

Created by: Michelle Crane, 2014

This project is funded in part by a grant from the National Geographic Society Education Foundation.

Grade Level: 5

Time Frame: One 45 minute period

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Analyze primary source documents, and
2. Explain why Washington DC was selected as our nation's capital.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The purpose of this lesson is to help students understand why Washington DC was selected as our nation's capital. Students will investigate a variety of primary sources in order to determine why DC was selected as the capital. This lesson is intended to be used as part of a 5th grade American History course during a unit on post-Revolution Era America. Before starting this lesson, students should have a basic understanding of where cities are typically located and why.

TEKS Strand(s) Objective(s):

8c. analyze the reasons for the location of cities in the United States, including capital cities, and explain their distribution, past and present

Materials:

For Student Use:	
Primary Sources	See references for map and text selections, students will need a map of the American colonies showing the location of Washington, DC – but they do not need a specific map, any will do
OIEC Handout	One per pair or group of students
For Teacher Use:	

References:

Barret, M. B. (2008). *Primary Sources: The New Federal City*. Retrieved September 18, 2014, from Our White House: Looking In, Looking Out: <http://www.ourwhitehouse.org/primaryfedcity.html#pres%20wash%20chooses>

DC City Pages. (1995). *1876 Map of Washington, D.C.* Retrieved from DC Pages: http://www.dcpages.com/DCP_Listings/visit/1532

Elliot, W. (1835). *Plan of the city of Washington: seat of the government of the United States*. Retrieved September 18, 2014, from Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/item/88694083/>

King, R. (1818). *Robert King's Map of the City of Washington*. Retrieved September 18, 2014, from DC Pages: http://www.dcpages.com/DCP_Listings/visit/6078

Library of Congress. (2010, July 29). *Original Plan of Washington, D.C.* Retrieved September 18, 2014, from American Treasures of the Library of Congress: <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tri001.html>

Stapleton, D. D. (n.d.). *The Founding of Washington D. C., United States*. Retrieved September 18, 2014, from Building the World Blog: <http://blogs.umb.edu/buildingtheworld/founding-of-new-cities/the-founding-of-washington-d-c-united-states/>

Stone, W. I. (n.d.). *Map of the City of Washington*. Retrieved September 18, 2014, from DC Pages:
<http://www.dcpages.com/Tourism/Maps/Historical/>

Vitale, D. (2014). *The 13 Colonies*. Retrieved September 18 2014, 2014, from Archiving Early America:
<http://www.earlyamerica.com/earlyamerica/maps/13colonies/>

Strategies: OIEC (Observation, Inference, Evidence, Conclusion): Students will use the OIEC method of analyzing the primary documents used in this lesson. The OIEC strategy is easy to remember and use, and lends itself well to this level of instruction. See the Human Systems module materials for more information on how to use this strategy.

Questions:

- Explain why Washington DC was selected as the site of the nation's capital.
- If the nation was selecting a new capital today, where do you think it would be located? Explain your answer.
- Evaluate your primary source document. How well did it help you answer your guiding question for today's lesson?

Procedures to conduct the lesson:

Starting the Lesson: 5 minutes

Asking Geographic Questions

Explain why Washington DC was selected as the site of the nation's capital.

At the beginning of class, review with students where cities are typically located (along coastlines or rivers for access to water and transportation routes in the days before mechanized transportation was available). Ask them to discuss how cities have changed over time (coastal cities have grown larger, cities have spread south due to the availability of air conditioning, cities have grown up in the interior as water transportation has become less important). Finally, ask the students to brainstorm ideas of how capital cities are chosen. What features are desirable in a capital city? (access to trade with other countries, central location to provide access and control of the country, etc.)

Many capital cities in Europe are hundreds of years old and were major centers of trade, culture, and politics even before they became the official capital city. In the Americas, most countries selected to keep their colonial capitals as their official capital city after they gained independence. The American colonies, however, did not have one capital, they had 13. So a new national capital had to be selected. Tell the students that they will be investigating the selection of Washington DC as our nation's capital and why it was chosen over established cities such as Philadelphia or New York.

The Lesson:

Acquiring Geographic Information: 15 minutes

Go over the OIEC strategy with the students. Divide the students into pairs or groups of three. Give each group of students a specific primary resource to review and hand each group a handout for them to use.

Organizing Geographic Information: 10 minutes

Give the students a few minutes to complete their organizer. Make sure they evaluate their resource in order to determine how useful it was in answering the Guiding Question for the lesson.

Analyzing Geographic Information: 10 minutes

As a class, discuss the following questions, allowing students to use evidence they learned from their source to support their answers. Since each group had a different source, some of their answers may differ. Use this as an opportunity to discuss why the sources might differ.

- Who was primarily responsible for selecting the site of the nation's capital? Washington
- Why was he given this responsibility? He was the first President. He also had experience as a surveyor.
- What advantages does Washington DC have as a capital city? Central location, building a new city allowed them to create a city that was politically, culturally, or economically tied to one state – giving it more influence than the other, slight inland location makes it easier to defend from foreign attack, location on river provides water and transportation

You can ask the students to discuss their individual sources.

- Did any of them have a source that wasn't particularly helpful? Have them explain.

If time allows, a modern map of the US and its population distribution can be shown to the students. Ask them if there are issues with DC still remaining our capital or if another place might be a better choice for our country. (While much of our population is still clustered along the East Coast, DC is extremely far from the people who live along the West Coast. However, modern transportation makes this less of a problem than it was 200 years ago. Possible alternatives to DC might include Chicago or even St Louis due to its proximity to the population center of the country, but both of these cities would have to undergo major political changes to make appropriate national capitals.)

End the Lesson:

Closing product:

Answering Geographic Questions: 5 minutes

Have the students write a brief (2 to 3 sentence paragraph) explaining why Washington DC was chosen as the capital. They can also write a sentence or two explaining where our capital today should be and why.

Evaluation/Assessment: Include your assessment product or idea with the lesson plan. Note, you want your assessment to measure your students understanding of the objectives (listed above).

	Not There Yet	Satisfactory	Clearly Outstanding
Paragraph	<p>1 Point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Written answer does not utilize appropriate vocabulary. ▪ Written answer is difficult to read due to spelling and/or grammar errors. ▪ Written answer provides no explanation or support. 	<p>2 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Written answer correctly utilizes appropriate vocabulary. ▪ Written answer is generally free from spelling or grammar errors. ▪ Written answer answers the question and attempts to provide support and explanation. 	<p>3 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Written answer demonstrates mastery of appropriate vocabulary. ▪ Written answer is largely free from spelling or grammar errors. ▪ Written answer thoroughly answers the question and provides explanation and support.
OIEC Organizer	<p>0.75 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizer is largely incomplete 	<p>1.25 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizer is complete 	<p>2 Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizer is complete and thorough

Name: _____

Name: _____

OIEC Handout

Write the Guiding Question you are trying to answer here:

O - Observe	Students list any observation they can identify in the primary source. What does this source show or tell you? What type of source is this – journal, map, ad etc.?	
I – Inference	Once they have concluded their observations, students use their previous knowledge and what they have seen in the primary source, students make inferences about the document. What does this document tell you about the guiding question?	
E – Evidence	Students cite evidence from the document to support their inferences. What in the document provides support for what you think this document is telling you?	
C - Conclusion	Students write a conclusion based upon what they have observed in the document. Does this document help you answer the guiding question? Why or why not?	