

# Photojournalist: The Exodusters

## Adventure Description:

In this adventure, students will think like a photojournalist and create a virtual art exhibit about the African American pioneers known as the Exodusters and their role in settling Kansas.

## Activity

- Teacher Notes:
  - This activity is long and can be completed across multiple days. You can complete Steps 1-4 on one day and Steps 5-7 on another day.
  - Students will need computers in Step 5. If students do not have access to computers, skip this step. If students do have access to computers, you will need to set up a free account on a QR generator website before class. See [Handout: Teacher Prep](#) for steps.

### Step 1: Background on The Exodusters (5-10 minutes)

- Show [Video: The Exodusters](#).
- Ask students why groups of people might move from one place to another. (e.g. looking for better economic opportunities, religious freedom, or to escape persecution). Ask students to name any groups that moved because they wanted a new life (e.g. immigrants coming from Europe, refugees from countries that are at war, etc.).
- Explain to students that sometimes people leave because they are being persecuted. To be persecuted means to be mistreated by a person or a group. Ask students for examples of groups who moved because of persecution (e.g. groups who came to America because of religious or political persecution, groups such as the Pilgrims or the Puritans).
- Next, ask students why people chose to move to the American West. (e.g., new business opportunities, chance to own land, groups moved West to establish their own communities).
- Explain to students that photojournalists use pictures and words to tell stories. Explain that many stories relate to talking about one culture or events that impacted a group.
- Provide students with [Handout: The Exodusters](#). Ask students what they might know about the Exodusters and their importance in Kansas history (e.g., the Exodusters were former slaves who moved from the South to the West for better opportunities, many settled in cities in Kansas and some formed their own towns).
- Ask students why they think it is important for photojournalists to create a story about different pioneer settlements (e.g. photojournalists want to show that people who came West were made up of many different groups, want to show sides of cultures that might not be as well known, they want to accurately depict American history or a particular group's history).

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## Step 2: Activity Set Up (5 minutes)

- Explain to students that today, they will think like a photojournalist and create a virtual art exhibit.
- Ask students why photojournalists and other professionals create virtual art exhibits (e.g., allow people to learn about history, art, and other topics without visiting a museum in person, allow people around the world to share ideas and collaborate on projects, allow people who do not live near a museum or cannot afford to go to one to see an exhibit online, allow students to go on a “virtual” field trip to a museum).
- Provide students with [Handout: Steps to Create a Virtual Art Exhibit](#). Explain to students that they will work in a group to create a 3D art installation that explores the different aspects of life for the Exodusters. They will then take a photo of their installation so that it can be featured in a virtual art exhibit so people anywhere in the world can see it.
- Next, explain that after students take a pictures of their art installation, they will create a QR code that is linked to the picture. When people scan the QR code, they will be able to access the picture of the 3D art installation online.
- Divide students into pairs or small groups. Provide pairs/groups with the following materials:
  - Assortment of recycled materials (tape, scissors, cardboard pieces, egg cartons, etc.)
  - Assortment of art supplies (pipe cleaners, pom pom balls, construction paper)

## Step 3: Creating a Message (5+ minutes)

- As a class, review Step 1 of [Handout: Steps to Create a Virtual Art Exhibit](#). Explain to students that they will come up with their main message that the installation will demonstrate. Explain that photojournalists have a message so that people will understand the main point of their exhibit. Their message should be related to the Exodusters and their importance in Kansas and American history.
- Have students look at [Handout: The Exodusters](#) to get idea about what their message will be.
- If students need help creating a message, ask them the following questions:
  - What do you want visitors to learn when they see your exhibit?
  - What story do you want to tell about African American settlers in Kansas history?
- While students are working, ask the following:
  - What can people learn about pioneer groups that formed their own communities?
  - How do the different groups that settled Kansas help create a state culture that tells about the history of the state?
  - What did you learn that you did not know about the Exodusters and their role in settling Kansas?

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## Step 4: Brainstorming and Sketching Ideas (10+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now complete Step 2 on the handout, brainstorming and sketching ideas for their 3D art installation. As a class, review requirements.
- Explain to students that they can select images from [Handout: The Exodusters](#) to use as part of their installation. Students can also create their own images.

## Step 5: Building a 3D Installation (25+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now complete Steps 3 - 4 on the handout. As a class, review the steps.
- Have students use the art supplies provided to create their 3D installation and write their own captions.
- While students are working, ask them the following questions:
  - How does your 3-D art installation help viewers understand your message?
  - Is your installation interesting from all sides?

## Step 6: Creating QR Code (15+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now make their art installation virtual. This means that people will be able to view their installation online.
- To make the installation virtual, students will create QR codes. When people see the QR code, they will be able to scan the code with a phone and access pictures of your installation. All of the QR codes will be on a website for people to access. That way, anyone around the world can access the art installations of the entire class.
- Teacher Note: if students are not familiar with QR codes, explain the following:
  - A QR code is a symbol that is linked to information.
  - When you hold the camera from a phone over the QR code, a link will pop up.
  - This link will send you to a website with the information that is linked to the QR code.
- Next, show students an example QR code. See [Handout: Example of QR Code](#). This QR code links to a database entry that a middle school student created about a spy in the American Revolution. You will need a smart phone to access the QR code. You do not need to download any apps to access the QR code. You will simply turn the camera on your phone and hold it above the QR code. Then you will be directed to the website and the data entry created by the student.
- Explain to students that they will first need to take a picture of their art installation and caption it. Have student place their art installations on a flat surface like a desk or floor. Have them place their caption next to or in front of the art installation. Then have students take a picture of their installation and caption using a phone or tablet.

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- Have students email the photo to themselves. Then, they should drag or download the photo onto their desktop so they can access it when they make a QR code.
- Explain to students that they should follow the instructions on [Handout: Steps to Create a QR Code](#) to finish making their art installation virtual.

## Step 7: Discussion and Presentation (5-10 minutes)

- Have students present their QR codes and art installation to the class.
- Have a concluding class discussion about why it is important for photojournalists to show different perspectives related to the settlement of the West, particularly of Kansas.
- Optional: Invite other classes to come see students' art installations using QR codes. You can print out the QR codes and post them around the room. Then, the other class can go around the room and learn about the different pieces of art. Another option is to have the other class access pictures of the art installations using the Google drive link.

## Materials List

### Provided online:

- Video: The Exodusters
- Handout: Teacher Prep
- Handout: The Exodusters
- Handout: Steps to Create a Virtual Art Exhibit
- Handout: Example of QR Code
- Handout: Steps to Create a QR Code

### Not provided:

- Assortment of recycled materials (tape, scissors, cardboard pieces, egg cartons, etc.)
- Assortment of art supplies (pipe cleaners, pom pom balls, construction paper)
- Tablet or Smartphone
- Laptop or Computer

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