

“In response to your letter...” - 8th Grade

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Lesson Plan Summary:

In this lesson plan, students will reinforce the Cause and Effect method used in writing in order to aid their reading comprehension. Students will find a letter on the TIDES website from the 1800's and write a response to it in the voice of a person from the same time period. Students may write as an average person, such as a farm owner, or someone well known and famous, such as Sam Houston.

Objectives:

- Students will listen effectively while taking notes on the Cause and Effect method in writing. **(ELA TEKS 8.1 A, C, D)**
- Using technology, students will search for a historical letter on the TIDES website then read and respond using historical facts as well as their imagination. **(ELA TEKS 8.4 A-C; 8.5 A-C; 8.8 B-D; 8.10 A-E)**
- Students will assess their own knowledge by engaging in a class-wide matching activity in order to pair the “cause” and “effect” letters together. **(ELA TEKS 8.11 A-D)**

Materials Needed:

- Computers/printers (classroom set or computer lab)
- Access to the TIDES website
- Writing/ artistic supplies
- Creative-Thinking caps ☺
- “Which letter will you choose” sheet

Procedure:

Instructors should collect some bullet notes on Cause and Effect for students to jot down before proceeding with this activity.

Students will respond to a letter from the TIDES website using their imagination and prior knowledge of the 1800s time period. Students are allowed to use resources such as their school history text, encyclopedias, and the TIDES site to make their response believable and funny. They may pretend to be as famous as Sam Houston or just a “regular old Joe” living in East Texas. Once students decide, take the “first come, first serve” approach to even out the amount of responses to each letter.

For instance, if a letter is talking about the selling of a slave and the cost, it may be important that the student write a “cause” letter (this would come before the actual historical letter) stating their reasons for wanting or needing a slave. Allow students to use their imagination all the while staying on topic. This activity should be fun in that students can be who they want to be and respond the way they see fit.

Each response should be at least two paragraphs in length (5 complete sentences in each). Letters should contain the appropriate parts such as: date, salutations, body, and closing. Students should go through the writing process individually (prewriting, self-editing, final piece). Once students have completed their letters, they will post their letters separately around the classroom (the “cause” letter should not be placed next to the “effect” letter).

As a class wide activity, students will have to read and match letters (the historical letter from TIDES matched with the student's response). This is where the teacher can assess their knowledge on Cause and Effect. Another option is to compile all letters in a book to show how creatively different the students respond historical writings.

****Modify this lesson as needed. Please allow Special Education students to receive help as needed (Content Mastery). ESL students must also have more time to work (sheltered classes if applicable). Instructors, you know your students best!**

Which letter will you choose? Cause and Effect

Directions: Look at the following letters. You must choose and write a response to one letter. USE YOUR IMAGINATION. You are at liberty to use other resources: history text, encyclopedias, and the Tides website (*The Handbook of Texas*). Make it fun, creative, and funny!

On the TIDES site: In each section, click on the 1800s and find each letter according to the dates given. First come, first serve. Once you decide, report to me so that there is an equal amount of responses for each letter.

African American

September 4, 1837: “Letter on Houston, Congress and Selling a Slave”

Anglo American

July 19, 1837: “Letter of Introduction”

September 1837: “Letter about Treasury Notes”

Mexican American

May 26, 1847: “Soldier’s Letter from the Mexican War”

Native American

December 4, 1849: “Joint Resolution Demanding Removal of Indians from the Territory”