



TCAP Lesson Plans for Grade 6

Note to Sixth Grade Teachers: TCAP categories for Grade 6 focus on social systems of the ancient world and pre-modern Europe; therefore, the Museum does not address any specific Social Studies SPIs for sixth grade. There are, however, comparisons and contrasts between medieval life and pioneer life that your students will find instructive. You may also want to use the Grade 5 SPIs in order to get the most benefit from your trip to the Museum.

Social Studies

SPI # 6.1.5 Identify differences between various cultural groups.

Topics for discussion:

- The Museum's Hall of Fame contains an exhibit of Native American artifacts. The Hall of Fame also includes an exhibit of toys from pioneer households. After looking at both exhibits, discuss the similarities and contrasts between Indian and pioneer children's play activities.
- One of the strongest characteristics of a culture is the way in which it worships. In the exhibit of Native American artifacts, there are examples of what are called "ceremonial objects." Ask the students to think about the worship services they have attended. Are any kind of ceremonial objects used? Examples might be the cross, a menorah, or other familiar religious symbol. Some denominations use robes, incense, or flowers as symbols in religious ritual.
- Another characteristic of a culture is how its people spend their leisure time. When exploring the Museum, your students will see many examples

of musical instruments, paintings, and carvings that were used or created during leisure hours. Ask your students to compare and contrast the leisure pursuits of pioneers with those of people today.

Reading/Language Arts

The following passage describes life for a typical English peasant in the early Middle Ages.

The average peasant home was constructed of whatever they could find close by—people living in rocky areas usually had homes made of stone, while people who could not find enough stone to build a house had to build homes made of wood or branches plastered over with a "cob" mixture of mud and straw. Homes generally had thatch roofs made of local plant materials, such as water reeds, straw, or heather. Most homes had two rooms with dirt floors, with one room usually set aside for eating and working and the other generally used for sleeping. In this room, they typically had large bags of straw (pallets) to sleep on, and they shared this room with their animals during the wintertime to keep warm.

Most peasants were very poor and owned very few furnishings. Everything had to be handmade, since they lived many hundreds of years before mechanization. Furnishings might include stools, a table, and sometimes a chest to store their few clothes. In the second room or bedroom, bags of straws would be used for sleeping. A wealthier peasant might have an actual bed.

Use the reading passage above for the following exercises:

SPI # 6.1.20 Distinguish among various literary genres (e.g., poetry, drama, fiction, and non-fiction).

While the students are touring the Museum and examining the homes of pioneers, they should compare and contrast what they see to the peasant homes described in the reading. Ask them to improvise a short skit on the porch of one of the cabins, where they "relax at the end of a long day" and muse about how fortunate they are to have such a nice home compared to "the old days." This exercise will not only illustrate the difference between non-fiction writing and drama, but will allow them to better understand that "the past" is a concept that is relative to the present—that they themselves are living in what will one day be considered "the past."