

Covert, Michigan: The Spirit of Cooperation

Teacher's Guide: K-8 Grades

The Woodson Center's lesson on Covert, Michigan affords the educator a great deal of flexibility in its implementation. The resources featured may be used to implement a lesson that is appropriate to use on consecutive days.

The materials in this lesson can be cut down and rearranged to suit classroom conditions, timeframe, student comfort level, or to connect with other material from an established syllabus or textbook.

As either an introduction to, or an extension of, this lesson, teachers of younger students can summarize content from the 2006 "All Things Considered" episode from Jacki Lyden of NPR (included) or the book *A Stronger Kinship* by Anna-Lisa Cox (not included), the definitive work on Covert referenced throughout this lesson. Middle School students can utilize these resources for in-depth projects or class discussion.

K – 5 Instruction: Approximately 15-30 minutes/day as applicable to grade scope and sequence.

6 – 8 Instruction: Approximately 30-45 minutes/day, as applicable to grade scope and sequence.

1. A "bell ringer" or lesson hook is always a great way to stimulate student thinking and introduce a topic for the day's lesson. Suggested bell ringers to ask students:

K -2

- "How do we demonstrate equality in our classroom?"
- "Why do people sometimes treat others differently?"
- "How would you feel if every person you knew treated others with kindness?"

3 - 5

- "What does the word *equality* mean to you?"
- "Why might people with different skin colors treat each other differently?"
- "How does equality affect relationships between people in a community?"

6 – 8

- "What does equality mean to you?"
- "How do we know if and when equality has been achieved in society?"
- "How does equality affect relationships between people in a community?"

2. The teacher should encourage students to spend a minute thinking about their answer, as they repeat the bell ringer a few times. Next, the teacher may ask for any students to volunteer to share their thoughts with the entire class.
3. Before moving into the Covert lesson, it is important to ensure that students have some background about the condition of equality in America after the Civil War and the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. Materials for a brief overview of the achievements as well as the struggles for equality during the time of Covert's founding can be found at the [Library of Congress online exhibit on Reconstruction](#).

K – 2 teachers can provide an overview and go straight into the lesson [Slide Deck](#).

K – 5 Summarize highlights:

- “One freedman, Houston Hartsfield Holloway, wrote, “For we colored people did not know how to be free and the white people did not know how to have a free colored person about them.”
- “After the Civil War, with the protection of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution and the Civil Rights Act of 1866, African Americans enjoyed a period when they were allowed to vote, actively participate in the political process, acquire the land of former owners, seek their own employment, and use public accommodations. Opponents of this progress, however, soon rallied against the former slaves' freedom and began to find means for eroding the gains for which many had shed their blood.”

6 – 8 “A History in Black and White” can be shared or printed out; students may take turns reading aloud.

4. The teacher can summarize the prewar realities of 1-2 items below and use the supplementary handouts from relevant Woodson Center lessons to strengthen the students' understanding of:
 - the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law;
 - the realities of “Jim Crow” rule;
 - Reconstruction and its collapse;
 - prevalent forms of discrimination in all parts of America despite the fact that Constitutional Amendments and state laws had been passed for equal protection.

Suggested Woodson Center lessons: Robert Smalls, Biddy Mason, 54th Massachusetts

Video Clips – [The Fugitive Slave Law](#), (~1.5 min) [Jim Crow Laws](#) (~1.5 min)
[Reconstruction](#) (~2 min)

5. At this point, the teacher may open the Covert, Michigan [Slide Deck](#) and introduce students to the story of its founding by Black and white pioneers.
6. After reading the background story on the founding of Covert, Michigan, the teacher may pause and ask students to consider grade-appropriate SEL questions. A list of questions can be found here: [Covert, Michigan Themes, Vocabulary and SEL Questions](#). In addition, the teacher can use the themes and vocabulary to bridge Language Arts goals. (Recommended for grades 3-8).
7. The next part of the lesson delves into the [Covert Case Studies](#). Depending on grade, the teacher can read and discuss the Case Studies or assign groups of students a particular Case Study to read and then to complete the accompanying grade-appropriate questions. Groups may read more than one Case Study if time allows.

Students may also develop a group statement about the Case Study to share with the class. The statement could articulate what impacted them the most from the story. K-2 teachers can choose various Case Studies to read aloud using the supplementary questions for listening comprehension and group discussion.

K-8 Case Study Questions can be found [here](#).

8. At this point, the teacher may want to connect the Covert story to our current times. K-2 teachers can distribute coloring pages to help young students maintain their focus on the topic. Discussion questions will help students understand the importance of Covert's founding and how its story can guide us today. Questions to be considered may include:
 - “What can the story of Covert, Michigan still teach us today?”
 - “The establishment of Covert required the cooperation of each and every person that called it home. In what ways does your community work well together? In what ways could it improve?”
 - “If the settlers of Covert had social media and could create a hashtag, what do you think it could be?”
9. A daily lesson may conclude in various ways:
 - Supplemental materials including coloring page; multiple choice and critical thinking questions; vocabulary.
 - Students write a summary and/or personal reflection based on the Covert story.
 - Small Group discussions on the significance of Covert; extensions to the lesson may include written responses to Case Study questions.

Covert, MI Standard Learning Objectives

Grades K-2

CIVICS

D2. Civ.2.K-2. Explain how all people, not just official leaders, play important roles in a community.

D2. Civ.6.K-2. Describe how communities work to accomplish common tasks, establish responsibilities, and fulfill roles of authority.

D2. Civ.8.K-2. Describe democratic principles such as equality, fairness, and respect for legitimate authority and rules.

D2. Civ.10.K-2. Compare their own point of view with others' perspectives.

D2. Civ.14.K-2. Describe how people have tried to improve their communities over time.

GEOGRAPHY

D2. Geo.7.K-2. Explain why and how people, goods, and ideas move from place to place.

HISTORY

D2. His.2. K-2. Compare life in the past to life today.

D2. His.3. K-2. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped a significant historical change.

D2. His.4. K-2. Compare perspectives of people in the past to those of people in the present.

ELA

D4.2.K-2. Construct explanations using correct sequence and relevant information.

D4.4.K-2. Ask and answer questions about arguments.

Grades 3-5

CIVICS

D2. Civ.3.3-5. Examine the origins and purposes of rules, laws, and key U.S. constitutional provisions.

D2. Civ.6.3-5. Describe ways in which people benefit from and are challenged by working together, including through government, work- places, voluntary organizations, and families.

D2. Civ.8.3-5. Identify core civic virtues and democratic principles that guide government, society, and communities.

D2. Civ.10.3-5. Identify the beliefs, experiences, perspectives, and values that underlie their own and others' points of view about civic issues.

D2. Civ.12.3-5. Explain how rules and laws change society and how people change rules and laws.

D2. Civ.14.3-5. Illustrate historical and contemporary means of changing society.

GEOGRAPHY

D2. Geo.4.3-5. Explain how culture influences the way people modify and adapt to their environments.

D2. Geo.7.3-5. Explain how cultural and environmental characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people, goods, and ideas.

HISTORY

D2. His.2.3-5. Compare life in specific historical time periods to life today.

D2. His.3.3-5. Generate questions about individuals and groups who have shaped significant historical changes and continuities.

D2. His.5.3-5. Explain connections among historical contexts and people's perspectives at the time.

ELA

D4.2.3-5. Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data.

D4.4.3-5. Critique arguments.

Grades 6-8

CIVICS

D2. Civ.3.6-8. Examine the origins, purposes, and impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements.

D2. Civ.6.6-8. Describe the roles of political, civil, and economic organizations in shaping people's lives.

D2. Civ.10.6-8. Explain the relevance of personal interests and perspectives, civic virtues, and democratic principles when people address issues and problems in government and civil society.

D2. Civ.12.6-8. Assess specific rules and laws (both actual and proposed) as means of addressing public problems.

D2. Civ.14.6-8. Compare historical and contemporary means of changing societies, and promoting the common good.

GEOGRAPHY

D2. Geo.4.6-8. Explain how cultural patterns and economic decisions influence environments and the daily lives of people in both nearby and distant places.

D2. Geo.5.6-8. Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.

HISTORY

D2. His.3.6-8. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

D2. His.4.6-8. Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2. His.14.6-8. Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

D2. His.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

ELA

D4.2.6-8. Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with relevant information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations.

D4.4.6-8. Critique arguments for credibility.