Social studies career Adventures

FBI Investigator: Stolen Artifacts from Revolutionary War

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, you will think like an FBI investigator and determine which suspect is guilty of stealing artifacts that were created during the Revolutionary War.

Activity

Step 1: Background Information on FBI Investigators and Revolutionary War (10–15 minutes)

- Show Video: Battles of the Revolutionary War.
- Remind students that FBI agents solve crimes. Some FBI agents work for a special division that investigates cases of stolen artifacts.
- Explain to students that they will be FBI agents who are trying to figure out who stole 3 artifacts that were used and created during the Revolutionary War. Show Handout: Information on Stolen Artifacts. As a class, review the handout. Discuss what each artifact tells about the Revolutionary War.
- Then, ask students why it is important for FBI agents to locate the artifacts and find out who stole them (e.g., it is illegal to steal the artifacts, the artifacts are primary sources that tell us about history, the artifacts are originals so there might not be other evidence of historical events, historians might have misconceptions about the war because they don't have enough evidence to back up their claim).

Step 2: Activity Set Up (10+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will play a game to figure out who stole three artifacts that were used on battlefields during the Revolutionary War. These artifacts are important because they provide us with clues about battles that were fought during the war. Show Handout: How to Play the Game. Review the steps.
- Provide 3 students with cards from Handout: Suspect Cards. Remind suspects not to show anyone the cards. They should not tell anyone if they are guilty or not of committing the crime.
- Students who are not suspects will be FBI agents. Provide these students with Handout: Looking at Evidence. FBI agents can work individually or in pairs.

Step 3: Preparing for Questioning (10 minutes)

- Have the three suspects come sit at the front of the room. Hang Handouts: Signs for Suspects above where the suspects are sitting. They should not talk to anyone else. Have them review their cards to prepare for the questioning in the next step. This means they should read through the card and learn about why they were at the museum and other information.
- While suspects are reviewing their cards, FBI agents will be looking at their handouts to look at evidence from the crime scene and read notes from the police. Then, they should think of 1 or more questions they want to ask the suspects. Below are some example questions:
 - Do you have a key to the museum?
 - Were you near the exhibit with the stolen objects?
 - Do you know how valuable the artifacts are?

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Stolen Artifacts from Revolutionary War

Step 4: Questioning (5-10 minutes)

- Provide FBI agents with Handout: Notes on Suspects. Explain to FBI agents that they will write down notes while suspects are talking.
- Have the suspects sit at the front of the room. Have each suspect introduce him or herself and state a few sentences saying why they are innocent.
- Have FBI agent pairs take turns asking questions to the suspects. Other pairs should carefully listen so they can write down notes about what they learn.
 Because pairs only have 5-8 minutes to ask questions, they should make sure that their questions are clear and related to the information needed to solve the crime.
- Here are some more questions investigators could ask:
 - What do you know about the Revolutionary War?
 - Can you show us a sample of your fingerprint?
 - Can you show us a sample of your handwriting?
 - Where were you the night of the crime?

Step 5: Deliberation and Reveal (5 minutes)

- After the questioning is over, tell FBI agents that each pair has two minutes to discuss and decide who committed the crime.
- Create a list on the board of pairs' final decisions of who is guilty.
- Have the guilty suspect reveal him or herself.
- Show Handout: Information on Who Committed The Crime. Review why this suspect is guilty. Discuss whether FBI agents correctly guessed who the guilty suspect was.
- Have a concluding discussion about how these artifacts provide us clues about important battles that were fought during the Revolutionary War. Without these artifacts, historians and other professionals might have an inaccurate understanding of history or lose historical information forever.

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: Battles of the Revolutionary War
- Handout: Information on Stolen Artifacts
- Handout: How to Play the Game
- Handout: Suspect Cards
- Handout: Looking at Evidence
- Handouts: Signs for Suspects
- Handout: Notes on Suspects
- Handout: Information on Who Committed The Crime

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Not provided:

No additional matrials are needed

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