1950 – 1974
The Red Menace

activities

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1. **DEFINE TERMS**
   The Red Menace

2. **ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW**
   Cold War Memories:

3. **ANALYSIS**
   The Red Scare

4. **MOCK TRIAL**
   Violation of First Amendment Rights?

- Resources
  - Nebraska Department of Education
  - Content Area Standards A1

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activity

Define Terms

Ask students what the phrase, “The Red Menace” meant. Ask if they think communism and communists threatened Nebraska. To help with this task, have students define the following:

- Communist
- Joseph McCarthy
- McCarthyism
activity

Oral History Interview

Interview a person who was living during the Cold War. Follow the guidelines suggested in the How to Conduct and Utilize Oral Interviews in the Resources section of this document. After the students conduct the interviews, have them read each other’s work. Then use the following questions as a basis for classroom discussion:

• Should an oral history interview be considered a primary source document? Why or why not?

• Would you describe your interviews as factual or emotional? If they are emotional, does that diminish their value for interpreting history?

Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Nebraska State Social Studies Standards
SS 4.4.1; SS 4.4.2; SS 4.4.3; SS 4.4.4 | SS 8.4.2; SS 8.4.3; SS 8.4.4

Nebraska State English Language Arts Standards
LA 4.1.6 Comprehension; LA 4.2.2 Writing Modes; LA 4.4.1 Information Fluency
LA 8.1.6 Comprehension; LA 8.3.2 Listening
Red Scare

activity

Analysis

Have students analyze the "Red Menace" in Nebraska in the 1950s and 1960s and include one or more of the following (including original documents found in this section of nebraskastudies.org) in their analysis:

- McCarthyism
- The Nebraska legislature’s attempt to outlaw the Community Party
- Governor Peterson’s list of suspected subversives
- Nebraska’s Loyalty Oath
- Communism as a threat to labor unions

Have students use the Written Document Analysis worksheet in the Resources at the end of this document.

Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Nebraska State Social Studies Standards
SS HS.4.1; SS HS.4.4; SS HS.4.5

Nebraska State English Language Arts Standards
Standard 12.1.1; Standard 12.1.6; Standard 12.2.4; Standard 12.2.5
Organize a mock trial or role-playing to discuss if First Amendment rights were violated with reference to a Cold War event.

1. Read the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

2. Have students organize into groups and choose ONE of the following historic events:
   - Nebraska’s legislative attempts to outlaw the Communist Party OR
   - Governor Peterson’s compiling of the list of suspected subversives OR
   - Nebraska’s Loyalty Oath that teachers and other public employees were required to sign

3. Depending on which event they select, have students research and obtain background documents such as:
   - the text of the proposed legislation to outlaw the Communist Party OR
   - background information on Governor Peterson’s suspected subversives’ list OR
   - the Nebraska Loyalty Oath.

4. Have students in each group play each of the following roles: newspaper reporters, defense attorney(s), defendant(s), prosecuting attorney(s), the judge, and jury members.
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resources

How to Conduct and Utilize Oral Interviews
7

Written Document Analysis Worksheet
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Nebraska Department of Education Academic Standards https://www.education.ne.gov/contentareastandards/
National Archives http://www.archives.gov/index.html
Oral history is the process of collecting an individual’s spoken memories of his or her life, of the people he or she has known, and the events which he or she witnessed or participated in. Oral history is another primary source technique historians use to help them interpret the past. Oral histories can be used to supplement written records, complement secondary sources (what has been written by historical scholars), and to provide information that would exist in no other form.

But, using oral histories as a source can also pose problems. Interviewees are human. They can forget things. Their memories can play tricks on them. You have to be very careful as a historian when you use oral history as a source.

Teachers need to explore activities that help students strengthen their abilities to develop good interviewing techniques. The teacher might conduct a personal interview with a person representative of whomever the students will be interviewing (an elderly person, etc.) in the classroom.

Students could then practice interviewing one another in the classroom as part of a paired activity. The practice interviews can help students develop awareness of key techniques that will help them when they conduct an actual interview. The teacher and/or students can offer suggestions on what the characteristics of a good interview are. The teacher may also want to review passages from actual transcripts of interviews to illustrate key attributes of successful interviews.

Caution students that oral history (conducting interviews) is not a substitute for basic research. Students should research printed and electronic resources for background information and historical accounts of the issue, event, or personality being studied.

Consider the following suggestions on how to conduct and utilize oral interviews.

**Preparing**

1. **Decide which individuals would be most appropriate to interview.** There are many ways to find someone to interview. Ask your family members. Contact veterans’ organizations, church groups, civic organizations etc. Put a request in your local newspaper. It’s a good idea when you find someone to have them complete a brief preliminary questionnaire to give you some background on the person.

2. **Schedule the interview as soon as possible and by telephone if possible.** Confirm the meeting time and date a day before conducting the Interview.

3. **Learn as much as possible about the topic of your interview before conducting the interview.** Contact the local media reporters for suggestions on related topics, sources, etc. Carefully read the person's completed questionnaire. Make up a list of questions from things on the questionnaire. Do enough preliminary research so that you are able to ask intelligent questions. Prepare a brief outline of questions you will be asking.

4. **Make sure you are familiar with your recorder.** Make sure any equipment you will be using is working properly (camcorder, tape recorder, etc.) and secure the interviewee’s permission to record the interview. Practice to make sure you can operate. Have an extra tape in case the interview is longer, or in case the tape would break.

5. **When selecting the location for the interview, ask the interviewee where he or she would be most comfortable.** Choose a place that is quiet, where there won’t be a lot of distractions.
How to Conduct and Utilize Oral Interviews
By Michael Young, former History Department Chair, Omaha Burke High School

Conducting the Interview

1. Dress appropriately and create a good impression.

2. When you get to the interview, chat briefly with your interviewee to get him or her feeling relaxed and comfortable with you. Explain, again, to the interviewee your purpose for the interview. Do not begin the interview abruptly. Introduce yourself, make the interviewee as comfortable as possible, and review the interview process you will be using. Be sure to let them know how much you appreciate getting the chance to talk with them.

3. During the interview, keep things moving. Express an interest in what the interviewee is saying and listen carefully. Make a conscious effort to be unbiased and try not to influence how the interviewee will answer your questions. Have your questions ready, but do not rely totally on them. By listening carefully to what the person is speaking about, you can come up with additional questions. Avoid too many open-ended questions that require long complicated answers.

4. Use a tape recorder or camcorder to more accurately record the interview. In addition, take notes and accurately record the correct spelling of name, places, etc. Silence can be productive. Do not rush the narrator to respond.

5. You may need to have the interviewee sign a legal release form enabling you to use any information gained through the interview for research purposes.

6. Know the physical limitations of the person you are interviewing. If the person has a hard time hearing, make sure you speak up loudly and clearly. Don’t let an interview drag on endlessly. If you still have areas to cover, you might want to take a short break.

7. Have a good closing question that helps the interviewee summarize his/her statements and helps bring closure to the interview.

8. Be sensitive. Indicate to the interviewee that his/her answers will be reported anonymously if requested. Some subjects may provoke an emotional response. If a person starts to cry, you might turn off the tape recorder for a few minutes.

9. After the interview, send a thank you note to the person being interviewed within one week of the interview. If you transcribe the tape, send your interviewee a copy of the tape, or if you don’t transcribe the entire tape, send them the paper you wrote.
How to Conduct and Utilize Oral Interviews
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Examining

1. Prepare a written summary, note cards, and/or outline of the key points discussed in the interview that are relevant to your topic.

2. What perspective did the interviewee give you about the topic? 3. What did the interviewee tell you about the lifestyles, culture, political atmosphere, economic issues, education, etc. of the time period being studied?

4. Is the interviewee a dependable source of information? Did the interviewee have a difficult time remembering dates, places, and events?

5. Compare/Contrast the information given to you by the interviewee with the factual information you have learned from researching other primary and secondary sources.

Determine Its Usefulness

1. What information from this interviewee is useful for the development of your topic?

2. What does this information contribute to the development or analysis of your topic? How can incorrect information or biased viewpoints be used?

3. How can the information gained from your interview be most effectively used in your research project?

4. Oral history can be used to validate other data, to collect opinions reflecting different points of view, to acquire background or perspective, and to collect "up-to-date" data.

5. In summary, oral history can also demonstrate cause and effect, objectivity versus subjectivity, reality versus abstraction, fact versus opinion, and attitudes then and now.

Bibliography


1950 – 1974 The Red Menace

resources

National Archives:
Written Document Analysis Worksheet

1. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one)
   ... Letter
   ... Patent
   ... Memorandum
   ... Map
   ... Telegram
   ... Press release

2. UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more):
   ... Report
   ... Advertisement
   ... Congressional record
   ... Census report
   ... Other

   ... Interesting letterhead
   ... Handwritten
   ... Typed
   ... Seals

   ... Notations
   ... RECEIVED stamp
   ... Other

3. DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT: ......................................................................................................................................................

4. AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT: ..............................................................................................................................................................................................................
   POSITION (TITLE): ..............................................................................................................................................................................................................

5. FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN? ..............................................................................................................................................................................................................

6. DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.)
   A. List three things the author said that you think are important:
      1. .......................................................................................................................................................................................................
      2. .......................................................................................................................................................................................................
      3. .......................................................................................................................................................................................................

   B. Why do you think this document was written?
      ..............................................................................................................................................................................................................

   C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document.
      ..............................................................................................................................................................................................................

   D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written:
      1. .......................................................................................................................................................................................................
      2. .......................................................................................................................................................................................................

   E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document
      ..............................................................................................................................................................................................................

Designed and developed by the Education Staff • National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408 • http://www.archives.gov

nebraska studies.org
Social Studies Standards

SS 4.4.1 Investigate patterns of continuity and change over time in Nebraska.
SS 4.4.2 Analyze and explain multiple perspectives of events in Nebraska, including historically marginalized and underrepresented groups.
SS 4.4.3 Analyze past and current events throughout Nebraska history.
SS 4.4.4 Develop historical inquiry and research skills.

SS 8.4.2 Use multiple perspectives to evaluate the historical, social, and cultural context of past and current events.
SS 8.4.3 Examine historical events from the perspectives of marginalized and underrepresented groups.
SS 8.4.4 Evaluate and interpret sources for perspective and historical context.

HS SS HS.1.1 Analyze the foundation, structures, and functions of the United States government as well as local, state, and international governments.
SS HS.3.5 Evaluate issues and/or events using geographic knowledge and geospatial skills to make informed decisions.
SS HS.4.1 Analyze and evaluate patterns of continuity and change over time in history.
SS HS.4.4 Evaluate sources for perspective, limitations, accuracy, and historical context.
SS HS.4.5 Apply the inquiry process to construct and answer historical questions.
Nebraska Department of Education
Content Area Standards

Language Arts Standards

4
LA 4.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by using prior knowledge and text information while reading grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 4.2.2 Writing Modes: Students will write in multiple modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.

LA 4.4.1 Information Fluency: Students will evaluate, create, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats (textual, visual, and digital).

8
LA 8.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by applying prior knowledge, using text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading increasingly complex grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 8.2.2 Writing Modes: Students will write in multiple modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.

LA 8.3.2 Listening: Students will develop and demonstrate active listening skills across a variety of situations.

LA 8.4.1 Information Fluency: Students will evaluate, create, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats (textual, visual, and digital).

HS
Standard 12.1.1. By the end of the twelfth grade, students will identify the main idea and supporting details in what they have read.

Standard 12.1.6. By the end of the twelfth grade, students will identify and apply knowledge of the text structure and organizational elements to analyze non-fiction or informational text.

Standard 12.2.4. By the end of the twelfth grade, students will use multiple forms to write for different audiences and purposes.

Standard 12.2.5. By the end of twelfth grade, students will demonstrate the ability to use self-generated questions, note taking, summarizing, and outlining while learning.