

Navigating the inlets and havens

BY PAULINE S. JOHNSON

In this lesson plan, students read “Of the Inlets and Havens of this Country¹,” an excerpt from a primary source document written in the early 1700s describing the inlets of the North Carolina coast. Students analyze the document from the perspective of a ship’s captain who must decide whether to use or avoid each inlet to deliver supplies to the Carolina colony. The lesson ends with a discussion of the author’s intentions in writing the document.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- read a primary source document
- evaluate reasons primary sources were written
- experience historical empathy

Teacher planning

TIME REQUIRED FOR LESSON

20-30 minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED

- computer with internet access for each group of students OR one computer with an LCD projector

STUDENT HANDOUTS

This media is available in the web edition only.

Activities

1. Put students into groups of four or five and give each group a copy of the graphic organizer. Have each group access “Of the Inlets and Havens of this Country².” **Note:** This could also be an individual activity.
2. Explain that as they read the page, students should fill in the first four columns. The fourth column (“How does the captain need to navigate this inlet?”) does not need to be detailed. Students should include directions and difficulty of navigation.
3. After they have filled in the factual information, tell the students to put themselves in the place of the captain of a ship that is delivering trade goods to the northern Carolina colony. Students should determine whether they would want to sail into each inlet (This is the column titled “Yes or No?”) and indicate why they made that decision (the last column).
4. Begin a class discussion with each group explaining their decisions and reasons. If no group introduces the idea that whether a captain would use an inlet would depend on his destination, you will want to lead students to this concept. Also, the Hatteras Inlet is very complicated and detailed. You will want to ask students why this might be so. You will want to lead them to consider if the exact directions might mean that it was an inlet that was often used by asking questions about the intentions of John Lawson when he wrote the description.
5. Ask students how important this document would have been for captains of ships from that time period.
6. Conclude your discussion by having the students read the last section of this document, with the heading “Albemarl Sound and Rivers.” Then ask them the following:
 - **Does this section seem to discuss the Sound and the rivers?**
Not really
 - **Why do you think John Lawson included this section with the descriptions of the inlets?**
Students should understand that trade was an integral component of colonial life. By indicating that the planters could always produce a viable crop, Lawson was explaining that captains could have produce to ship and also that the planters would have sufficient wealth to purchase trade goods. The abundance of timber would produce other raw materials to ship abroad. This section could also induce more settlers to northern Carolina Colony.

Assessment

By using the graphic organizer teacher guide, teachers can assess the charts of each group or student. The class discussion will indicate if the students have understood key points, including:

- that John Lawson wrote this document to ensure the continued opportunities of trade for the northern Carolina Colony
- the importance of such texts to ship captains and navigators of the time.

National Standards

In addition to meeting objectives of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, this lesson plan addresses the following national standards.

HISTORICAL THINKING STANDARDS

Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

- A. Identify the author or source of the historical document or narrative and assess its credibility.
- B. Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage.

Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

- C. Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causation, including the importance of the individual, the influence of ideas.

On the web

Of the inlets and havens of this country

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2.7>

Excerpt from John Lawson's 1709 *A New Voyage to Carolina* detailing the geography of North Carolina's coast. Includes historical commentary and notes about how the coastline has changed since the colonial period.

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Notes

1. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/1976>.
2. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/nchist-colonial/2.7>.

About the author

PAULINE S. JOHNSON

I am currently the Director of a Teaching American History Grant for Buncombe County Schools, Asheville City Schools, and Madison County Schools. I have taught history and English in the seventh and eighth grades for over twenty-six years at Reynolds Middle School in Asheville, North Carolina. I am currently doing adjunct work for Mars Hill College and Western Carolina University. I have a Masters Degree from Western Carolina University and am Nationally Board Certified in Early Adolescence/Social Studies-History. I am certified to teach K-12 and I also have Academically-Intellectually Gifted certification.