

NAME: James W. D'Acosta

TITLE: "What's for lunch?" – Food reveals status and ethnic identity among participants in the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 in Pennsylvania.

SUBJECT AREA: High school U. S. History, Economics, and Civics-Contemporary Issues courses

EDUCATOR'S STATE: Connecticut

ABSTRACT: "What's for lunch?" provides students with a four-week guided independent study research project into the culture at Homestead, Pennsylvania, during the era of the steel strike of 1892. Flexibility allows students to work alone, in pairs, or in small groups and to focus on one or more of the many ethnic groups performing the full range of jobs at the mill as well as on the American born managers and owners.

The main product of student research and work is three or more food dishes. Students film or photograph their preparation of each dish and show this to their peers during an oral presentation as part of their assessment. Background information about the strike is included in the requirements.

Through their research and preparation of food, students gain familiarity with the culture of Homestead during the era of the strike and insight into the vast differences in lifestyles and status between workers and managers. The competing concerns of labor and capital are revealed, in part, by the food they ate.

Lesson Plan

Introduction: In all courses, I assign students to complete one independent study project each term. My current teaching load is two U. S. History classes and two U. S. History Honors classes which are all full year, four term courses; also, one Economics class and one Civics-Contemporary Issues class which are each one semester, two term courses. This lesson is a flexible independent study research project contract to be used with students in these classes.

In U. S. History, which is taught chronologically in my school, students have the option of this “What’s for Lunch?” project option in either the second term, in which subjects may be those between 1840-1900, or in the third term, in which subjects are usually restricted to 1900-1945 but in this case would be allowed because the working conditions and issues related to the Homestead Strike of 1892 continued into the early 1900s.

In Economics this project option is available either term and would require some specific research into the cost and availability of the food chosen by the student(s). Similarly, in Civics-Contemporary Issues the student would include research into the current popularity of the food chosen, comparison with food being introduced now by immigrant groups, or some other tie between the participants in the Homestead Strike and contemporary issues depending on the student’s interest.

All projects constitute four weeks of work done outside of class at the same time as regular homework and ongoing assessments. The flexibility of the contract allows for students to work in pairs or small groups; the workload of individuals being kept constant by increasing the number of dishes prepared and the length of the essays detailed in the contract.

Overview: Independent study on subjects chosen by individuals encourages diligence and results in enhanced learning, especially when lessons account for different learning styles.

Unit rationale: The Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 is of sufficient historical importance to warrant major study. The issues raised and the groups involved present students with a variety of choices for concentration, including: the competing goals of labor and capital, the human and environmental costs of industrialization, the immigrant experiences of Slaves, Hungarians, Poles, Russians, Welch, Scotts, Irish, English and others, the experiences of American born participants including those in management and ownership, the cost, nutritional value, and availability of foods eaten by people involved.

Different learning styles are engaged as the student(s) cook the foods they choose, film themselves cooking, write the required essays, and illustrate their presentations further with photographs or artwork (if they choose this extra credit option).

Unit goals: To encourage student engagement with significant events and themes in each course. To provide enough structure and require enough research to make this project not only fun but a legitimate product of research and analysis for high school junior and seniors.

Connections to Connecticut State Standards: In U. S. History, standards related to the competing goals of labor and management as well as knowledge of significant events in the history of labor, of which the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 is a milestone; also, standards related to immigrant experiences. In Economics, standards related to working and living conditions and to ones analyzing the labor and management relations. In Civics-Contemporary Issues, standards related to defining an individual's civic responsibility and a society's responsibility to its individuals as highlighted by the chasm in lifestyle which separated Andrew Carnegie from his steel mill workers.

What happens each day: Each student's research contract is negotiated one-on-one in the first two weeks of each term by a deadline which leaves at least four weeks for completion. The teacher presents examples of student work, including, among others: paintings, reading projects, models, children's books, musical performances, cooking, and now, cooking specific to the Homestead Steel Strike. Boundaries are established and many topics introduced as examples. Upon completion, the student(s) present their project in an oral presentation to the class using information on a "Student Test Questions" as a guide or script.

"Student Test Questions" – sample below. During the student's oral presentation, the student identifies reasons why the Homestead Steel Strike is important, connections between Homestead and events in other periods of U. S. History and gives his/her classmates three original test questions (and answers) which will appear on a test following the presentation of all research projects completed by all students in the class.

Formal and informal assessments: Formal assessment is based on the degree to which the student completes the requirements listed on the research contract. Emphasis is given to the statement on the contract, "A" is always for work which is above and beyond. Several opportunities for extra credit leading to an "A" are included on the contract. One informal assessment constitutes a half-way check on progress. Formal assessment concludes with the student's oral presentation and submission of written work.

Technological needs: The student needs a kitchen and cooking utensils, either a camera for still photographs or one which will film, and a computer with Internet connection for word processing and research. The teacher needs a classroom computer, projection equipment and screen in order that the student may show their photos or film of the cooking.

Material needed to complete the unit: The research contract specific to The Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 which includes some data and source references, but which requires further research by the student, and the general Student Test Questions form.

Other sources to consider: The teacher should be familiar with The Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 and sources for research to help and direct students choosing this research project option, such as:

COOKING/ “What’s for lunch?” – Food reveals status and ethnic identity among participants in the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 in Pennsylvania.

Mr. D’Acosta Fairfield Warde H. S. **Name(s):** _____

[contracts/cooking] 8/2022 **US / Econ / Civics 1/3 2/4 1 2 3 4**

CHECK: _____ **DUE:** _____

GRADE - Based on quality, completeness, appearance, progress at ½ way check, and prompt submission (-10 points each school day late).

“A” is always for work which is above and beyond.

FOCUS: 1a) ORIGIN: IMMIGRANTS from _____

involved in the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 in the area of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. These may include, among others: Slaves, Hungarians, Poles, Russians, Welch, Scotts, Irish, English.

1b) CLASS: poor middle rich immigrants or American born living in the area of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in the 1890s. This can include managers and owners of steel mills in the area.

1c) OTHER, such as coal miners and workers in other industries near Pittsburgh in the 1890s: _____

2) Dishes: 3 4 5 representing 1 2 main course(s) of beef, chicken, pork, fish, or vegetarian, and 1 2 3 4 smaller dishes such as vegetable, soup, dessert, cookies, appetizer, snack, or drink.

Suggestions for research include pierogies, cabbage rolls, and halushki common among groups from Eastern Europe.

Ask to borrow Mr. D’Acosta’s classroom copies of:

Byington, Margaret F. *Homestead: The Households of a Mill Town*. 1910. 2nd ed. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974. Entries in the index under “food” include “dinner-pail” and “holiday feasts”.

Karaczun, Daniel. *Out of this Kitchen: A History of the Ethnic Groups and Their Foods in the Steel*

Valley. 2nd ed. Publassist, 1998. This is a historical cookbook with over 200 ethnic recipes commemorating the Homestead Strike.

The Pittsburgh Cookie Table Recipe Collection: Take a Bite of Pittsburgh's Most Delicious Tradition! Pittsburgh: Rivers of Steel, n.d. [printed and distributed to teachers participating in the NEH History & Landmarks Workshop, The Homestead Steel Strike & the Growth of America as an Industrial Power, July 17, 2022 hosted by The University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Included are recipes and instructions for pizzelles, kolache (also known as kolaczke, kiffle, kiefles) cold dough cookies, peach cookies, lady locks, Russian tea cakes, Italian wedding cookies and caramel tassie cups.

If including food of the rich, consider the luncheon menu prepared by Henry Clay Frick's chef for President Theodore Roosevelt at Mr. Frick's home in Pittsburgh in 1902, which included: main dishes of salmon mayonnaise, sweetbreads with peas, filet chateaubriand with new potatoes and asparagus, and roast duck served with tomato salad, cheese and crackers, as well as appetizers of melons and consume and vanilla ice cream for dessert (difficult to make at the time and with the President reportedly loved). This menu is preserved and made available courtesy of The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library Archives.

3) Film: Approx. **5 minute film** which plays on classroom equipment showing the ingredients of each dish and you cooking (time-laps works well); clear & loud volume, clear & bright images, and smooth transitions. Begin with title, your name, course, Fairfield Warde High School, and full date. End with **credits** to the actors and **on-screen bibliography**. All writing must be large, bold, and slow moving.

Extra Credit: Include dialogue and captions in your film with information about the ingredients, cooking method, and facts from your research into the strike and the ethnic group(s) upon which you focused. Also, photographs of steel workers carrying their dinner pails.

WRITTEN REPORT, IN SEGMENTS

4) TITLE PAGE: COOKING/ "What's for lunch?" – Food reveals status and ethnic identity among participants in the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 in Pennsylvania, your name(s), Course, date, Mr. D'Acosta, Fairfield Warde High School.

5) TABLE OF CONTENTS: List each category in the order given below and show the corresponding page numbers of your report. **Every page must have its own number.**

6) MOTIVATION (BY EACH STUDENT)/ draft at ½ way check: In at least one full page, explain why you chose to research cooking in general and these dishes specifically. Did family members work in industrial jobs such as those in the steel mills of the Homestead Strike? Are the dishes you chose connected to your family? If so, how? Are you considering cooking as a career or as a hobby?

7) RECIPIES, INGREDIENTS, AND COOKING METHODS (*recipes chosen by ½ way check*): **2 page typed**, double-spaced **research essay**. **No more than 10 lines** in any paragraph (*lines*, not *sentences*).

One at a time for each dish,

- Recipe naming plants, nuts, animals, fish, spices, and other ingredients.
- Note things you added or did not use and explain why. E.g., adding cinnamon to Colonial Era apple pie because that's the way your family does it now.
- Describe how it was originally cooked and how you cooked it.

Cite the source of each recipe following rules of a formal system such as M. L. A. E.g.: IN ESSAY: Nash argues that man has a deep longing for nature in its wild, untamed form (**Nash 262**).

ON SEPARATE SHEET: **Works Cited**

“Mesa, Arizona.” Map. U.S. Gazetteer. US Census Bureau. 15 May 2021. **Web.**

Nash, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. 3rd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982. **Print.**

Extra credit: Add paragraphs describing and explaining:

- How leftovers were originally preserved (salt, icebox, hole in the ground).
- How people got each ingredient (hunting, fishing, farming, purchase? If imported, from where?).
- The general level of expense of each dish in its time period (cheap, expensive).

8) ORIGIN: **2 page typed**, double-spaced **research essay**. **No more than 10 lines** in any paragraph.

For the immigrant group(s) upon which you chose to focus, describe conditions in Europe and opportunities in the U. S. which may explain their immigration, major entry point(s) in the U. S., jobs, pay, working and housing conditions at Homestead during the era of the 1892 strike. End with a few examples of major contributions by the descendants of these people to American culture, politics, and history.

Cite at least 2 3 sources following rules of a formal system such as M. L. A.

9) Class: **2 page typed**, double-spaced **research essay**. **No more than 10 lines** in any paragraph.

How many meals a day did members of the class you are studying eat? Where did they get their food? Who cooked it? What equipment and utensils did they use to cook and eat it? Also describe

a typical dining room in the home of someone in this class: table, other furniture, plates, utensils, and decorations.

Cite at least 2-3 sources following rules of a formal system such as M. L. A.

Extra credit: Create a poster or Google slides with multiple images and captions describing the details of a typical kitchen and dining room.

10) Other: 2 page typed, double-spaced research essay. No more than 10 lines in any paragraph.

Cite at least 2-3 sources of information following rules of a formal system such as M. L. A.

11) REFLECTION (BY EACH STUDENT): In at least **2 pages typed**, double-spaced, with no paragraphs longer than 10 lines, explain how your research and experience changed your understanding of cooking and of the food, people, and era of the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892.

12) Extra Credit/ COST: Calculate your per-person expense for each dish and the total for the meal. Attach receipts and/or have a parent sign a statement.

13) Extra Credit/ NUTRITION: Include a research essay with works cited giving the nutritional value of one or more of your dishes and of its cooking method (e.g. frying verses steaming).

Results of the defeat of the union in the Homestead Steel Strike of 1892 included the increase of working hours to 12-hour shifts 7-days a week. Workers were assigned seven 7-hour shifts each week. The mill ran 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. Wages were cut by 30%-40%. Source: McCollester, Charlie. "Milltowns and Unionism: The Consequences of Homestead." NEH History & Landmarks Workshop: The Homestead Steel Strike & the Growth of America as and Industrial Power hosted by The University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA, July 19, 2022.

Food in the "dinner pail" of a typical steel worker sustained him through a twelve-hour shift.

14) OTHER (if any): _____

15) 3 TEST QUESTIONS: Use the form from Mr. D'Acosta.

16) ORAL PRESENTATION: Explain your topic's importance, show your film and answer questions.

Student(s) _____ Teacher _____ Date _____

STUDENT estimated grade & reasons based on quality, not “worked hard”

extra dish(s) yes no

extra research in #7 ingredients yes no

extra elements in #3 film yes no

extra #12 cost yes no

extra #13 nutrition yes no

extra poster/Google slides yes no

TEACHER’S notes & grade

progress at

½ way check

motivation

recipes chosen

presentation

film:

papers:

extra dish(s) yes no

extra research in #7 ingredients yes no

extra elements in film yes no

extra #12 cost yes no

extra #13 nutrition yes no

extra poster/Google slides yes no

Student Test Questions

Name(s): _____

Based on Research Project [USHISTORY/stestQs]

Mr. D'Acosta Fairfield Warde H. S. revised 8/2022

U. S. / Economics / Civics: **1/3 2/4** 1 2 3 4

Read the example on the back. TOPIC: The Homestead Steel Strike, 1892

What are the first things someone should know about your subject? Answer who? what? when? where? and why? it influenced people. How did it change people's lives?

1) strike issues, organizations, results: _____

2) leaders involved, location: _____

3) immigrant groups involved and their food; managers & owners and their food: _____

Connect your topic to similar events and people in other periods of American history.

4) connection, issues & results: _____

5) connection, immigrants & food: _____

**QUESTIONS MUST BE BASED ON THESE FACTS
AND ONE MUST MAKE A CONNECTION USING 4 & 5 ABOVE**

In each question:

- **Context: Give information describing the environment around your topic. Use full names.**
- **Do not ask for dates or ages unless this information is critical. Avoid “he,” “she,” “it,” & “the”.**

1) M/C _____

A: _____ A) _____ C) _____

B) _____ D) _____

2) T/F _____

A: _____

3) F/B _____

A: _____

EXAMPLE

TOPIC and book title and author if Reading Project: The American Civil War. The Battle of Gettysburg. *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shaara.

What are the first things someone should know about your subject?

1) The Union victory in the Civil War resulted in the reunification of all states under a stronger national government, the freeing of all four million slaves (13th Amendment 1865), citizenship rights to former slaves (14th Amendment 1868), the right to vote to former slaves (15th Amendment 1870, the end of slave labor, the devastation of the southern economy and culture, and the acceleration of the industrial revolution.

2) *The Killer Angels* explains the Battle of Gettysburg which took place in Pennsylvania as Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army approached the state capital and threatened Washington D. C. in July 1863.

3) The Union victory at Gettysburg is commonly seen as the turning point in the Civil War, the point after which the Union dominated until the Confederate surrender in 1865.

Connect your topic to other similar events and people in other periods of American history.

4) connection: voters respect the patriotism of veterans and often elect them: Seven Union officers became President: Johnson, Grant (the Union's commanding general at the end of the war), Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Harrison, McKinley. Similarly, George Washington after the Revolution, Andrew Jackson after the War of 1812, and Dwight Eisenhower after WW II.

5) connection: As a turning point and decisive battle during a war, Gettysburg stands out as does Saratoga in New York during the American Revolution and the D-Day invasion of Europe which we led during WW II.

QUESTIONS MUST BE BASED ON THESE FACTS

AND ONE MUST MAKE A CONNECTION USING #4 or #5 ABOVE

* **Do not ask for dates or ages unless this information is critical.**

* **Give enough information in your question so readers recognize your topic and understand its context.**

Therefore, do not refer to your topic as "he," "she," "it," or "the" in your question. Use full names.

