

Lesson Title: Historical African American Places

Grade Levels: 5-6

Lesson Description: This lesson focuses on an exploration of significant African American historical sites. Students will be read an entry of *Sienna's Scrapbook* each day and then investigate the place Sienna visited using the web, Google Earth, and the library. Not only will students explore places mentioned in the book, they will also research other places to add to their final project. At the end of the lesson, students will create their own "historical virtual scrapbook" of historical African American places using Google Earth.

Literature Connection

Sienna's Scrapbook: Our African American Heritage Trip
By Toni Trent Parker

Sienna, a pre-teen African American girl, envisioned a summer hanging out with her cousins, swimming in her uncle's pond, and eating Krispy Kremes. Instead, her parents take the family on a twelve day African American heritage trip during which they visit various historical locations along the East coast. This book is Sienna's scrapbook of her July adventure including pictures, drawings, her opinions, and historical information. Also included are the addresses of and web links to all of the places (and more!) she visits on her trip.

Concepts and skills

- Location, place

NCSS Standards

- Learners will understand concepts such as: location, region, place, and migration, as well as human and physical systems
- Learners will be able to research, organize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from atlases, data bases, grid systems, charts, graphs, maps, geospatial technologies, and other tools to interpret relationships among geographic factors and historic events

Objectives: Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe two historical places in African American history-including, where they are and why they are important.
2. Identify common physical and human characteristics of the places Sienna visits.
3. Use Google Earth and other sources to explore historical places.
4. Explain why the majority of famous historical African American places are located on the East coast of the United States.

Google Earth Skills Needed:

- Use the "fly to" feature
- Make a placemark
- Use street-view
- Use layers
- Zoom in and out of locations

Teaching Procedures

1. Ask students to share examples of historical places (e.g., the National Mall, Gettysburg, Pearl Harbor, etc.) and make a list on the board. Ask why these places are important and where they are located. For example, “Did something happen here that makes it special or is this a place (monument) that we as a people have dedicated to a certain person?” The goal of this brief introductory discussion is to get students thinking about historical places in the United States.
2. Further the discussion by asking students if they know of any places that commemorate African Americans and/or their history. If this is a struggle for them, explain that over the coming days they will have many opportunities to identify places that recognize African American people and/or historical events.
3. Give each student a [KWL graphic organizer](#) and ask them to write what they know about African American history and /historical places in the first column.
4. Introduce the ongoing project by showing the book, *Sienna’s Scrapbook*. Give a brief summary of the book, making sure to discuss what a scrapbook is and what purpose it serves; scrapbooks are used to record memories so they can be remembered for many years. Explain that over the next several days: the teacher will read one of Sienna’s entries and then students will discuss as a large group what they learned. Following the discussion, students will use books, the internet, and Google Earth to learn more about that historical place. After all of the entries have been read and a variety of places have been researched and documented, students will create their own “historical virtual scrapbook” by creating placemarks with Google Earth.
5. Have the students fill in the second column of the *KWL* graphic organizer with what they would like to learn during this lesson. Students can add to this whenever they please throughout the project.

DAILY PROCEDURE

1. Gather students in the reading area and read one entry in *Sienna’s Scrapbook*. (On the first day, read the first two entries).
2. Have a student or two find the location Sienna mentioned on a large class map and mark it using a “pointer post-it” or marker of some sort. (Marking these locations every day will lead to class discussion about the overall area in which these places are located as the lesson moves along).
3. Ask students what stuck out to them and what they learned from the chapter. Include questions that help students explore how the physical and/or human characteristics of the places visited were similar and different. (e.g., landforms, climate, languages, culture, population, ethnicities, etc.)
4. Have students use the Internet and library resources to learn more about the historical place Sienna visited that day. In the back of the book, each historical place’s address is listed as well as a web address where more information can be found. The address and web address should be projected onto a screen or written on the board so that students can utilize this information without having to wait until they get a chance to see the book. Another website that may be helpful is www.britannica.com. Students can record their discoveries on the [Daily Research Notes graphic organizer](#).
5. After students have done some research using the Internet and other library resources, demonstrate how to explore places and create placemarks using Google Earth. Google Earth will allow students to observe each historical place as if they were actually there. Emphasize that careful attention should be paid to the physical and human characteristics of each place. Students can record their observations on the [Physical and Human Characteristics of Places graphic organizer](#). (Note: if an adequate number of

computers are available, students may work individually with Google Earth. If computers or time is limited, the teacher may want to project Google Earth and invite students to serve as assistant tour guides.)

- Open Google Earth.
 - Make sure only the 3-D Buildings and Borders and Labels layers are on. Type the historical site's address in the "fly to" search bar.
 - If multiple locations are provided, show students how to identify the correct option. Double-click on that option to zoom in on the location.
 - Use street-view, panning, and zooming to explore the place and compare it to the pictures/information Sienna gave and they found in their research.
 - Make a placemark for this location.
 - Have students record the physical and human characteristics of this site on their graphic organizer.
6. Repeat this process for every entry in *Sienna's Scrapbook*.
7. After the entire book has been read, have students, working in pairs, select and research two historical African American monuments or sites that were not included in Sienna's memory book. They will share their findings by creating Google Earth placemarks for each site. These placemarks will be organized by the teacher to create a "historical virtual scrapbook" tour. It's okay if some pairs pick the same historical places; differences in their findings can show the class that everyone finds different information and that personal biases and preferences influence what is emphasized.
- Inform students that for each of their sites, they will create a placemark in the style of a scrapbook page. Remind them of Sienna's style of writing: she included personal reactions, factual information, things that surprised her, her feelings, and what she enjoyed. Encourage students to think of each placemark as a *real* scrapbook page. Tell them to include the name of the place, the location, important historical dates and information, what its significance is, what they enjoyed about "visiting" the site, etc. Images and video clips can also be embedded in placemarks. The sky is the limit with scrapbook entries!
 - Students can complete the [My Research Notes About... graphic organizer](#) while conducting their research.
 - Have students use the [Writing Web graphic organizer](#) to lay out their ideas for the placemarks.
8. After students have completed their placemarks demonstrate how they can use email to send their assignments to the teacher. The teacher can use the placemarks to create a virtual tour of important places in African American history.
9. Have a few pairs present their places each day. During presentations, students can be asked to:
- Show the class their place on Google Earth.
 - Read their scrapbook page passages to the class.

- Explain why the place is significant to African American history.
- Explain what physical and/or human characteristics this place has in common with the places in *Sienna's Scrapbook*.
- Tell the class why they chose this place.

10. Ask the presenters:

- Is there anything else you can tell the class about these historical African American places?
- Where is this place located in relation/comparison to the other places Sienna visited?

11. After the presentations, show students the tour or the map with all of their locations (as well as Sienna's). Talk about the location of all of the placemarks in their virtual scrapbook. Ask them if there are any patterns in the location of the sites visited (many are located in the East.). After a few minutes, ask the students why they think many of the African American historical places are located in the same area.

12. Have students fill out the last column of their "KWL" graphic organizer with what they have learned throughout this project. They should then hand this in, along with their other graphic organizers.

Assessment:

Objective 1: *Describe two historical places in African American history-including, where they are and why they are important.*

- This objective will be assessed during each pair's presentation of their historical places of choice. As students read their scrapbook entry and "show and tell" their place, knowledge of the history of the place should be evident.

5. Objective 2: *Identify common physical and human characteristics of the places Sienna visits.*

- This objective will be assessed by looking at the students' *Physical and Human Characteristics of Places* graphic organizer, where they have taken notes about the characteristics of each place while using Google Earth. It will also be assessed during student presentations, as one of the requirements is explaining what physical and/or human characteristics their place had in common with those in *Sienna's Scrapbook*.

Objective 3: *Use Google Earth and other sources to explore historical places.*

- This objective will be informally assessed as students research their two historical places. Students should use a variety of sources including the internet, the library, and Google Earth. It will also be assessed by looking at each student's *My Research Notes About...* graphic organizer, where they have used three different sources for research.

Objective 4: *Explain why the majority of famous historical African American places are on the East coast of the United States.*

- This objective will be informally assessed during class discussion after all presentations are finished.