticeship

LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Have students create a t-chart so that they can list the pros and cons of coal mining as they learn more about it.
2. Present the students the video clip at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/media/29151>.
Talk a little about the video and John Cooper.
3. Read the article called “Coal Industry” at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1349> together with the students as a class.



4. Hand out copies of the timeline sheet to students. Tell the students they are going to create a time-card for one of the dates in the “Coal Industry” article. Divide the time periods (listed on the timeline sheet) among the students. Provide each student with three index cards. The first card will have the date written in large numbers and letters. The second card will have a sentence or two about the event. The third card will have a picture of the event. For example, in 1797, coal was used as the primary fuel source in the salt industry. The workers in this industry were often African-American slaves. On the third card, a student could draw a picture of a slave working at a salt furnace. This may take a little research for the students as far as the picture is concerned.
5. Once all three cards have been created, provide each student with a piece of construction paper. The student will glue the index cards to the construction paper for display in the classroom. After all of the students have created their time cards, they will present them to the class.
6. During the presentations, the other students will take notes on their timeline sheets. Later, they can view all the time cards on display on the bulletin board and fill in the picture column of their timeline sheet.
7. After this part of the unit is complete, have the students list questions they still have about the coal industry on the back of their timeline sheet.
8. Show students the video clip on underground mining at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/media/29190>.
9. Read the article entitled “Mining Methods in the Hand-Loading Era” at <http://wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1835> with the students. Before reading the article, review the vocabulary words “ventilating,” “implements,” and “apprenticeship” with the students. After reading the article as a class, have students share other words they were not familiar with and explain their meanings.
10. Divide the students into groups of three. Ask each group to present a visual representation or diagram for one of the following terms: drift-entry method, vertical shaft mines, room-and-pillar method, a mine room or entry, undercutting, and mule-drivers. Post these artifacts on the bulletin board under the category “Hand-Loading Era.” If more groups are required, one group can prepare a diagram based on the article entitled “Auger Mining” at <http://wvencyclopedia.org/articles/312>.
11. After the diagrams are complete, have the students refer back to their t-chart from the beginning of the unit. Ask them to fill in anything they could contribute to the pros and cons of coal mining.
12. Talk to the class about mountaintop removal mining. Ask if there are any students in the classroom who know someone that mines coal for a living. Talk to the students about the importance of jobs and the importance of protecting the environment. At this point, read the article about mountaintop removal mining at <http://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1530> with the students.
13. After finishing the article, have students write a persuasive letter to the editor of their local newspaper. Tell the students to take a stand for or against mountaintop removal. Have them find three facts that support their opinion from the article. Remind students that they can choose either side in order to shape their letter and that it is important in a persuasive letter to include facts that support one’s opinion.
14. After students have finished their letter to the editor, ask them to return to their t-chart on the pros and cons of coal mining. Have them fill in any new idea they have discovered. As a culminating activity for this lesson, the t-chart can be re-written on large poster paper and placed in the front of the classroom for their viewing.



WEST VIRGINIA NEXT GENERATION CONTENT STANDARDS AND OBJECTIVES

SOCIAL STUDIES

- SS.8.9: Research and cite industries and products that are vital to the economy of the four regions of West Virginia both past and present, and categorize the related occupations (e.g., tourism, coal, glass, timber, chemical, oil, natural gas, agriculture service industries and gaming).
- SS.8.11 : Compare and contrast the effects of technological/industrial advances as they relate to economy vs. environment and their effects on the demographic profile of West Virginia (e.g., entrepreneurial businesses, agriculture, tourism, education, interstate commuters, mining and natural gas).
- SS.8.17 : Analyze the geographic factors that led to development of agricultural, coal, glass, chemical, metallurgic and tourism industries in West Virginia (e.g., floods and coal mining disasters).
- SS.8.23: Demonstrate an understanding of major social, political and economic developments that took place in West Virginia during the second half of the nineteenth century.
- Identify the types of transportation that facilitated the growth of West Virginia.
 - Compare and contrast the West Virginia Constitutions of 1862 and 1872.
 - Summarize the changes that occurred in West Virginia agriculture and industry during the late nineteenth century, including changes in family life in various regions and the growth of industry.
 - Explain the significance of increased immigration into the United States in the late nineteenth century to West Virginia, including cultural and economic contributions of immigrants, opportunities and struggles experienced by immigrants, increased racial hostility and the effect of racial and ethnic diversity on national identity.
- SS.8.24: Demonstrate an understanding of West Virginia’s development during the early twentieth century.
- Analyze the evolution of the labor movement in West Virginia.
 - Summarize the progressive reform movement in West Virginia (e.g., child labor laws, Prohibition, improvements to roads, hospitals, libraries, tax reforms, changes to local government systems and the roles of significant individuals and groups).
 - Summarize the political, social and economic situation in West Virginia following World War I, including progress in suffrage for women, improvements in daily life in urban/rural areas, Roaring 20’s and developments in industry.
- Explain the effects of the Great Depression and the lasting impact of New Deal programs on West Virginia, including the Homestead Projects.
- SS.8.25: Demonstrate an understanding of West Virginia’s development during the mid-twentieth century.
- Summarize the significant aspects of the economic and industrial growth experienced by West Virginia during World War II (e.g., chemical industry, steel industry and coal industry).
 - Evaluate the sequence and analyze the impact of contemporary social, economic and technological developments on people and culture in West Virginia.
 - Identify the labor/management strategies that have affected West Virginia’s economy (e.g., strikes, boycotts, yellow-dog contracts, injunctions and lock-outs).
 - Explain the economic, social, and political impact of twentieth century events on West Virginia (e.g., school integration, Civil Rights Movement, Cold War and Vietnam).





Time Period	Event	Nonlinguistic Representation (picture)
1797		
1815		
1840		
1852		
1860		
1867		



1873		
1870s & 1880s		
1892		
1893		
1890-1893		
1902		



1909		
1917		
1920		
1927-1931		
1930		
1932		

1950		
1970		
1997		

