

Lesson Plan #2: Edith Wharton's Lily Bart - How Authors Can Impact a Region

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify the literary importance of Edith Wharton's work as it influenced people to visit and explore the Hudson River Valley.
- Organize the descriptions cited in the article to compare and contrast the Hudson River Valley to New York City in a T-chart.
- Use guiding questions to formulate an educated belief as to how Edith Wharton's work impacted her readers.
- Write a letter from the perspective of a reader at that time, which outlines why people would travel to the Hudson River Valley after reading Edith Wharton's work.

Standards:

Social Studies Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Key Idea 4: The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments.

Performance Indicator - Explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, and traditions of people living in their neighborhoods, communities, and State.

Performance Indicator - View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Teacher Resources:

- *The Hudson River Valley Review* articles:
 - [“Edith Wharton and the Hudson Valley” by Donald Anderson and Judith Saunders](#)
 - [“Lily Bart at Bellomont: Beauty on the Battlements” by Donald Anderson and Rose DeAngelis](#)

Materials:

- *Hudson River Valley Review* Article
- Highlighters (if available)
- T-chart
- Paper
- Pencil/Pen

Procedures (Teachers may assign to groups or individually):

1. After reading the article, “Edith Wharton and the Hudson Valley”, students will use a highlighter to identify all of the description used to describe the Hudson River Valley.
2. Students will then box or circle, or use a different colored highlighter to highlight all of the descriptions that pertain to New York City.
3. Then, students will transfer their information into a T-chart.

4. Using the T-chart students will then respond to the guiding questions to better understand how Edith Wharton's work influenced tourism in the Hudson River Valley after the publication of her work. (This may be done orally or in written form depending on the needs of the students.) Refer to the Guiding Questions:

Guiding Questions

1. How does the description make the Hudson River Valley appear compared to city life?
2. What types of people would be interested in the Hudson River Valley Region?
3. Why is it important that a book such *The House of Mirth* was published at the time that it was (1905)?
4. How could this author's work have contributed to the success and development of the Hudson River Valley as a region?
5. Have students pretend to travel back into history.

Assessment:

Students will write a letter outlining what they "heard from a friend" about the detail in Wharton's book. They will use the descriptions found in their T-charts to write a letter to a family member explaining why they need to travel to the Hudson River Valley to escape the city for the summer.

Enrichment:

- Read Edith Wharton's *Hudson River Bracketed* and evaluate its significance in Hudson River Valley history.
- Research more biographical information about Edith Wharton and create a poster outlining what you have learned.
- Research more information on the Hudson River Valley and create a poster adding information from the flyer and poster to create a brochure designed to encourage New York City residents to come and visit the Hudson River Valley.