

Lesson Procedure: Unraveling the Salem Mystery Through Reading

Time Allotment: 45-60 minutes

I. Introduction: Sparking Curiosity (5-10 minutes)

- Begin by asking the student: "What do you already know or think about witches or the time period around the Salem Witch Trials?"
- Briefly explain that the Salem Witch Trials were a real historical event in colonial Massachusetts where people were accused of witchcraft. Emphasize that today, we understand things differently, but it's an important historical event to learn about.
- Introduce the goal: "Today, we're going to read about the Salem Witch Trials. We'll be like detectives, using our reading skills to understand what happened, why it might have happened, and how people felt."

II. Guided Reading & Vocabulary Hunt (15-20 minutes)

- Provide the student with the age-appropriate reading material about the Salem Witch Trials.
- Read the text together, section by section. Pause frequently to check for understanding.
- Ask guiding questions: "What is this part mostly about? (Main Idea)", "What important details tell us more about that?"
- Vocabulary Hunt: As you encounter potentially tricky words (e.g., 'accusation', 'hysteria', 'Puritan', 'testimony', 'colony'), encourage the student to use context clues to figure out the meaning. Write these words and their agreed-upon definitions on the chart paper/whiteboard. Use a dictionary if needed.
- Discuss: "Based on what we've read, why do you think people started accusing others?" (Making Inferences)

III. Timeline Detectives (10-15 minutes)

- Review the key events mentioned in the text (e.g., when the accusations started, key trials, when it ended).
- Use the timeline template or draw a line on the chart paper.
- Work together to place the major events in chronological order on the timeline. Write a short description for each event based on the reading.
- Discuss cause and effect: "What event seemed to lead to the next?"

IV. Fact vs. Feeling (5-10 minutes)

- Revisit parts of the text. Ask the student to identify sentences that state facts (e.g., "The trials took place in 1692.").
- Ask the student to identify parts that describe how people might have felt or interpreted events (e.g., "Fear spread through the village."). Discuss the difference.
- Briefly touch upon how historians use evidence to understand the past, but some things involve interpretation.

V. Conclusion & Reflection (5 minutes)

- Review the timeline and the vocabulary words learned.
- Ask the student: "What was the most surprising or interesting thing you learned today?" "What reading skill did we practice the most?"
- Connect back to the objectives: Briefly recap how they identified the main idea, figured out words,

put events in order, and thought about facts and feelings.

Differentiation/Extension:

- **Support:** Pre-teach key vocabulary words. Use a shorter or simpler text. Focus primarily on sequencing one or two key events.
- **Challenge:** Encourage the student to write a short journal entry from the perspective of someone living in Salem at the time (focusing on expressing feelings based on the text). Have them research one specific person involved in the trials using kid-safe online resources. Compare the historical account to a fictional portrayal (if appropriate content is available).