

Fever 1793: Headline News

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Type of Lesson: Reading Skills

Goal: To use historical fiction to generate an understanding of the 1793 yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia.

Sunshine State Standards: SS.A.4.3.2, SS.B.1.3.1, SS.B.1.3.3, SS.B.1.3.5

Materials: *Fever 1793*, Laurie Halse Anderson (ISBN 0-689-84891-0) cut apart by chapters; index cards (one per student); drawing paper (8 ½ x 11) or could be computer generated if desired

Day One:

1. Define epidemic. Talk about diseases in history and at the present that have been epidemics. Discuss what might have been happening in America in 1793.
2. The teacher reads aloud chapters one and two from *Fever 1793*, pages 1-13. Discuss the characters emerging in the story. Locate Philadelphia on a map.

Day Two

1. Distribute a chapter from the book to each student beginning with chapter 3. Reserve chapters 28, 29, and the Epilogue for teacher use later. The reading is not difficult for eighth graders; chapters are brief. If there are more chapters than students ask for volunteers to do the remaining chapters.
2. Students read their passage. Note: Reassure students that their passage may not be completely clear in the context of the story, but that they are only responsible for their portion of the book which will become clearer as the class conducts its round-robin storytelling activity.
3. Their tasks after reading include:
 - a. A **chapter summary** to tell their part of the story to the class. They should write a paragraph summary to refer to as they talk. Their oral summary may elaborate a little more. They need to be prepared to answer questions of clarification from their classmates.
 - b. A **vocabulary word** from their chapter. The word may be a new term or a word related to the time period that is not commonly used today. Students write the word and its definition on an index card.
 - c. **Headline News.** Each chapter is organized by date. Students will create the facsimile of a newspaper headline for the main action of their chapter. Each will include: the “name” of their newspaper, the date of their chapter, their headline, and an accompanying illustration. Students can use www.timeanddate.com to determine the day of the week of their chapter.

Days Three and Four (time will vary depending on class reading skills)

1. Distribute handout to students. The class should record information presented by their classmates.
2. Beginning with chapter 3 students come forward sequentially with the telling of their part of the book. Students share their vocabulary words and their *Headline News* newspaper facsimile.

3. Select a headline for each chapter to post in the classroom essentially creating a timeline of the main events from the book. Note: The broadleaf advice on page 58 should be discussed and perhaps posted as well.

Day Five

1. The teacher reads aloud chapters 28, 29, and the Epilogue.
2. Debrief the book. You may wish to refer to the historic notes in the book's appendix.

Teacher Resources:

A discussion guide, chapter and interdisciplinary activities, yellow fever and historic Philadelphia links.

http://www.writerlady.com/fever1793_teachers.html

More web links including to primary sources. Includes a more expanded newspaper writing project with an assessment rubric.

<http://www.southernct.edu/~ils69313/fever1793/webquest.htm>

A historian's view of the book and its time. Addresses possible inaccuracies. Elaboration on Benjamin Rush. Links to primary sources.

<http://www.geocities.com/bobarnebeck/fever1793.html> <http://www.geocities.com/bobarnebeck/children.html>

Student Resources:

This site will create a calendar for any year. Students can look up what day of the week their chapter's date would fall on.

<http://www.timeanddate.com/>

[An American Plague: The True and Terrifying Story of the Yellow Fever](#), Jim Murphy This non-fiction account describes the illness that took its toll on the residents of Philadelphia in 1793, relating the epidemic to the major social and political events of the day and to 18th-century medical beliefs and practices. Illustrated with archival prints. Bibliography. Map. ISBN:0395776082

First hand accounts of the epidemic.

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/yellowfever.htm>

FEVER 1793

NAME _____

CHAPTER & DATE	NAME	HEADLINE	WORD
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
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7			
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9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

CHAPTER & DATE	NAME	HEADLINE	WORD
16			
17			
18			
19			
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21			
22			
23			
24			
25			
26			
27			
28			
29			
EPILOGUE			