

Lesson Plan #4: Early American Engineers: Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Utilize prediction strategies to summarize the Robert Fulton article “Robert Fulton, Genius Ahead of His Time” by Cynthia Owen Smith **and/or** “Robert R. Livingston, Enthusiastic Inventor, Prudent Entrepreneur”.
- Collaborate with team members to determine the historical impact of Robert Fulton.
- Re-read and clarify the predictions made earlier in the lesson.
- Write a short biography of Robert Fulton by focusing on 3 symbols that best represent his life and explain why they represent his life.

Standards:

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

Key Idea 3: Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals and groups.

Performance Indicator: Study about the major social, political, economic, cultural, and religious developments in New York State and United States history involves learning about the important roles and contributions of individuals.

Performance Indicator: Gather and organize information about the important achievements and contributions of individuals and groups living in New York State and the United States.

Teacher Resources:

- *The Hudson River Valley Review* articles:
 - [“Robert Fulton, Genius Ahead of His Time,” by Cynthia Owen Philip](#)
 - [“Robert R. Livingston Enthusiastic Inventor, Prudent Entrepreneur,” by Cynthia Owen Philip](#)

Materials:

- *Hudson River Valley Review* Article
- “Concept Splash” Word Bank
- Index Cards
- Chalkboard and Chalk or Large Poster Size Sheet of Paper and Marker for each group
- Paper
- Pencil/Pen

OPTION I (“Robert Fulton, Genius Ahead of His Time”) :

Procedures:

1. Put one word from the “Concept Splash” Word Bank (below) on each of the index cards.

indenture	Robert Owen	banker	apprenticed	refuge	American Revolution	Euclid
steamboat	<i>Clermont</i>	oil portrait	London	Charles Wilson Peale	loner	engineering
Royal Academy	inventor	canal	Society of Arts, Commerce, and Manufacturing			
Chancellor	Robert Livingston	Philadelphia	John Barker Church	lectures	submarine warfare	
rope-making machine	<i>U.S. Chesapeake and Leopold</i>		<i>“Fulton’s Folly”</i>	Harriet Fulton	<i>Phoenix</i>	
monopoly	Aaron Ogden	Fort Pitt	350 miles			

2. Pass out one index card to each student (more if there are extras).
3. Allow students to move around the room to share their card with others and try to piece together what the article might be about.
4. Provide students time to meet in groups to discuss what they believe the article they are about to read will be about.
5. Have students make a list of 5-10 sentences using the words they reviewed to predict what the article will be about. (Remind them that historians often have only limited success as they seek out information.)
6. Select one student from each group to act as scribe and have one be the presenter.
7. Post on the wall for all to review.
8. Then read the article with students. Allow them time to take notes.
9. Have students get back into their groups and make corrections to their predictions.

Assessment:

Symbols, such as a steamboat, can convey much more than just a picture. Have students list what symbols they would use to describe Robert Fulton. Have students write a brief biography explaining which symbols they believe best portray his life and explain why using their notes.

Enrichment:

- Create a timeline of Robert Fulton’s accomplishments, relating each accomplishment/event to the events in industrial/transportation/commerce history occurring at the same time in the United States and Europe.

OPTION II (“Robert R. Livingston Enthusiastic Inventor, Prudent Entrepreneur”) :

Procedures:

1. Put one word from the “Concept Splash” Word Bank (below) on each of the index cards.

“hobby horse”	New York Society for the Promotion of Arts, Agriculture and Manufactures	patent			
innovators	steam navigation	monopoly	steamboat	sloop	stagecoach
Robert Fulton	diplomat	Louisiana Purchase	Marquis de Lafayette	<i>Phoenix</i>	<i>Hope</i>
<i>Perseverance</i>	Hudson River Line	mechanics	John Stevens	James Rumsey	
New York State Legislature	Nicholas Roosevelt	foundry	shares	entrepreneurial	

2. Pass out one index card to each student (more if there are extras).
3. Allow students to move around the room to share their card with others and try to piece together what the article might be about.
4. Provide students time to meet in groups to discuss what they believe the article they are about to read will be about.
5. Have students make a list of 5-10 sentences using the words they reviewed to predict what the article will be about. (Remind them that historians often have only limited success as they seek out information.)
6. Select one student from each group to act as scribe and have one be the presenter.
7. Post on the wall for all to review.
8. Then read the article with students. Allow them time to take notes.
9. Have students get back into their groups and make corrections to their predictions.

Assessment:

Symbols, such as a steamboat, can convey much more than just a picture. Have students list what symbols they would use to describe Robert Livingston. Have students write a brief biography explaining which symbols they believe best portray his life and explain why using their notes.

Enrichment:

- Create a timeline of Robert Livingston’s accomplishments, relating each accomplishment/event to the events in industrial/transportation/commerce history occurring at the same time in the United States and Europe.

Combine the lessons:

Teachers can divide the class into halves, allowing each half to conduct each lesson. They can then have each side share its t-charts with the other half of the class.