

Angelo's Saturdays

Lesson 3: Historical Heads (Part 2)

Essential Questions

What life and work opportunities did immigrants find in Chicago in the 1890s? What factors did new immigrants take into account when weighing their options? How did Jane Addams and Hull House improve immigrants' lives and expand their opportunities?

Desired Understandings

Students will understand that 1890s Chicago offered immigrants both opportunities and challenges and that individuals had to weigh many conflicting factors when planning their futures. Students will understand that Jane Addams created Hull House to help immigrants overcome the obstacles to success they encountered in their new home.

Knowledge

Students will know the opportunities and limitations encountered by immigrant children in 1890s Chicago. They will know that Jane Addams's Hull House provided many services that had a positive impact on the lives of Near West Side immigrants.

Skills

Students will use their analytical skills to identify obstacles to advancement that might impact an immigrant. They will use their language arts skills to summarize their interpretations in writing and present their findings verbally to the class.

Illinois Learning Standards

English Language Arts

- Goal 1: Read with understanding and fluency.
- Goal 2: Read and understand literature representative of various societies, eras, and ideas.
- Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.
- Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations.
- Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information.

Social Science

- Goal 15: Understand economic systems, with an emphasis on the United States.
- Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the United States, and other nations.
- Goal 17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on society, with an emphasis on the United States.
- Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the United States.

In This Lesson

This lesson uses the "historical head" conceptual framework derived from the work of James Percoco to explore the thoughts and feelings of the characters in *Angelo's Saturdays*. The story elements of setting, character, and obstacles/problems are addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Aggie Nowak.



Activity

Begin the lesson by having students briefly regroup to review their character summaries from the Lesson 2 Home Connection. Have them choose a spokesperson to play the role of their historical head character.

Next choose a student volunteer to play the role of Angelo. (It could be a student who was absent from the Lesson 2 activity or a student who is in the Angelo historical head group but not that group's spokesperson.) Have each spokesperson/character come to the front of the room and give Angelo his or her advice about what to do with his future, ending with Angelo's own advice to himself. Afterward, ask the student playing Angelo to share his or her feelings about the advice he received. If not raised by students in the context of this exercise, point out that the characters often had contradictory opinions about what Angelo should do and that Angelo's best interests might not have come first (e.g. needing money for the family).

Next, tell students that there is one additional character in the story who could potentially influence Angelo's fate. Then, read the remaining two chapters of *Angelo's Saturdays* aloud. Briefly discuss how Jane Addams and Hull House might have impacted Angelo's future. Brainstorm as a class what words of advice Jane Addams might have given to Angelo, and compare/contrast this with the advice of the other characters, as determined earlier in the class period. Finish up with a very brief plot review to ensure all students have an understanding of what happens at the end of the story.

Lesson 3 Home Connection

Have students write a short story about Angelo's life set 20 years in the future. What is Angelo doing now? Has he returned to Italy? Has he made it to Prairie Avenue? Has he remained on the Near West Side? How did he get to the place/situation where he finds himself around 1920? Give students at least two days to complete this assignment.

Materials & Resources

- **Printouts of the *Angelo's Saturdays* narrative:**

http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/Angelos_Saturdays_%20by_Katherine_San_Fratello.pdf

Instructional Notes

This activity worked really well in my classes because it made Angelo and the other story characters more concrete in students' minds. This created an interesting discussion dynamic among the characters, and students were able to see more clearly the many divergent paths open to Angelo. Students can also more readily put themselves in Angelo's shoes, giving them good preparation for the writing activity.

As students embark on their story writing, remind them how difficult it is in any time period to achieve the wealth reflected in the Prairie Avenue of Angelo's time, regardless of whether one is a new immigrant or an established citizen. Repeatedly stress plausibility as an important element on which their story will be graded.

For more information about James Percoco's historical head activity, see page 31 of his book *A Passion for the Past: Creative Teaching of U.S. History* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1998).

Extension Activities

Consider devoting more class time to actual story writing if your students struggle with elements of literature, such as third-person narrator and dialogue.

Have students explore the "Hull House" tab of the interactive history map and list 10 interesting facts about Hull House not revealed in the story. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/site/storymap/index.html?story=7>

Have students read Hilda Satt Polacheck's *I Came a Stranger: The Story of a Hull-House Girl*. Hilda's story is particularly relevant because she must drop out of school to help support her family by working in a sweatshop. At Hull House she is able to learn English and take creative-writing classes, and she ultimately attends the University of Chicago on a scholarship.