Overview

This lesson involves students reading primary source documents to answer the question “Why did African Americans living in the South want to come to Kansas in the 1870s?” They will use observation and inference skills to find Economic, Social, and Political (ESP) reasons for the Exoduster movement in 16 primary sources. This lesson is designed to take one class period.

Standards

Current standards can be found on kshs.org.

Objectives

Content:

• Students will identify who the Exodusters were and why they came to Kansas.
• Students will explain Economic, Social, and Political reasons behind the Exoduster movement.

Skills:

• Students will use observation and inference skills to read a primary source document.

Essential Questions

• Why did so many African Americans come to Kansas after the Civil War?
This activity uses the following Read Kansas! cards:

- Evidence Card 1
- Evidence Card 2
- Evidence Card 3
- Evidence Card 4
- Evidence Card 5
- Evidence Card 6
- Evidence Card 7
- Evidence Card 8

Day 1

1. Introduce the topic of the mass African American migration from the South to Kansas in the 1870s, also known as the Exoduster movement.

2. In this lesson students will learn first hand from the men and women who experienced the Exoduster movement by reading documents and photographs from that time period. They will read the materials to locate Economic, Social, and Political (ESP) reasons behind the Exodusters. Review the definitions of ESP with the students.

3. There are 16 primary source documents on the eight Read Kansas! cards in this lesson. Begin by modeling the ESP process with the photograph of Nicodemus and complete the Exoduster ESP worksheet.

4. For a class of more than 16 students you will need additional set(s) of Evidence Read Kansas! cards. These can be copied, downloaded off the Kansas Historical Society website, or purchased.

5. Group students in pairs. Give each pair one Read Kansas! card and two Exoduster ESP worksheets. Each student will be responsible for completing one worksheet.
   a. Students will use observation and inference skills to complete the worksheets.
   b. Both students will read the primary source on the front of the card. The first student will be responsible for completing a worksheet on this document.
   c. Students are to work together to answer the document questions and complete the graphic organizer. It may help to read the document aloud.
   d. Students then read the primary source on the back of the card. Student two is responsible for completing the second worksheet, following c.

6. Rearrange students into groups by their document/worksheet. You will have 16 groups. Provide them with enough time to compare what they learned. Have them select a spokesperson to report their findings to the class.

7. Review all 16 documents with the class.
   a. The spokesperson should begin by sharing the answers to the document questions.
   b. Then the spokesperson should report on the Economic, Social, and/or Political reasons found in the document to support the Exoduster movement.
   c. List the reasons on the board. Leave this list on the board for the final activity.

8. As a final activity, each student will select a reason for the Exoduster movement and create an illustration, drawing or political cartoon and write a caption for his/her piece.
Alternate Activity:
Some students may have difficulty locating Economic, Social, and Political themes in the documents. To help them find this information, copy the Read Kansas! card. Then assign a color to each theme (i.e., economic=blue, social=yellow, political=pink). Have students highlight the appropriate phrases on the document before transferring the information to the Exoduster ESP graphic organizers.

Assessment

• Evaluate students’ abilities to work cooperatively to complete the Exoduster ESP worksheet.
• Evaluate students’ abilities to draw or illustrate reasons for the exodus and write captions.

For the Teacher

If you are using the textbook, The Kansas Journey, this lesson can be used with pages 130-132. A biography of Benjamin “Pap” Singleton is included there.

Definitions:
Economic: An economy is the way in which people use their environment to meet their material needs; the system of production and management of material wealth.

Social: Of or relating to human society, the interaction of the individual and the group, or the welfare of human beings as members of society.

Political: Politics is a process by which groups of people make decisions. The term is generally applied to behavior within civil governments.

Exodus: The term “Exodus” refers to the story of the departure of the Israelites from ancient Egypt. For this reason African Americans leaving the South in the 1870s chose a modification of this term for their movement.

Hegira: A flight to escape danger.

Answer Key:
• Primary Source: Photograph of Nicodemus
• Type of document: Photograph
• Date of document: circa 1877
• Creator/author: Unknown
• For what audience was this document created?: The townspeople of Nicodemus
• Why do you think this document was created?: To document their town.
• Economic: Opportunity to own their own business
• Social: Opportunity to live with other people who shared similar past experiences; ability to live without discrimination
• Political: Ability to create own city government; exercise control over community life

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Resources for this lesson are from:
• Kansas Historical Society collections
• Collection of The New-York Historical Society; Negative #50482
This photograph captures the bustling main street in Nicodemus, Graham County, a settlement founded by Exodusters in 1877.
Why did African Americans living in the South want to come to Kansas in the 1870s?

- Economic
- Social
- Political