

So What Were They Saying? (English 1)

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Objectives:

- Students will become more familiar with historical literature and its conventions of language. (ELA TEKS 8 A-B, 9 A-B)
- Students, as a class, will discuss the importance of reading various forms of early literature. (ELA TEKS 10 A-C, 11 A-B, 12 A, 13 D-E, 14 A-C)
- Students will search/read to analyze, comprehend, and interpret writings from early East Texas history on the TIDES website. (ELA TEKS 6 A-B, D-E; 7 A-C, 8 B, 12 A)
- Students will use technology to search, print and produce their interpretation of an early piece of writing. (ELA TEKS 4 A, C, G; 5 A-B)

Materials Needed:

- Familiar examples of early texts such as *The Declaration of Independence* and *Romeo and Juliet*.
- Computers and printers (classroom or school computer lab)
- List of links to documents on TIDES site
- Thinking Caps and writing utensils

Procedure:

The teacher will open the class period with an impromptu reading from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Students will be asked to translate the section into modern language and discuss how the English language evolves and changes. This practice will prepare them for the project.

Students will choose one TIDES document from the list of links provided. They will print out one copy of both the original and manuscript.

Once students have their chosen piece of writing, they will translate the documents into "modern" speech. Ask the students, "How would you have written this same letter today?" The teacher should remind students that they are simply re-writing their findings into today's language, and that while slang may be appropriate in some places they should refrain from including harsh interjections that are not present.

Once the translations have been completed, the students will partner up and assess their understandings. The teacher will allow time for the students to read both their partner's original version as well as the modern interpretation. Students will then read their interpreted version out loud to the class. This is a fun activity and, if monitored correctly, will help students to appreciate and understand all types of literature, both new and old.

Modifications:

Modify this project as needed. ESL and Special Education (Content Mastery) students will need one-on-one help with their project. You may want to allow students to work with a partner on one piece, work alone, or allow them to find and choose an appropriate document in the TIDES site for themselves.

*****Links for this lesson.**

African American

- September 4, 1837 “Letter on Houston, Congress and Selling a Slave”
 - Link: <http://tides.sfasu.edu/AA18/A132B1F1a.php?culture=1&chrono=5&index=0>
 - Print the “corrected transcript” version.

Anglo American

- July 19, 1837 “Letter of Introduction”
 - Link: http://tides.sfasu.edu/AN18/SMM1981_1320.php?culture=2&chrono=5&index=0
- September 1837 “Letter about Treasury Notes”
 - Link: <http://tides.sfasu.edu/AN18/A132B1F2b.php?culture=2&chrono=5&index=0>

Mexican American

- May 26, 147 “Soldier’s Letter from the Mexican War”
 - Link: http://tides.sfasu.edu/ME18/SHHVII_46.php?culture=3&chrono=5&index=0
 - Print the “corrected transcript” version.

Native American

- December 4, 1849 “Joint Resolution Demanding Removal of Indians from the Territory”
 - Link: <http://tides.sfasu.edu/NA18/A31B2F5a.php?culture=4&chrono=5&index=0>