**Performance Task**

Beliefs and Ideals: The student will understand that beliefs and ideals of a society influence the social, political, and economic decisions they made.

Standards: SS5H1; SS5H2; SS5CG3b; Informational Texts: ELA5Ra-h; Informational Writing: ELA5W2a-i

Notes to the Teacher: The Internet links provided for this task include some high level reading material. Teachers may choose to use other available resources for research or may choose to print the Internet text to read and discuss in guided reading groups. Before assigning this task to students, the teacher should review the Internet links to determine the additional support students will require.

Introduction

Though it seems like only yesterday when you were out on the battlefield of Gettysburg fighting for your country’s future, it has actually been over five years. Since the war, life has really improved for the former slaves living in the Southern states—or so you think. The idea that you fought to make life better for thousands of innocent men, women, and children makes you feel confident that the war was fought for a good cause. Your memories of the war are still vivid in your mind, but you have moved on with your own life. Today you are a well-respected reporter for a small newspaper in New York City. They have a new assignment for you and some of your fellow reporters. Read the memo to find out what they want you to do.

November 14, 1870  
Good morning reporter.  
We have heard many stories lately that life for freed slaves in the Southern states has not improved as much as we had hoped. You will join a group of three other reporters to interview people who will tell you what life is really like. You will leave by train tomorrow morning to go to Atlanta. Please gather as much information as possible so that, when you return, you are able to write a feature story for the newspaper on this subject. Good luck.

Task

Select your assignment. Which person would you like to interview? Reporter 1: Interview a former slave who is now working as a sharecropper. Reporter 2: Interview an assistant commissioner of the Freedmen’s Bureau. Reporter 3: Interview a former slave owner in Georgia.  
Reporter 4: Interview a child who was a slave.

Process

1. Choose the person you would like to interview.  
2. Read the required questions and write any others you would like to answer.

**Reporter 1:** Your task is to interview a former slave who is now working as a sharecropper. Find out what it is like to do this job and how it compares to his work as a slave. Be sure to ask why this man is working as a sharecropper instead of doing another job. How does he feel about his boss? What were black codes? What are Jim Crow laws?

Sharecropping- http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/black\_voices/voices\_display.cfm?id=29 Life as a Sharecropper - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/sharecrop/index.html Black Codes - http://search.eb.com/blackhistory/article-9015471

Jim Crow Laws - http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories.html  
Examples of Jim Crow Laws - http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories.html

**Reporter 2:** Your task is to interview an army general who is working in Atlanta as an assistant commissioner of the Freedmen’s Bureau. Find out what this man is doing to make the lives of freed slaves better. Why is the Freedmen’s Bureau important? How do Southerners feel about the bureau? How have the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution changed the lives of former slaves?  
13th Amendment - http://www.greatamericanhistory.net/amendment.htm  
14th and 15th Amendments - http://www.americaslibrary.gov/cgi-bin/page.cgi/jb/recon/revised\_1 Freedmen’s Bureau - http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories\_events\_freed.html  
Working for the Freedmen’s Bureau - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/carpetbagger/index.html

**Reporter 3:** Your task is to interview a former slave owner in Georgia. How has life changed for this man since the war? How does he farm his land? Who works for him and how does he pay these employees? How does this person feel about Jim Crow laws?  
Farming and Sharecropping - http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/black\_voices/voices\_display.cfm?id=29 Life as a Sharecropper - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/sharecrop/index.html

Southern Opinions - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/kkk/index.html Plantations in Ruins - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/plantation/index.html Jim Crow Laws - http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories.html

**Reporter 4:** Your task is to interview a child who was a slave. How has school changed since the war ended? Does the child feel safe living in the South? Why or why not? How do Jim Crow laws affect his/her life?  
Life in the South - http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/features/timeline/civilwar/recon/goodings.html Education - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/schools/index.html  
Racism - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/reconstruction/kkk/index.html  
Jim Crow Laws - http://www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/stories.html

3. Use the websites to find information to help you answer these questions. You may also use any other resources available in the classroom or media center. Use the ―Notes Sheet‖ (attached below) to keep track of the information you learn that will help you to write the final article.

4. Once you have collected notes that answer all of your questions, you are ready to write the rough draft of your newspaper article. "Writing a Newspaper Article" (attached below) will help you to organize what you are going to write. You can learn even more about how real newspaper reporters do their jobs by visiting this website http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/news/index.htm .

5. Time to pull out the old typewriter (okay, you can travel to the future and use a computer) and type the final draft to submit to your editor. Carefully check the spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Don’t forget to include a catchy headline for your article.

6. Print your final copy and combine it with the articles written by the other reporters to create the newspaper. You may want to use a publishing program that will make the articles look like a real newspaper.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Conclusion  Your job is done and the articles published by this group of reporters have had a tremendous influence on readers of the newspaper. Imagine that you are no longer a reporter, but a reader of the paper instead. After reading the four articles written on this subject, you decide to write an editorial for the paper, explaining what you think the government should do in response to the current conditions in the South. Regardless of the opinion you choose to express, you must back up your ideas with information from each of the articles. Since you are trying to persuade other readers to feel the same way you do, you will need to consider what each of the people interviewed would have to say in response to your ideas.  Modifications: On the notes page, include each question with lines for responses In place of the outline, provide a graphic organizer template with prompts for each paragraph of the report Prior to the research conduct a characterization discussion to build background knowledge of each interviewee and display key points for reference points as students work through their interview questions Conduct a whole group discussion regarding the issues in the ―Conclusion‖ activity and provide a template with prompts to guide students through the editorial writing process Display the elements of effective persuasive writing Provide individual or peer partner assistance Edit each web link for readability levels and consider student reading levels to determine how much assistance each student will need | |
|  |  |