



TEACHER PAGE

DIGGING UP FACTS

GRADE LEVEL: 5–8 **SUBJECTS:** Technology, Social Sciences, Language Arts **DURATION:** One 40-minute class period and additional class time or homework

NATIONAL STANDARDS: Technology, Standard 5: Technology research tools; Social Science, US History, ERA 4: Expansion and reform; Language Arts, Standard 1: Reading for perspective

MATERIALS: Access to the Internet, or use CD-ROM encyclopedias, see Useful Resources web sites

Use this lesson to instruct students to use designated web sites or CD-ROM encyclopedias to separate fact from fiction about a real Western legend.

DESCRIPTION

In *Holes*, the author weaves the story around the legend of the fictional character, Kissing Kate Barlow, a school-teacher-turned-outlaw in the American West. A legend is a story passed down from generation to generation. Legends are often historical in nature, but not verifiable. They often include exaggerations, embellishments, and a slight bending of the truth.

Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone, and Annie Oakley are Western figures whose life stories have been converted to legend in the popular imagination.

OBJECTIVES

- To conduct research using the Internet or a CD-ROM encyclopedia
- To understand the literary meaning of legend

ADAPTATIONS

For younger students, complete this project as a class. Hook up the computer to a video monitor or a projector so that the class can browse the web or CD-ROMs together. Invite students to participate by taking turns clicking on the hyperlinks or reading information. If projecting the information is not an option, assign student teams to find specific information on available computers. Complete the graphic organizer as a class on the board or overhead projector.

ASSESSMENT

Design a five-point rubric to assess students on successfully navigating through specified web sites and/or CD-ROMs, completing the graphic organizer as instructed, and writing a comprehensive essay explaining the differences between the truth and the legend of their chosen character.

EXTENSIONS

Using information from the graphic organizer, ask students to write a compare and contrast essay about what is true about their legendary figure and what has been embellished over time.

Engage students in a discussion of the concept of historical truth. Some possible questions: Why do we tend to add details to create legends, magnifying heroic or villainous qualities of historic figures? Who decides which peoples' lives make it into history books? Do you think people are able to write accurate stories of the past, and does it make a difference if you're writing about something that recently occurred or something that occurred a long time ago?



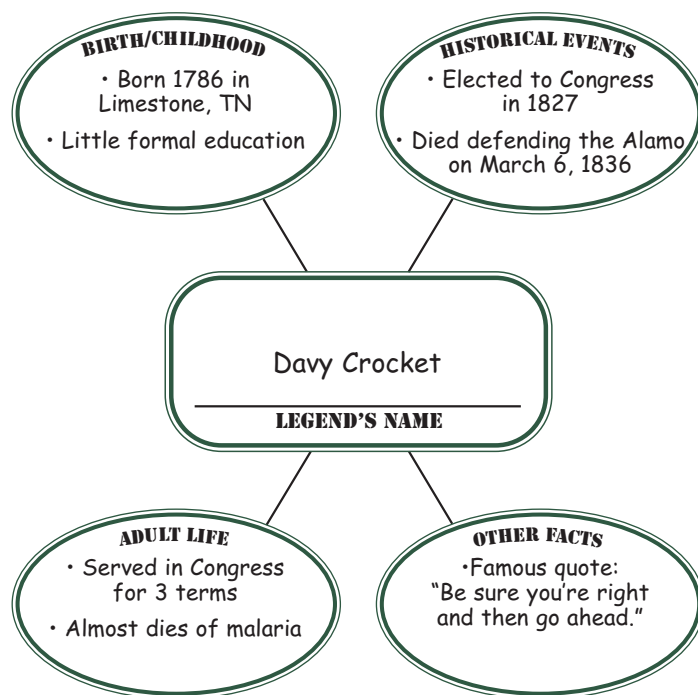
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PROCEDURES

1. Review with students the meaning of “legend” and the character of Kissing Kate.
2. Ask students if they can think of any other legendary figures.
3. Reiterate to students that legends are often stories that have been exaggerated or changed over time and may not be historically accurate.
4. Tell them that they are to find out the true story about one of three historic legends using the recommended web sites or available CD-ROMS listed under Useful Resources. Ask students to choose one figure: Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone or Annie Oakley.
5. Next, draw the graphic organizer (with data not filled in) on the board or overhead projector. See diagram at right for an example.
6. Using the CD-ROMs or recommended web sites, ask students to fill in factual information about their legendary figure on their worksheets.
7. Once students have gathered their research, ask them to identify at least two differences or inconsistencies between the truth and the legend about their chosen individual.
8. Using their filled out graphic organizers as a reference, have students write an essay explaining the truth versus the legend inconsistencies.

EXAMPLE: GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



USEFUL RESOURCES

Web sites

Free Internet encyclopedia with information on all three legends: www.encyclopedia.com

Hosted by MSN, students can search the database in the Encyclopedia Center: www.encyclopedia.com

The History Channel web site offers information on all three legends: www.historychannel.com

eHistory provides information on Daniel Boone: www.ehistory.com

Britannica.com is a fee-for-service online encyclopedia: www.britannica.com

Education World's resources for teaching about legends and folktales, including one lesson in particular about Betsy Ross, *Truth or Legend*, which can serve as a model for extension activities: www.education-world.com/a_lesson/02/lp267-05.shtml
www.education-world.com/a_lesson/lesson279a.shtml

Encyclopedia CD-ROMs

Encyclopedia Britannica 2003 Ultimate Reference Suite DVD

Encarta Reference Library 2003

Webster's Gold Encyclopedia 2001

World Book Encyclopedia 2002 Premiere Edition



STUDENT PAGE

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NAME _____

DATE _____

Legends are often historical in nature, but not verifiable. They include exaggerations, embellishments or a bending of the truth. Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone, and Annie Oakley are Western figures whose life stories have been converted to legend in the popular imagination. Choose one of these three Western figures. Using designated web sites and/or CD-ROM encyclopedias provided by your teacher, complete the following graphic organizer and separate fact from fiction about a real Western legend.

BIRTH/CHILDHOOD

HISTORICAL EVENTS

LEGEND'S NAME

ADULT LIFE

OTHER FACTS