Centropa Lesson Introductory Information

**Overview Information: Borders and Bridge Reflective Thoughts**

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• Language Arts (with historical emphasis or co-taught with history teacher if possible)

• Middle School level: 6th-8th Grade

• Requires 3-4 sixty minute periods with previous chapter reading

**Lesson Summary**

**Themes:**

This thematic lesson will explore the literal and figurative joinings and confinements that exist in the world; these joinings and confinements can be connected to point in the language arts curriculum (in this case, it will be connected to Suzanne Collins’ novel *The Hunger Games*, but could theoretically work with any literature where such ideas and themes exist. In addition, the lesson will crystallize the idea of what it means to be human and the idea of human rights as per the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights.

**Goals:**

Have students begin reflecting on the historical and current meanings of borders and isolation in correlation to those seen the specific Language Arts curriculum connection as well as within themselves.

**Centropa materials:**

***Centropa Video Links*:**

Family → “Laszlo Nussbaum: Europe without Borders”

<https://www.centropa.org/node/45289>

History→ “Maps, Central Europe and History”

<https://www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/maps-central-europe-and-history>

Community→ “Survival in Sarajevo: Friendship in a Time of War”

<https://www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/survival-sarajevo-friendship-time-war>

Love→ “Love on a Paper Airplane”

<https://www.centropa.org/teaching-materials/love-paper-airplane>

***Centropa Pictures*:**

“A Bridge over Vymnyanka”

<https://www.centropa.org/photo/bridge-over-vymnyanka-river-jewish-borough-yanovichi-where-blyuma-perlstein-lived>

***Other Links*:**

*The Hunger Games* excerpt:

[https://kids.scholastic.com/content/dam/scholastic/kids/pdf/Book%20Excerpts/HHungerGames\_excerpt.pdf?logActivity=true](https://kids.scholastic.com/content/dam/scholastic/kids/pdf/Book%20Excerpts/HungerGames_excerpt.pdf?logActivity=true)

<https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/05/24/border-walls-berlin-wall-donald-trump-wall/553250002/>

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/countries-with-border-walls.html>

Artifact/Document:

<https://www.un.org/en/sections/universal-declaration/human-rights-law/>

**Background Information**

**1. Context for Lesson** – At the point when this lesson takes place, students will have read at least the first three chapters of the novel *The Hunger Games*. Within this section, it is revealed that the main character lives in a divided district with a (sometimes) electrocuted fence bordering the area. The fence is controlled by a Capitol region of the country--Panem--in order to keep every district isolated and within its control. A discussion of borders and bridges will be the introductory lesson on what isolationism is, how it affects people socially and mentally, and the economic and physical factors that go along with each.

**2. Enduring Understanding** (EU) –An enduring understanding might be that borders and bridges exist as much in the current world as in the historical world, and that avoiding fractures is one way of striving for change and peace in the world..

**3. Goals/objectives**: Students will be able to reflect on monitored discussion questions and reflect both in writing and in group discussion as they think about what it means to acquire human rights (live within borders or live among bridges); acknowledge new information from other viewpoints; understand the correlations and reasons between fences mentioned in literature with those created in history; reflect on the beginnings of change and revolutions as they are presented in literature as well as in history

**4. What Centropa or other sources were used?** \*Same as above.

**5. Are there any specific background skills or knowledge students need to successfully**

**learn the concepts, information and skills in your lesson?** Students may need a basic knowledge of deportation of families during the Holocaust and may have also be exposed (in coordinating history class) to other examples of isolationist countries or incidences but it is not required.

**The Lesson**

This is the road map for teachers wanting to use your lesson in their classes. Include the following:

**1. Motivating the students.**

*Day 1 (45 minutes)*

As students enter the classroom, a paper wall is constructed (hanging from the ceiling or set up on desks down the middle). Students can be assigned on one side or the other or may naturally take a side as entering, but must not move once they find a seat. This is the “fence” from the book and now they have a border of separation. To get kids interested, they will be invited to figure out why the ‘government’ (the teacher) decided to set up the division and how both sides can be observed (class discussion, 10-15 minutes). As a challenge opener, each student will be given a post-it and invited to attempt to get a message to another student across the wall, thinking in particular about what information will go in the message. These post-its will be shared on the white board for a discussion after the wall ‘comes down’ (20 minutes). With a column notes section on the board or on paper, allow students to then give words for how they felt with the fence up and with the fence down (10 minutes) and discuss.

**2. The lesson.**

*Day 2--60 Minutes Total:*

*Two Column Notes Open Thinking/ Partner Discussion (20-25 minutes*

*Class Discussion on Two Column Notes (15 minutes)*

*Bridges vs. Borders Video Showing/ Decision Making (20 minutes)*

1. On a page with Borders on one side and Bridges on the other, have students begin to compare the two (for advanced students, this can be done in partners; for inclusion students, this can be done with leading questions)

***Leading Questions:***

**Borders:**

Are they always constrictive?

Do they exist in nature?

Are they always completely man-made?

Can they be peaceful or violent/ not so free?

Meant to contain or to confine--it is to keep someone in or someone out?

\*\*What fences can you pick out in literature? Examples?

\*\*What fences are LITERAL and what are FIGURATIVE (breaking down walls in minds and hearts vs. breaking down actual wall?

\*\*Can you go around, through, over or under the wall, but it still exists?

Can borders be a good thing (think about open borders in the EU)?

**Bridges:**

Do these naturally form after borders are formed?

Who builds the bridges?

What’s the point of bridges?

At what point are bridges torn down?

What are they made of?

Why are bridges important? Have they been around forever?

b) Have students begin thinking about FIGURATIVE and HISTORICAL borders and bridges. (30 minutes)

On the back of the column notes, number their paper #1-3. Watch CENTROPA videos Lazslo, Sarajvo, Paper Airplane. Students decide if a bridge or border is discussed and why as they watch and write answers on the paper.

*Day 3: 60 minutes*

Opener--Show the Centropa picture of “A Bridge over Vymnyanka”; students may journal or talk about where and when this bridge is. They can discuss hardships of the bridge, who may have drawn the bridge, the feelings associated with it. Then share the story of the narrator. (25 minutes)

Afterward, discuss the thematic responses from yesterday’s Centropa videos. (20-25 minutes)

Watch Centropa Video of Maps.

Afterward, have class compare this to the changing history mentioned in *The Hunger Games*. (10 minutes)

Open the USA Today article. Look at the changes in borders/ fences that have occurred since WWII (presentation). Students should COMPARE/ CONTRAST these. (15 minutes)

**3. Concluding Activity.**

*Day 3/4. Connecting Human Rights, Borders, and Bridges--Project*

Students have at this point had a good discussion and background on how borders and bridges set people apart and bring them together, both literally and figuratively. Students are now provided with a the primary document of the 1948 list of ‘The Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ along with a list of important bridges and boundaries in history (Edmund Pettus Bridge, Brooklyn Bridge, the Great Wall of China, The Maginot Line, the Isreal and West Bank division, the Mason Dixon Line, the Ireland ‘Peace’ Wall). As partners, students research these locations to find general history and then decide what Human Rights Laws these areas diminish. Students have the choice of how to present findings to the class, or the teacher can define this type of project. Presentations will be graded on the rubric given.

**Reflection**

Please write a reflection paragraph about your experience teaching this lesson, using these questions as guidelines:

• What was your experience of teaching this lesson?

• What recommendations do you have for other teachers using your lesson plan?

• What worked well?

• What might you do differently next time? What challenges did you face?



