

Moments in Time

BUFFALO SOLDIERS IN NEW MEXICO

Estimated Time

One - two 45 minute sessions

Materials

- ★ Moments in Time video – *Buffalo Soldiers in NM*
- ★ Art-making supplies (paper, paint, magazines for collage)

Vocabulary

- ★ Buffalo Soldiers
- ★ Valor
- ★ Prejudice/Racism
- ★ Civilization

Standards Met

New Mexico State Standards 4th grade

- ★ Language Arts L.A.4, 2A, 1B.2
- ★ History 1.A
- ★ Civics and Government 3.B
- ★ Visual Arts 1.B, 5.B

Extensions

Have students do more intensive research on the experience of Buffalo Soldiers in New Mexico (the missions they were given, the treatment black troops encountered in military, government and civilian communities, and relationships they had with the settlers they were protecting and the Native Americans they fought).

Goal

To determine the values and identifying characteristics associated with Buffalo Soldiers

Student Learning

After discussing the historical context, reputation and treatment of Buffalo Soldiers, students create a visual representation of the values and characteristics associated with these American soldiers.

Procedure

1. If possible, have students watch the *Moments in Time – Buffalo Soldiers of New Mexico* video on their own or in class. After the Civil War, Congress established a peacetime military that included black soldiers who had served in the Civil War. These men were assigned to work in Western territories where they patrolled vast areas under challenging conditions and with limited resources. Their responsibilities included building forts, mapping and exploring territories, serving as lawmen, and providing security for the US mail, stagecoaches, survey parties and cattle crews.
2. Discuss the conditions facing Buffalo Soldiers– challenging responsibilities, poor equipment, racism. What was it like to be a Buffalo Soldier? What sorts of values might have helped them stay dedicated to their work? Brainstorm these values as a whole class and list on board or chart paper (examples might include: bravery, commitment, brotherhood, patriotism, peacekeeping, honor, valor, courage, public distinction, pride, “doing tough jobs that nobody else would do”)
3. Explain that students will make a “coat of arms” that communicates values or experiences and responsibilities of the Buffalo Soldiers. Distribute art-making supplies and ask students to create a “shield” that is divided into 4 – 6 sections. Each section is a place for them to visually represent a value or ideal exemplified by the Buffalo Soldiers. Students may also write the value as well as draw something.
4. As a whole class, students share their coats of arms. Are they similar? Different? Students discuss their rationale for choosing the images they used and what they want to communicate about Buffalo Soldiers.
5. As a wrap up discussion, talk about the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers. The video mentions, among other things, that the work of Buffalo Soldiers helped bring peace to the territories and supported New Mexico’s journey to statehood by supporting the law and “civilization.”

Suggested Forms of Assessment

- ★ Class discussion
- ★ Art project produced
- ★ Presentations and explanations for art project

Lesson Plan by Beth Maloney



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