

## **NEH Hudson River Workshop Lesson Plan 2011**

**Teacher:** Grace Leatherman

**Subject:** US History

**Grade Level:** 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Summary:**

This is a discussion-based lesson designed to help students think about their own local river, the Potomac, by comparing it to the Hudson. By the end of the lesson, students will understand how rivers determine the development of cities and businesses.

## Comparing the Hudson and Potomac Rivers: How Rivers Drive Industry and Settlement Patterns

**Name:** Grace Leatherman

**Course:** \_\_\_\_ US History \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade Level:** \_\_ 9 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Rationale:**

This is a discussion based lesson based lesson designed to help students think about their own local river, the Potomac, by comparing it to the Hudson. By the end of the lesson, students will understand how river determine the development of cities and businesses. This fits into our Unit II discussion of Industrialization and the growth of cities.

### **Essential Questions:**

1. How do changes in technology affect economic, political, and social systems?
2. How do economic and industrial changes affect individuals?
3. How does physical geography affect settlement patterns?

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will compare and contrast the physical geography of the Hudson and Potomac Rivers.
2. Students will compare and contrast the economic and political development of the areas around the river
3. Students will analyze the affects of physical geography on human settlement and economic patterns.

### **Materials:**

See attached materials, including nautical maps and images of the Potomac and Hudson

### **Procedure:**

Comparison (20 mins): Students will be divided into teams of two. Each will have a navigation map of either the Hudson or Potomac River. They will record the following about their river:

- Major Cities
- Major Ports
- Observations about river depth
- Observations about river length
- States touching the River
- Other Observations

They will then join another group of two who looked at the other river. The students will brainstorm five similarities and five differences.

Lesson Body (20 minutes): Students will share out the similarities and differences they observed. These will hopefully include:

- Both rivers have a major city at the mouth
- Both rivers have major ports at their mouth (NY City, Alexandria)
- The Potomac is much more shallow than the Hudson, which is navigable up to Troy.
- The Potomac has a canal along most of it.
- Both rivers are state borders

At this point the teacher will ask more probing questions, providing images to go along. The class will discuss how Washington D.C. is where it is because it is convenient for shipping, is half way between North and South, and because Maryland and Virginia donated land on either side of the Potomac. The teacher will show images of factories along the Hudson and the Potomac, and ask students how rivers determine where factories are built. The teacher will show images of steam boats on the Hudson, and barges on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal. Students will discuss how navigability of a river determines transportation. If time allows, the teacher can discuss the strategic importance of river cities like New York, Washington, Baltimore, and Harpers Ferry in wartime. Finally, students should discuss the current importance of the Hudson and Potomac Rivers. Are they still important for industry and transportation? What is their role today? This should be a very discussion based lesson

**Assessment:**

Students should write a few sentences answering the prompt 'How does the physical geography of a river affect economic and settlement patterns along its banks?'