

The POINT!

E-Letter for Western Pennsylvania Social Studies Educators
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Primary Source Materials

Approximately 8% of the population is associated with the armed forces today. It follows that most students don't have a clue as to what life in the military is like. While movies and TV offer bits and pieces of military life, they do not always portray the services accurately. Only those who have served understand what military service is all about.

The **Veterans Breakfast Club** provides a variety of programs that can help teachers share veterans' stories that illustrate what military life is all about.

Check out the Home Page of the Vets Breakfast Club with links to a variety of programs that focus on specific topics that can lift the veil that today keeps much about the military a secret. See: <https://veteransbreakfastclub.org>

The "*Scuttlebutt*" takes a stab at understanding jargon of the various branches of the service. The scuttlebutt is a drinking fountain in the Navy and the term refers to the latest news or gossip aboard ship, usually passed along at the scuttlebutt.

There are first hand accounts of many aspects of military life, including descriptions of battles as seen from the eyes of a participant. No history book can provide what can be found here.

The Veterans Breakfast Club offers great source information that can help teachers to help students understand a great deal about the military.

<https://veteransbreakfastclub.org>



Soldiers & Sailors Hall!

Soldiers & Sailors Memorial Hall & Museum houses a vast collection of primary and secondary documents and military artifacts. It is their mission to promote the use of these educational items and create an understanding for all groups who visit the museum. They provide a rich learning experience for all people by exploring the deeds and sacrifices of ordinary citizens during extraordinary circumstances.

Don't forget contact S&S about VIP Tours and Footlocker program.

For more information visit our web site:

<https://soldiersandsailorshall.org>



Classrooms W/O Borders

Dear Educators!

We invite you to look at our available speakers, scholars and course options available to you and your classrooms!

To discuss your class room needs or to book a scholar for your classroom contact [Melissa Haviv](#)

[View this email in your browser](#)



TeachingAmericanHistory.org

A Pageantry of Power: Planning Washington's First Inauguration

by: Sarah Morgan Smith

Americans might expect there would be less of such information for George Washington than for the other men on the list, but in fact, the opposite is true. Washington's first inauguration was the result of extremely careful planning and much behind-the-scenes negotiation. Since Washington would be the first president of the new United States of America, his assumption of the office had to strike just the right note: ceremonial but neither overly solemn nor yet merely celebratory, lest it be seen as too monarchical on the one hand or too common on the other. **Read more...**



TeachingAmericanHistory.org

American Independence Begins on Favorable Terms: Continental Congress Ratifies the Treaty of Paris

by: Ellen Tucker

This day, in a sense, marks the anniversary of the beginning of American independence. While the American Revolution ended with the surrender of Lord Cornwallis to General George Washington at Yorktown, on October 19, 1781, the treaty that settled the new relationship between Britain and its former colonies was ratified by the Confederation Congress on January 14, 1784. (It had been signed in Paris on September 3, 1783.) **The treaty's provisions**



The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there.
-L.P. Hartley, writer (30 Dec 1895-1972)

The Point

For
Western Pennsylvania
Social Studies Educators
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studies in Western Pennsylvania

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Can students be motivated to revise their writing?

Eschewing letter grades on writing assignments for rubric-guided labels of "Publishable," "Revisable" or "Redo" has made some students eager to repeatedly revise their writing before the final due date, according to Alexis Wiggins, chair of the English department at a Texas school. Wiggins and other teachers respond in this blog post about how they encourage students to revise their writing. **Full Story:** [Education Week](#) (1/3)

Survey: Few teachers feel prepared to teach civics

About 1 in 5 teachers say they feel very well-prepared to teach civics to students, according to a new report from the RAND Corporation. The report also showed that teachers of color were more likely to address "controversial" topics in civics education and to emphasize international relations, climate change, and immigration and emigration. **Full Story:** [Education Week](#) (1/5)

How teachers use a new approach to civics education

About 1 in 5 teachers say they feel very well-prepared to teach civics to students, according to a report from RAND Corp. An approach that invites discussion about controversial topics and highlights the larger global community often is employed by teachers of color, the report shows. **Full Story:** [Education Week](#) (1/5)

Tips for teaching civics in elementary schools

Teachers can introduce civics lessons to elementary-schoolers by helping them identify and craft speeches about topics they care about, writes Jinnie Spiegler, director of curriculum in the education division of the Anti-Defamation League. In this article, Spiegler suggests that educators hold mock elections to teach about voting and elections. [Edutopia online](#) (1/31)

Smithsonian, PBS put free lessons online

Science, history and art curriculum for K-12 schools is coming for free to PBS's digital platform from the Smithsonian Institute via a partnership with PBS LearningMedia. The grab-and-use content can be sorted by grade level, subject area or Common Core and state standards. **Full Story:** [The Washington Post](#) (tiered subscription model) (1/12)

N.J. students interview Ariz. peers about sports mascots

Journalism students at a New Jersey high school recently interviewed former students from a high school on the Hopi reservation in Arizona about the controversial use of Native American mascots. The New Jersey school recently changed its mascot, nickname and school newspaper name that had been insulting to Native Americans, and the student journalists say the conversations gave them better insight from their Arizona peers. **Full Story:** [Navajo-Hopi Observer](#) (Flagstaff, Ariz.) (1/5)

NCSS: Inauguration Day offers lessons in all grades

All teachers across all grade levels have an opportunity to integrate next week's presidential inauguration in lessons, says Stefanie Wager, president of the National Council for the Social Studies. Besides lessons about the US' historically peaceful transfer of power, Wager and others say the inauguration offers potential for math classes, such as studying the economics of the event and the role of taxpayer funding. **Full Story:** K-12 Dive



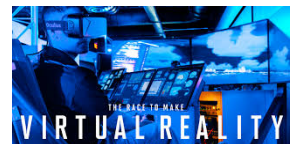
Teaching resources for Trump's second impeachment

Donald Trump is the first US president to be impeached twice, and a trial in the US Senate could begin at any time. Education Week offers lesson ideas from Trump's first impeachment in 2019, which C-SPAN shares videos and other resources from this week's unprecedented second impeachment for use in lessons. **Full Story:** Education Week (1/13), C-SPAN (1/13)



How to bring AR and VR to your classroom for free

Many teachers want to add virtual reality and augmented reality technology to their classrooms but are deterred by the cost. Kathryn Nieves suggests five tools that are available online for free and offer students and teachers creative ways to explore the world without leaving the classroom. [Edutopia](#) (12/27)



Honors class teaches Appalachian history, culture

Ray Sugg ties class lessons to area landmarks and communities during the Appalachian history honors class at Tuscola High School in Waynesville, N.C., and students complete class projects about local culture to gain a deeper appreciation of the region. Sugg also frequently brings in guest speakers, including experts local authors and history professors.



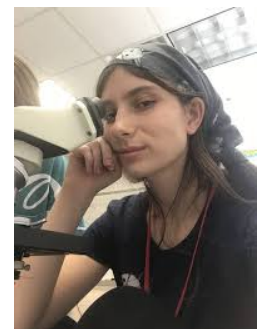
A look back at the decade in education

Frederick Hess, director of education policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, in this commentary recounts 10 defining moments in education over the past decade, including the rise and fall of Common Core, the signing of the Every Student Succeeds Act, and teacher strikes in cities and states across the country. The focus of the coming decade should be on addressing issues that arose in the 2010s, Hess writes. [Forbes](#) (12/30)



Teen's history-based TikTok clips go viral

Brooke Pavek of Jacksonville, Fla., has developed a following of nearly 100,000 on TikTok by posting 15-second videos on historical subjects from Joan of Arc to Isaac Newton. Pavek, who is particularly interested in European history and has also posted history-themed content on YouTube and Instagram, has received recognition from the History Channel and Time magazine for her



*It's taken me all my life to learn what not to play.
Dizzy Gillespie, jazz trumpeter, bandleader, composer.*

Past meets present in museum's history program

Skagit Valley Herald (Mt. Vernon, Wash.) (12/30)

Pioneer Days is a daylong program full of workshops and activities to teach students what life was like in the county's early days. Included are lessons on its logging and farming histories and on the lives of the Coast Salish people.

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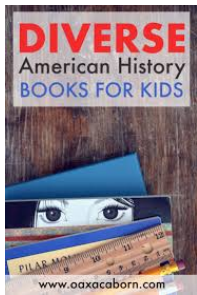
Confederate flag's presence in US Capitol riot examined

Some of the most memorable images that have emerged from Jan. 6 riot in Washington, D.C., are those of a man carrying a large Confederate flag on a pole through the US Capitol Rotunda. These articles examine what the photos represent, including the historical significance of the flag's presence in the building that is the heart of US government along with the history of white supremacy and racism in the country. **Full Story:** The Boston Globe (tiered subscription model) (1/7), USA Today (1/7), Business Insider (tiered subscription model) (1/6)



Educator: Explore 7 more diverse books about US history

Full Story Social studies teachers can design lessons that offer a more complete and honest view of US history, one that includes the experiences of marginalized groups, writes Carl Cooper, a social studies supervisor for a New Jersey school district. In this article, Cooper recommends seven books that he describes as challenging narratives that are typical in US schools, such as "Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You," by Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi.: Edutopia (1/6)



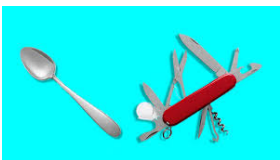
How history teachers can prep for unexpected events

Teachers who find their planned lessons disrupted by unexpected, significant current events should frame conversations through the same critical lens used in daily discussions, Delaware State University associate professor Delayne Johnson says. Johnson and other experts say teachers should be ready to redirect the conversation and be respectful of students' views. **Full Story:** Delaware State News (Dover) (tiered subscription model) (1/16)



Why, how to encourage students to become generalists

Students may benefit from learning to become generalists -- or adopting an "action-oriented identity toward information" -- who can view issues from different angles, dig up and distill the best information, and draw key comparisons, write educators and authors Angela Kohnen and E. Wendy Saul. In this commentary, they recommend nurturing students' curiosity and persistence to help students develop their "information literacy,"



I wake expectant, hoping to see a new thing.
Annie Dillard, writer

Has Jeff Bezos set his sights on education?

Amazon is poised to make inroads in public education, writes Tulsa Public Schools' Dominik Dresel. In this commentary, Dresel discusses Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos' investment in Montessori preschools and what a future Amazon Learning Center could look like, with highly paid teachers, a personalized curriculum and learning spaces designed to look like workplaces. **Full Story:** EdSurge (1/21)



Va. mulls cultural training for teachers

Teachers in Virginia would be required to take cultural competency training under legislation being considered by state lawmakers. The training would be required beginning in the 2022-23 school year and would be part of the process to obtain or renew a teaching license. **Full Story:** The Virginia Mercury (1/18)



Cartoon Network PSA on systemic racism goes viral

A clip of a Cartoon Network public service announcement that features Pearl from the "Steven Universe" show talking about the effect of systemic racism on the teaching of history has gone viral on social, attracting millions of views across Twitter and TikTok. "These textbooks are incomplete," says Pearl in the video, "There were Black Roman warriors, Black medieval knights, Black classical musicians, Black cowboys, Black fighter pilots. Where are they?" **Full Story:** Ad Age (tiered subscription model) (12/9)



What were teachers focused on before the pandemic?

Shortly before the coronavirus pandemic, teachers were talking about replacing timed tests with math fluency, identifying achievement gaps related to student behavior and trends in instructional materials. SmartBrief education editor Katie Parsons offers insight into the hot topics in education that were being discussed in early 2020, before the coronavirus pandemic hit. **Full Story:** SmartBrief/Education (12/15)



Virtual trips help teach world religions

A Michigan school's online education pivot has led to virtual field trips and chats that have engaged seventh-graders who are meeting their world religions requirement, says social studies teacher Shelley Lloyd. The Religious Diversity Journeys programming, provided in connection with the Interfaith Leadership Council of Metropolitan Detroit, shows the similarities among religions and decreases "barriers of otherness," says Wendy Miller Gamer, the council's program director. **Full Story:** The Detroit News (free content) (12/13)



The Black Death paved the way for the decline of the landed nobility to be replaced by capitalism but on a more egalitarian basis. Could the winnowing of the population by Covid lead to a new change?

Pa. students protest stress of online classes

Students at a Philadelphia high school this week held a one-day virtual-classroom strike to protest schedules that have them online from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., using the time to catch up incomplete or missed schoolwork, according to Leilani Ferrara, a 15-year-old sophomore. Social studies teacher Ismael Jimenez says students are overwhelmed by school, while students say school is adding to stress of personal obligations and other issues that cause their grades and mental health to suffer. **Full Story: The Philadelphia Inquirer (tiered subscription model) (12/14)**



Remote classes challenge teachers, young students

Educators say teaching elementary-schoolers to use technology and overcome glitches are among the most challenging aspects of remote teaching during the pandemic, several elementary-school teachers say in this article. Keeping students motivated and engaged is another issue, but fifth-grade teacher Megan Rock says she encourages students to ask questions and meet assignment deadlines. **Full Story: The Indiana Gazette (Pa.) (1/22)**



Contest has students in mock congressional hearings

The Jan. 6 insurrection at the US Capitol challenged high-school students to craft answers about constitutional rights, national security, hyperbole and propaganda for the state finals of the We The People competition, which was staged like a congressional hearing and held online. Two Michigan teams are headed to the national competition, slated for April. **Full Story: School News Network (Grand Rapids, Mich.) (1/22)**



Teachers, students discuss culturally responsive lessons

A culturally responsive curriculum has helped Black high-school senior KaLa Keaton of Wake County, N.C., consider the perspectives and backgrounds of others, she told students and educators who participated in a recent student voices' webinar. First Americans Teacher Education program coordinator Leslie Locklear, a member of several Native American tribes, says she builds trust with students by being honest about what she knows and doesn't know. **Full Story: EducationNC (North Carolina)**



———Some Random Thoughts———

There have been many theories about over populating the world. Could the rare outbreaks of pandemics be a natural check on population that would prevent the world from becoming overpopulated? Perhaps the fears of over population should not be a concern. Pandemics tend to even out the population. Perhaps the Pandemic has cleared the way to open up immigration once more.