



Using Podcasts in the Classroom: A Sample Lesson Plan

Listening to the Colonial Trades

Introduction

Integrating media into classroom lessons is an easy way to keep kids' interest and reach students who best retain information in auditory and visual formats. Educational podcasts are easy to use, can provide unique and in-depth content, and give students a chance to learn material from voices other than your own.

Podcasts are much like radio segments that are downloadable from the Internet. They often come in a series that can be subscribed to and downloaded into audio media software (for example, Windows Media Player or iTunes).

Colonial Williamsburg's "Past and Present" series includes free podcasts, "enhanced podcasts" (podcasts accompanied by images), and "vodcasts" (podcasts accompanied by video) which can be played directly from podcast.history.org. Many are accompanied by transcripts. Users can also download files with audio media software, and subscribe to the full series on iTunes or using an RRS feed. These podcasts cover a wide variety of historical topics, from slavery to pirates to bathing, to famous Americans to important inventions.

This lesson uses colonial trades as an example, but the lesson format can be used for podcasts on any subject matter.

NOTE: This activity requires students to have computer, Internet access, and headphones. It could be completed in a computer lab, in a classroom with a laptop cart, or as an at-home assignment. You may wish to have students bring their own headphones to school on the day of the lesson.

Materials

- Past & Present: The Colonial Trades
- Podcast Response Worksheet
- Podcast Synopsis Sheet
- Computer with projector

Strategy

1. Project an image of a colonial tradesman on the screen (you could use www.colonialwilliamsburg.com/Almanack/life/trades/tradehdr.cfm). Ask students:



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- If you were able to listen to a colonial tradesman, what might you want to know?
 - If you were able to interview a colonial tradesman, what is a question you might ask?
2. Display the Colonial Williamsburg “Past and Present” podcast page on the screen (podcast.history.org). Demonstrate how to search for podcasts using the search function.
 3. Prepare/load a trade podcast to use as a demonstration. Discuss with students:
 - How many of you listen to a news program on the radio? How is it different than watching one on television?
 - What is a podcast? Have you ever listened to one?
 4. Play all or a portion of the selected demonstration podcast. Ask students to listen for key points to share with the class afterward.
 5. Conduct a *Think-Pair-Share* with students by allowing a few minutes for private reflection and a few minutes to share with partners. Then ask several students to share their key points with the class.
 6. Distribute one copy of “Past and Present: The Colonial Trades” to each student. Review with students the directions and the choice of trades podcasts listed.
 7. Have students listen to the podcast of their choice.
 8. Distribute one copy of the Podcast Response Worksheet to each student. Give students time to complete the worksheet. Then call on students to share which podcast they listened to and what they thought of it. If desired, collect and grade the Podcast Response Worksheet.

Evaluation

Hand out the “Podcast Synopsis” directions. Review them with students. You may wish to display a movie trailer or the synopsis of a book as an example for students.

A picture that correlates with the trade in the podcast should accompany the synopsis.

This lesson plan was written by Mike Lebsock, 8th-grade teacher, Fresno, CA.



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Past & Present: The Colonial Trades

You are going to go back into time to discover more about some of the trades that were practiced in Colonial Williamsburg. You will select one of the Colonial Williamsburg podcasts from the list below, listen to that podcast and then complete the response form, including writing a brief synopsis of the podcast you selected.

- A. **Coopering** (7/18/05)... The art and science of making barrels.
- B. **Ken Schwartz on the Life of a Blacksmith** (8/8/05)... Noise, smoke, dirt... the blacksmith endured all this to turn raw materials into useful objects.
- C. **Silversmith** (8/22/05)... A journeyman silversmith describes his 26 years of creating beautiful, silver pieces.
- D. **Printer** (10/31/05)... A 24 year journeyman printer describes his work.
- E. **Shoemaker** (1/2/06)... Details of making shoes for 18th century citizens.
- F. **Gunsmith** (1/16/06)... Master gun maker tells about the art of making guns in Williamsburg.
- G. **Brewing and Baking and Much More** (1/23/06) Discover what was involved in the food trades of the 18th century.
- H. **Milliner and Mantua Maker** (8/7/06)... Creating the beautiful dresses for the Margret Hunter Shop in Williamsburg.
- I. **A Fourth-Generation Cabinetmaker** (8/21/06)... The sophisticated artistry of 18th century cabinetmaking.
- J. **The Fashionable Wig** (9/25/06)... A Williamsburg wigmaker shares her story of life and hair in the King's Arms Barber Shop.
- K. **Williamsburg's Blacksmith** (9/19/11)... Williamsburg's blacksmith transforms crude metal into elegant, functional tools. Master Blacksmith Ken Schwarz details the trade.
- L. **Meet the Basketmaker** (8/8/11)... Basketmaking is a tradition born of utility and preserved for beauty. Colonial Williamsburg basketmaker Terry Thon practices a trade passed down through generations.
- M. **Meet the Weaver** (6/20/11)... War makes the weaver busy. Cloth for everything from sails to bedsheets is created on his loom. Max Hamrick weaves the tale.

Go to the following website to locate your podcast. Use the search function to find your podcast, or browse podcasts by date or category.

<http://podcast.history.org>



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Podcast Response Worksheet

Student Name _____ Date _____

Title of podcast _____

Date of podcast posting _____

Interviewer name _____

Guest speaker _____

What was the topic (main idea) of the podcast?

What was ONE main point of interest to you in the podcast AND why?

What made you choose this podcast?



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Podcast Synopsis Sheet

Imagine that Colonial Williamsburg has decided to create a new webpage for teachers and students featuring their podcasts on the colonial trades. They need a new, longer synopsis for each of these podcast episodes.

A synopsis is like a movie trailer: it provides enough information to make a potential listener interested in the podcast, but does not give away all the “good stuff.”

Directions: Write a brief synopsis about the trade podcast you selected.

1. Focus your synopsis on a couple key points from the podcast.
2. Be sure to include the site address of the podcast at the end of your synopsis so a potential listener will know where to find it.
3. Include a picture that would be published with your synopsis.