

Decoding the Past: Finding Text Evidence

In this interdisciplinary lesson, students will recognize the importance of finding evidence within historical texts in order to construct accurate and reliable interpretations of the past and present.

Grades: 3-5		Subject: ELA & Social Studies
Focus Standard(s)	R9: Recognize genres and make connections to other texts, ideas, cultural perspectives, eras, personal events, and situations. D2.His.16.3-5. Use evidence to develop a claim about the past.	
Learning Objective	Students will be able to find evidence to support the history behind the U.S. flag by reading and answering questions about a historical text.	
Materials/Resources	The Story of the U.S. Flag Chart paper; marker Sticky notes; pencil	
Vocabulary	Alternate: every-other; legend: story	
Essential Questions(s)	How do we know if a story from the past is true or not? What symbols represent our nation?	
Anticipatory Set	Show examples of different flags, including the different versions of the United States' flag. Ask students what makes flags unique or what do they notice about different countries' flags? (colors, images, patterns, etc.) Ask students if they think flags ever change.	
Mini-lesson/Guided Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that today they will be reading a story about the history of the U.S. flag. When reading historical texts, it's important to identify evidence to support the topic. As we read this text together, I want you to be thinking about the evidence or sources of the information. • On a piece of chart paper draw three columns. Label one column Flag Act, label another Legend, and the third Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. • Read aloud the article, The Story of the U.S. Flag. • After reading the article, ask students to help identify the evidence to support the history of the U.S. flag. Begin with the Flag Act. Ask students to reread and explain what was said under the Flag Act. Similarly, ask students to explain what the legend said about the making of the first U.S. flag (i.e. who told the story, where did the events take place and who was involved). And finally discuss how the PA Historical and Museum Commission pays tribute to Betsy Ross (see Slide Show). 	
Independent Practice	After discussing the evidence, pass out sticky notes (one per student) and ask students to answer the following question: Is the history of the U.S. flag accurate and reliable? Why or why not?	
Assessment (closure)	Collect students' answers and share what the majority of the class believes.	
Differentiation	Adjust lexile® levels as needed; answer questions as a whole group; use accessibility features or read-to-me feature as needed; print copies of articles	