



What can we learn from the 1918 influenza epidemic?

Overview

This is a primary source inquiry connecting past events to contemporary issues. Students research Vermont newspapers to find connections and lessons from the past for us today.

Grade Level

8 - 12

Topic(s)

1918 Flu Pandemic, World War 1

Compelling Question(s)

What lessons does the 1918 influenza epidemic have for us today?

Historical Thinking Skills

Continuity and Change; Historical Research Skills

Summative Task

After studying the 1918 flu, describe some lessons we might draw from the past for the present and explain what we might learn.

Outline

Activating Prior Knowledge/Building Historical Context:	Formative Assessment
Read this background essay on the 1918 flu in Vermont.	Class discussion; list of primary sources
Investigation of Primary Sources	
Distribute these two copies of the Barre Times. Ask students to circle articles connected to the epidemic and underline key words such as grip, grippe, flu; Students report out on their articles and class discusses connections or lessons for today. If your goal is to focus on taking notes, summarizing, or identifying search terms, the activity could end here.	List of search terms; class discussion
Historical Investigation: <u>Choice 1:</u> Listen to oral history interviews and take notes about connections or lessons for today. <u>Choice 2:</u> Investigate historic newspapers using Chronicling America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Click on Vermont Choose 1918 for the beginning and end dates You can also then sort by date if you want to look at what was happening at a particular time of year, such as in the fall of 1918 	Notes from primary sources

Flow of History Teaching with Primary Sources



Search Terms:
Grippe, Grip, Ill, Illness, Sick, Epidemic, Death Toll

Summative Assessment

After studying the 1918 flu, describe some lessons we might draw from the past for the present and explain what we might learn. Students could also create a poster of newspaper clippings.

Summative Assessment

Explanatory Essay

Materials

[Awful, Awful, The Spanish Flu in Vermont, 1918-1919](#)
[The Flu Epidemic, 1918](#) --Oral History Interviews and Transcriptions
 Pages from the Barre Times, December 10, 1918
[Page 6](#)
[Page 7](#)
[Chronicling America](#)

[Example of one student's investigation](#)

[The Great Influenza: Library of Congress Resources](#)

I had a little bird,
 Its name was Enza.
 I opened the window,
 And in-flew-enza.
 —Children's Rhyme, 1918