

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

Spanish-American War: Disease and its impacts

Grade(s): 9-12

Time (minutes): Two (2), 50-minute class periods

Lesson Overview:

Students will act as detectives and “solve a mystery” surrounding the large number of deaths of U.S. soldiers during the Spanish-American War. Students will interact with primary source documents of soldiers who died from a mysterious illness during the war. Students will then analyze letters and other primary documents to determine what is killing these soldiers and why it is claiming so many lives. Students will finish with a close read on the Typhoid Fever epidemic and learn details of the disease and how it spread so quickly during the Spanish-American War.

Relevant Social Studies Standards:

SS.912.A.4.3 Examine causes, course, and consequences of the Spanish American War.

- Examples are Cuba as a protectorate, Yellow Journalism, sinking of the Maine, the Philippines, Commodore Dewey, the Rough Riders, acquisition of territories, the Treaty of Paris.
- Trace the origin, course, and/or consequences of the Spanish-American War.

SS.912.A.4.11 Examine key events and peoples in Florida history as they relate to United States history.

- Examples are the Spanish-American War, Ybor City, Jose Marti.

Related Benchmarks:

SS.912.A.1.2 Utilize a variety of primary and secondary sources to identify author, historical significance, audience, and authenticity to understand a historical period.

SS.912.A.1.4 Analyze how images, symbols, objects, cartoons, graphs, charts, maps, and artwork may be used to interpret the significance of time periods and events from the past.

SS.912.A.1.6 Use case studies to explore social, political, legal, and economic relationships in history.

Required Materials:

Pen/Pencil

UCF Veteran’s Legacy Project [video](#)

Burial Information Card for James Nelson

James Nelson Register of Enlistment

Burial Information Card for Charles Parks

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

Charles Parks Register of Enlistment

Demographics worksheet

Solving a Mystery Worksheet

Florida Memory Documents

- Documents contained in section titled “Measles and Typhoid in Camps at Fernandina Beach, Florida”

Article: *The Typhoid Epidemic in the Spanish-American War*

Close Reading Worksheet

Learning Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify the role of Typhoid Fever in the deaths of soldiers during the Spanish-American War
- Students will be able to describe how the conditions of the era lead to the spread of this deadly disease
- Students will be able to explain strategies that helped quell the virus and the spread of death in the aftermath of the War.

Special Vocabulary: typhoid fever, typhus, yellow fever, malaria

Procedure:

Day 1

1. Students will start by watching an intro [video](#) to the Veterans Legacy Project at UCF to understand the background to the project and why it’s important to study veterans from our own state, and the importance of the project’s mission in honoring and commemorating our nation’s veterans. Teacher should pause after the video to discuss the importance of the project and ask students probing questions such as
 - a. Why would it be important to study veterans of the Spanish-American War?
 - b. How could our location in Florida be even more pertinent to the events of the Spanish-American War? What information can be gained from analyzing soldier’s experiences in our FL cities?

(5-8 minutes)

2. Students will begin by working in groups to analyze the primary source documents of Private James Nelson and Private Charles Parks

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

- a. Students will complete a Demographics worksheet as they analyze the documents that outlines the main details of the soldiers
- b. Teacher discretion can be used as to whether each student will complete the worksheet, or if it will be completed as a group

(15 minutes)

3. If not already in groups, students should be placed in groups of 3-4 students to complete a “Solve the Mystery” worksheet. The goal of this activity is for students to work together analyzing various documents to solve the mystery as to what is causing so many deaths of soldiers during the Spanish-American War.
 - a. Divide up the Florida Memory documents among groups. Teacher discretion can be used as to how to assign documents to groups or individual students within groups.
 - i. Documents of most relevance are the [Letter from Chaplain McDonald](#), the Letter from Colonel Lovell, the [Letter from General Carpenter](#), and the [Letter from the Chief Surgeon Headley](#).
 - b. Have students read their assigned article and fill in their portion of the “Solve the Mystery” worksheet.
 - i. “Artifact” is the document they are looking at. “Characters involved” is who is writing and/or receiving the document. The “clues” are the main ideas/main pieces of information from the artifact that help describe what is killing soldiers during the Spanish-American war.
 - c. Teacher should be monitoring the groups, taking extra care to help groups come to the conclusion that typhus was the main cause of so many soldiers’ deaths.
 - i. At the end of the class period, the teacher should collect students’ worksheets and hold on to them for continuation of the lesson the next day.

(30 minutes)

Day 2

1. Teacher will start the class period by passing back the Solve the Mystery worksheets, and leading a whole group discussion on what students found in their research yesterday
 - a. Discussions should focus on what killed the soldiers, what the symptoms of the disease were, who was most affected, how it spread, etc.

(5-8 minutes)

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

2. To reinforce the conclusions made from the previous day, students will conduct a Close Read activity on the Typhoid Fever Epidemic in the Spanish American War. (NOTE: This article is very lengthy. Teacher discretion should be used in how much of the article to assign students to read. **Recommended pages for reading are: 355, 368, 377- top of 378, 389-top of 390. Furthermore, teachers could opt to have students only read the introduction and conclusion for a more focused close read).**
 - a. Students should complete the Close Read Worksheet as they read
 - b. Teachers unfamiliar with the Close Reading Process can find additional information [here](#).
 - i. Teachers should be sure to stagger the readings & instructions (i.e., don't show students instructions/questions from Read 2 before Read 1 is finished)

(30- 35 minutes)

3. Teacher will engage students in small-group discussions on the spread of the Typhoid Epidemic during the Spanish-American war. Monitor groups as they discuss what they learned from the reading, how Typhoid fever was spread (be sure to emphasize this was a PREVENTABLE disease spread through unsanitary conditions), and how it was dealt with (finally bringing in women as nurses and including sanitation education at the military academies).

(7-10 minutes)