

Chautauqua Summer Institute  
July 2-6, 2008

**Lesson Plan**

**Lesson Plan Title:**

Alexander Graham Bell Primary Source Activity

**Concept / Topic To Teach:**

Working with Primary Sources/Inventors

**Grade Level:**

8th

**Standards Addressed:**

Construct a historical narrative using primary and secondary sources;

Organize and lead a discussion;

Identify ways to manage conflict within a group.

**Duration:**

One to two class periods (provided that students are familiar with working with primary sources)

**General Goal(s):**

Students will critically examine primary sources to gain a better understanding of Alexander Graham Bell and the impact of his inventions.

**Specific Objectives:**

1. Examine the primary sources and determine their historical significance.
2. Gain a better understanding of the process of inventing and patenting.

**Required Materials:**

1. Telephone patent (2)
2. Petition from Bostonians (2)
3. Bell's notebook entry (2)
4. Artifact Analysis worksheet (6)

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**Primary Sources Used:**

1. A.G. Bell Telegraphy Patent, March 7, 1876. <http://www.archives.gov/global-pages/larger-image.html?i=/education/lessons/telephone-light-patents/images/telephone-patent-drawing-l.jpg&c=/education/lessons/telephone-light-patents/images/telephone-patent-drawing.caption.html>
2. Letter from Benjamin Pierce to Alexander Graham Bell, April 20, 1877 (Petition from Bostonians). The Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers, The Library of Congress. [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?magbell:2:/temp/~ammem\\_5Slo::](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/P?magbell:2:/temp/~ammem_5Slo::)
3. Laboratory Notebook, March 10, 1876. The Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers, The Library of Congress. <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=magbell&fileName=253/25300201/bellpage.db&recNum=21>.

**Warm-up:**

Quickly review the difference between a primary and secondary source.

**Step-By-Step Procedures:**

1. Divide the students into six groups.
2. Give each group a primary source and an Artifact Analysis worksheet.
3. Have each group look over their artifact and fill out the worksheet.
4. When finished, have the groups that had the same primary sources get together and compare and contrast their findings.
5. In their new larger groups, the students will present their primary source and findings to the class as a whole.

**Homework and Practice:**

This is an in class assignment, so there is no homework.

**Closure (Re-teach):**

Working with primary sources should be an on-going theme. If this is the first time that students have worked with primary sources, I would suggest doing a similar lesson soon after, and then trying to incorporate primary source analysis on a regular basis.

**Assessment Based On Objectives:**

Students will be evaluated based on how well their small group completed the Artifact Analysis worksheet.

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**Adaptations (For Students With Learning Disabilities):**

Make sure that students with learning disabilities are placed in groups with non LD members and are given tasks within the groups that they are capable of achieving.

**Extensions (For Gifted Students):**

1. Students may search for more Alexander Graham Bell primary sources.
2. Students may write another journal entry as though they were Bell.
3. Students may write a response to the Bostonians from Bell.

**Possible Connections To Other Subjects:**

1. There may be connections to Science. Check with the Science teachers to see if there is a way to incorporate their teachings of the scientific method into this lesson.
2. If the students choose to work on the Extension Activities, there are connections to the Writing strands of the Language Arts curriculum.