

# Middle School Lesson Plan: “Our Oregon”

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by **Christine Campanella and Catherine Mermelstein**

*This lesson plan was developed during a class (summer 2010) with Professor Barbara Ruben, Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Education, Portland State University.*

**Recommended for grades 6-8.**

## **Unit Overview**

“Our Oregon” was created to help students develop an understanding of the connections between themselves and the State of Oregon by studying and exploring the history of Oregon’s people, places, and events through the Oregon Encyclopedia (OE). Students will use the OE website to create a piece of expository writing, compare and contrast information from Internet sources, and create a class book representing those topics that the students believe best represents “their” Oregon. Written work will be recorded to accompany the book, titled Our Oregon, which will be digitized and made available for an online audience (attached as a link to the school and/or class website). At the conclusion of the unit, the class book will be shared with the school and extended community at an Authors’ Tea. The ODE (Oregon Department of Education) Standards incorporated throughout the unit are provided below.

## **Essential Question**

As Oregonians, how are our lives influenced and changed by the people, places, and events that are significant to the state? What does Oregon mean to us?

## **Oregon State Standards**

### **Reading:**

EL.06.RE.03 Listen to, read, and understand a wide variety of informational and narrative text, including classic and contemporary literature, poetry, magazines, newspapers, reference materials, and online information.

EL.06.RE.17 Identify the structural features of newspapers, magazines, and online information, and use the features to obtain information.

### **Writing:**

EL.06.WR.01 Use a variety of strategies to prepare for writing, such as brainstorming, making lists, mapping, outlining, grouping related ideas, using graphic organizers, and taking notes.

EL.06.WR.02 Discuss ideas for writing with classmates, teachers, and other writers, and develop drafts alone and collaboratively.

EL.06.WR.03 Identify audience and purpose

EL.06.WR.08 Revise drafts to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs

EL.06.WR.09 Edit and proofread one’s own writing, as well as that of others, using the writing conventions, and, for example, an editing checklist or list of rules with specific examples of corrections of specific errors.

EL.06.RE.17 Identify the structural features of newspapers, magazines, and online information, and use the features to obtain information.

*EL.06.WR.32* Quote or paraphrase ideas from resource materials, citing them appropriately (e.g., Works Cited Entries--MLA)

**Speech:**

*EL.06.SL.02* Match the purpose, message, occasion, and delivery to the audience.

*EL.06.SL.10* Identify the tone, mood, and emotion conveyed in oral communication.

**History:**

*SS.08.HS.07.02* Understand the interactions and contributions of the various people and cultures that have lived in or migrated to the area that is now Oregon from post-American Revolution until 1900.

*SS.08.HS.08* Understand the lasting influence of events and developments in local history

**Art:**

*AR.05.CP.01* Use experiences, imagination, observations, essential elements and organizational principles to achieve a desired effect when creating, presenting and/or performing works of art.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL) / Differentiation**

Students choose their own research topic. This fosters creativity and independent decision-making. Students will also be encouraged to work together in pairs during the review and editing process. This will be especially helpful for those with special needs in reading and writing. Students will be given the choice to complete their draft summary either on the computer or by hand. This is designed to assist with time management, neatness, and difficulties with the fine motor skills required by writing by hand. Providing students with a variety of materials to create their visual interpretation for their topic will encourage individual creativity. Any artwork that is too cumbersome to fit into the class book can be photographed and inserted. Recording the summary and biography will provide those students with special needs in reading or with visual impairments with access to an audio version of each of the written documents included in the class book. Student work may be completed in a student's first or home language with the original student work and the translation/interpretation provided in the class book. For students for whom writing may be an obstacle, dictation may also be used. The final class book will be digitized and attached to the class and/or school website to provide additional access.

**Lesson 1 – Oregon Encyclopedia**

**Overview:**

Students will brainstorm to access prior knowledge about their own interests and about the State of Oregon in order to generate excitement about creating a class book and audio recording about the people, places, and events that the students judge are most representative of "their" Oregon. This accessed knowledge will help students generate a list of what they would like to learn about Oregon. Through these student-generated lists, students will be introduced to the Oregon Encyclopedia (OE) website, beginning with the categories of topics provided on the site. Students will explore the OE website to select five potential items for further research.

**Goal:**

Students will be introduced to the OE website ([www.oregonencyclopedia.org](http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org))

as a quality research tool, which they will use to generate a set of potential topics for a class book about Oregon.

**Objectives:**

- Students will brainstorm, creating a list of 5-10 things that they are interested in within their own life.
- Students will brainstorm, creating a list of 5-10 things that they know about Oregon.
- Students will brainstorm, creating a list of 5-10 things that they would like to learn about Oregon.
- Students will discuss and categorize the ideas generated from their lists using the categories available on the OE website.
- Students will be introduced to the resources and tools for navigation available on the OE website.
- Students will explore the OE website.
- Students will locate 5 potential items of interest on the OE website.

*EL.06.RE.17* Identify the structural features of newspapers, magazines, and online information, and use the features to obtain information.

*SS.08.HS.07.02* Understand the interactions and contributions of the various people and cultures that have lived in or migrated to the area that is now Oregon from post-American Revolution until 1900.

*SS.08.HS.08* Understand the lasting influence of events and developments in local history

**Materials:**

- Computer (one per student or pair)
- Printer
- Paper
- Pen/pencil

**Procedures:**

1. Teacher will ask students to brainstorm as a group and then individually on paper a list of 5-10 things they are interested in within their own lives. Students will turn to their neighbor and share 2 things on their list.
2. Teacher will ask students to generate a list of 5-10 things that they know about the State of Oregon – again as a group and individually in writing. They will then share 2 things on their list with a neighbor.
3. The third time the class will generate a list of 5-10 things that they want to know more about Oregon--as a class on the board, individually on paper, and then shared with a neighbor.
4. Taking the 3 lists on the board, the teacher will facilitate a class discussion and guide the students to categorize the ideas generated from their lists using the categories available on the OE website.

5. The teacher will project the OE website on the screen and have the students identify for the class what categories are on the site and the resources and tools for navigation available on the OE website.
6. Students will individually or in pairs explore the OE website.
7. Students will locate 5 potential items of interest on the OE website and write them on a word document. They will save the document on the desktops in student folders and print out list as an exit slip.

### **UDL/Differentiation:**

Providing students with an opportunity to brainstorm ideas about both those things in which they are most interested in within their own lives and those that they know about the state within which they live will help students begin to draw connections between their own interests and the people, places, and history of Oregon. Students are not assigned topics to research but are provided choice in determining the topics in which they are most interested.

## **Lesson 2 – Determining Validity**

### **Overview:**

Students will prepare for a written summary on a topic of their choice to be included in the class book on Oregon. They will use the Internet for research, developing and using a critical lens to determine the validity of potential Internet sources. Comparisons of content, author information, and affiliations will be made between identified sources and information contained on the OE website. Students will select one topic from the 5 generated in the previous lesson and locate 2 additional valid sources to be used in conjunction with their OE source. At the conclusion of this lesson, students will generate research notes to be used in their written summaries.

### **Goal:**

Students will learn and practice the skill of determining the validity of an Internet sources and other reference materials available in their school library.

### **Objectives:**

- Students will conduct a Google search for one item of interest determined at the conclusion of the previous lesson.
- Students will determine the domain (.gov, .edu, .com, etc.), author, any group or other associations, dates, and any other information that can be used to evaluate the validity of the site. (Authority, biases, current information)
- Students will compare OE content and author information with what they have found during their Google search.
- Students will select one topic from the 5 generated in the previous lesson.
- Students will select 2 additional sources of information regarding their topic to be used in conjunction with the information obtained from the OE website.
- Students will print out and/or take notes of pertinent information to be included in their written summaries.

*EL.06.RE.17* Identify the structural features of newspapers, magazines, and online information, and use the features to obtain information.

*EL.06.RE.03* Listen to, read, and understand a wide variety of informational and narrative text, including classic and contemporary literature, poetry, magazines, newspapers, reference materials, and online information.

*EL.06.WR.01* Use a variety of strategies to prepare for writing, such as brainstorming, making lists, mapping, outlining, grouping related ideas, using graphic organizers, and taking notes.

**Materials:**

- Computer (one per student or pair)
- Printer
- Paper
- Pen/pencil

**Procedures:**

**UDL/Differentiation:**

The opportunity to explore additional sources of information provides students experience in determining appropriate sources for research information, to become more-informed Internet consumers, and to think critically about the information they read. Additionally, student choice continues to guide the selection process, as the student determines which sources they prefer to support their research on their chosen topic.

**Lesson 3 – My Oregon Topic**

**Overview:**

Students will create an expository summary of 150 or more words describing their topic of research. During the editing process, students will work with a peer to pair-share for content and readability and rewrite as needed. Following the rewrite, students will work with a different peer to read their works aloud to one another, then exchange their work and repeat the process. Edits will be made to create a final summary to be included in the class book. Throughout the writing process, students will use proper citations as determined by the district and/or school.

**Goal:**

Students will create a draft, rewrite, and final summary based on their research, including information obtained from the OEP. Additionally, students will participate in peer review and oral delivery during the editing process.

**Objectives:**

- Students will write to a particular audience with a particular purpose in mind, as demonstrated through the essays available on the OE
- Students will write a 150-word summary using expository voice designed to emulate the conversational voice used in OE entries.
- Students will include proper citations within their summary (as mandated by the district and/or school).

*EL.06.WR.02* Discuss ideas for writing with classmates, teachers, and other writers, and develop drafts alone and collaboratively.

*EL.06.WR.03* Identify audience and purpose

*EL.06.WR.08* Revise drafts to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs

*EL.06.WR.09* Edit and proofread one's own writing, as well as that of others, using the writing conventions, and, for example, an editing checklist or list of rules with specific examples of corrections of specific errors.

*EL.06.WR.32* Quote or paraphrase ideas from resource materials, citing them appropriately (e.g., Works Cited Entries--MLA)

**Materials:**

- Computer (one per student or pair)
- Printer
- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Research Notes

**Procedures:**

1. Teacher will model conducting a Google search on a potential topic for the Oregon Class Book. The teacher will demonstrate where on the URL one can identify the domain source. The class will generate a list of different domains (.gov, .edu, .com, .org) – and together discuss validity of source. They will generate a list of other considerations to determine validity (citations, dates, author bios...).
2. Students individually or in pairs will conduct a Google search for one item of interest determined at the conclusion of the previous lesson.
3. Students will determine the domain (.gov, .edu, .com, etc.), author, any group or other associations, dates, and any other information that can be used to evaluate the validity of the site. (Authority, biases, current information)
4. Teacher will model a comparison between a source on OE and another source to determine validity using the list the class created earlier.
5. Students will then compare OE content and author information on their topic with what they have found during their Google search.
6. Students will select 2 additional sources of information regarding their topic to be used in conjunction with the information obtained from the OE website.
7. Teacher will model taking notes from OE and the 2 other sites that will be used to write summary page for class book. The teacher will demonstrate how to identify key point to bullet. Teacher will ask students to write down 4 pertinent facts about their item of interest.
8. Students will take notes of pertinent information to be included in their own written summaries.
9. Closure: Students will turn to a neighbor and share 2 new facts they learned today about their topic of choice.

**UDL/Differentiation:**

During this lesson, students will use peer review in the editing process. Peer review will include a pair-share for content and readability and a paired read-aloud for meaning and clarity. This peer review process will assist students with special needs and differentiated learning styles. Student choice continues to include access to computer technology at will. In addition, students

may create their summary using their first and/or home language. A translation will be created to accompany the student work in the class book. For students for whom writing may be an obstacle, dictation may also be used.

## **Lesson 4 - Illustrating the Topic**

### **Overview:**

Students will use varied materials to create an illustration or other physical representation of their choice for their topic. This representation will accompany their written work to be included in the class book. Photographs will be taken of student work that may not easily fit into the confines of the book.

### **Goal:**

Students will complete a piece of artwork that illustrates their chosen topic.

### **Objectives:**

- Students will create a drawing or 2-3 dimensional representation of their topic.
- Students will create an artistic representation using materials of their choice.

AR.05.CP.01 Use experiences, imagination, observations, essential elements and organizational principles to achieve a desired effect when creating, presenting and/or performing works of art.

### **Materials:**

- 8.5 x 11 white paper
- Glue/glue sticks
- Colored pencils
- Scissors
- Markers
- Pencils
- Construction paper
- Trimmings (ribbons, button, scraps, etc.)

### **Procedures:**

1. Using some actual artifacts and photos of artifacts, teacher will introduce the idea of an artifact. Then using the same model topic from past lessons, teacher will “think out loud” about what would be a good artifact to create to help the readers of the class book understand more about the topic of choice.
2. Students will be asked to think about what appropriate artifacts might be to enhance their topic for the class book.
3. Students will be asked to draw a pencil sketch of what the artifact might look like and identify what art media they will work in.
4. Students will work on creating their artifact.
5. Ten minutes before the end of time period, the teacher will give a 5-minute warning.
6. Five minutes before the end of the time period, teacher will announce clean-up and demonstrate where materials need to be placed and where artifacts need to be placed to be digitally photographed for class book.

**UDL/Differentiation:**

Providing students with a variety of materials in order to create their interpretation of their topic will encourage individual creativity. Students' artwork may include illustrations, models, or any other representation as agreed upon by the instructor. Artwork that is too cumbersome to fit into the class book can be photographed and inserted. Providing the opportunity for artwork to be photographed for entry in the class book allows for greater student choice and creativity.

**Lesson 5 - Writing the Biography****Overview:**

Students will create a brief author biography about themselves as demonstrated in the author biographies included on the OE website. During the editing process, students with a peer will initially pair-share for content and readability and rewrite as needed. Following the rewrite, students with a different peer will read their works aloud to one another, then exchange their work and repeat the process. Edits will be made to create a final biography to be included in the class book. Once the book is complete, it will be digitized and posted on the school and/or class website.

**Goal:**

Students will create a draft, rewrite, and final biography of themselves using a similar format to that used on the OE website. Additionally, students will participate in peer review and oral delivery during the editing process.

**Objectives:**

- Students will brainstorm the types of information contained in a biography.
- Students will read at least 5 author biographies available on the OE website.
- Students will create their own bios of at least 5 sentences to accompany their written summary.\*
- Students will pair-share their bios with a peer to assist with the editing process.
- Students will read their bios aloud to assist with the editing process.

*\*NOTE: An adaption to this lesson is to pair students in order to interview one another and write their partner's biography.*

*EL.06.WR.02* Discuss ideas for writing with classmates, teachers, and other writers, and develop drafts alone and collaboratively.

*EL.06.WR.03* Identify audience and purpose

*EL.06.WR.08* Revise drafts to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs

*EL.06.WR.09* Edit and proofread one's own writing, as well as that of others, using the writing conventions, and, for example, an editing checklist or list of rules with specific examples of corrections of specific errors.



**Materials:**

- Computer w/Internet access
- Pencil
- Notebook paper
- Variety of examples of biographies

**UDL/Differentiation:**

During this lesson, students will use peer review during the editing process. Peer review will include a pair-share for content and readability and a paired read-aloud for meaning and clarity. This peer review process will assist students with special needs and differentiated learning styles. Student choice continues to include access to computer technology at will. In addition, students may create their biography using their first and/or home language. For students for whom writing may be an obstacle, dictation may also be used. A translation will be created to accompany the student bio in the class book.

**Lesson 6 - Recording the Summary****Overview:**

Students will use the computer and Garage Band (available free as part of MAC systems) or similar software to record an audio interpretation of their summary and biography from their topic. This recording can be done with a partner in order to help facilitate an edited and final product. Student work written in a language other than English will be interpreted and recorded by a peer or specialized interpreter. Audio recordings will be included with the digitized class book available on the school and/or class website. This lesson will be followed by an Author's Tea to share and celebrate the completion of the class book with the school, parents, and community.

**Goal:**

Students will complete audio recordings of their topic summary and author biographies.

**Objectives:**

- Students will make an audio recording of their summary and biography on Garage Band.
- Students will use peer review techniques to help edit audio recording.

*EL.06.SL.02* Match the purpose, message, occasion, and delivery to the audience.

*EL.06.SL.10* Identify the tone, mood, and emotion conveyed in oral communication.

**Materials:**

- Computer (one per student or pair)
- Garage Band or similar software
- A copy of written summary and biography

**UDL/Differentiation:**

Recording the summary and biography will provide those students who are struggling readers with an audio version of each of the written documents from the class book. In addition, students may create their audio recording using their first and/or home language with a student and/or another interpreter providing an interpretation. Giving opportunities for students to use their first or home language creates a more diverse, cohesive, and accessible community for all learners.

**About the Authors:**

Christine Campanella is a graduate of Portland State University, where she received her Master's in Education in Elementary and Middle Level Education specializing in Mathematics Education. She currently works as a math intervention specialist in Portland Public Schools. She resides in Oregon City, Oregon, with her family including a dog, a rabbit, and a Madagascar Hissing Cockroach named Glenda. Whenever possible, she can be found hunting for agates, taking long walks, and seeking poetic inspiration along the Oregon Coast.

Catherine Mermelstein is a graduate of Portland State University, where she received her Master's in Education in Early Childhood and Elementary Education. She has been substitute teaching in the Portland area. She resides in Beavercreek, Oregon, with her family, where she loves to read, paint, and dig in the dirt. In her spare time, she takes great joy hunting for rocks and admiring the natural wonders that make Oregon unique.

