Treasure Island - Learning Resources

Time travelling pirate's debate club

This exercise asks pupils to propose one object they would take back with them to the 18th century to improve life on the Hispaniola. It asks them to research the hazards of life at sea during that time, and to think laterally about how they might overcome those hazards using one item from their life today. Pupils debate which of the class' chosen objects would be the most useful.

Who is it for?

This learning resource plan is for students in Year 5 or 6. It will be most applicable for students who have studied life at sea, or the 18th Century, or who have read or watched Treasure Island. However, it will also be of use to any class who would benefit from taking part in a structured research task and debate.

Learning outcomes

Learners will:

- Learn about life at sea during the 18th century through independent research
- Think laterally and creatively about how to solve the problems of life on a pirate ship
- Give a presentation about their research and respond to questions from classmates
- Evaluate the proposals of others.

You will need

- Time for the class to perform independent research
- Pupils will be encouraged to bring an object to the class to speak about, but no other materials are necessary

Activities

1

As a homework assignment before the class, or as a research activity during class time, ask pupils to come up with five dangers or challenges of being at sea during the 18th century. For example: getting lost, running out of food or water, fighting in the crew, being attacked by pirates, illness and disease. They can also be more trivial things like getting bored, sunburnt, or homesick.

2.

Invite the class to share their suggestions – and any accompanying facts from their research, if they have them – and choose one of their dangers or challenges which they think would be the worst or hardest.

3.

Ask the class to imagine they're time travellers. Tell them they can take one object from the present day back with them to the 18th century, which they would take aboard the Hispaniola on its voyage to Treasure Island. It can be anything they like – as long as they can carry it on their own, and explain why it would have



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been useful to the crew of the Hispaniola.

4

Give the class some time to choose an object, and prepare to speak about why the object would be important. This could be as a homework assignment. If possible, encourage them to go and find the object they'd take with them, and bring it back to the class with them. If they can't find the object, or it's too precious to take, ask them to find a photograph or draw a picture.

5.

In groups of three to five, ask each pupil to speak for about thirty seconds about why their object is the most useful. If several pupils have brought the same or similar objects, they can be divided into separate groups.

6.

The rest of the class can then ask questions, or challenge them. They can ask any question they like. Is the object waterproof? Does it need electricity? Will the crew know how to use it? Will it be more useful than someone else's object?

7.

The class not presenting should then vote with a show of hands which object in that group would be the most useful, before another group goes up to present as before.

8.

Once every group has presented, all the winners from the previous groups can then compete in one final debate as to which object is the most useful, and why.