

Rip Van Winkle and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* Lesson Plan

GRADE LEVEL: 7, 8, & 9

COMMON CORE STANDARDS:

- **SOCIAL STUDIES**
 - Standard 1: History of the United States and New York
- **READING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES**
 - Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
 - Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

OBJECTIVE:

Students will be able to use Washington Irving's short stories *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and *Rip Van Winkle* from his collection of short stories *The Sketch Book*, to understand what life was like during the colonial/post-Revolutionary War period in the Hudson Valley

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How can one use these two *fictional* American classics to have a deeper understanding of the historical significance of the Hudson River Valley during the colonial/post-Revolutionary War time period?

- How can we use a fictional story to learn something factual about the time when it was written?

LEARNING STYLES: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic

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MATERIALS:

- “*The Sketch Book*” by Washington Irving <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/i/irving/washington/i72s/complete.html>
- *Washington Irving* PowerPoint

MOTIVATION:

Begin lesson by asking students:

- What do you think someone who has been asleep for twenty years would say if he or she woke up today?
- What would this individual find that is new?
- What sort of questions would he or she ask?

then:

- If you fell asleep and woke up twenty years from now, what do you think you would find has changed?

PROCEDURE:

1. Introduce *The Sketch Book* to the class
2. Explain who Washington Irving was, when, and where he lived, in class (information on PowerPoint included)
3. Have students read *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* for outside of class, for homework over the course of 3 days (2 for *LoSH*, 1 for *RVW*)
4. Come into class each day and discuss summary of reading
 - a. Put major plot points on the board
 - b. First day of *LoSH* have students record plot points, then use them to jump-start discussion the next day

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- c. Each day after this has been done have students separate plot points which *they* believe are fictional from those based on historical fact circling notes in different colored markers on board
5. Give lesson further elaborating on the historically accurate facts to explain Colonial/ Post-Revolutionary War Era Hudson Valley. Explain which are fictional and *why* we know those are not true, and why they may have been used.
6. After both texts have been completed and broken down, have students discuss in groups of two or three what they believe is one underlying theme for both of these texts. Then to gather all major points, host class discussion... (hopefully concluding something such as “The plight of the individual outsider in an homogeneous community permeate both stories and helped to develop a unique sense of American cultural and existential selfhood during the early nineteenth century”)

FINAL ASSESSMENT:

For a final assessment have students write a piece with the same plot as *Rip Van Winkle* except based on someone falling asleep in 1997 and waking up in 2017 in the Hudson River Valley, and be sure to highlight major changes in our society. Assess how well they understand societal norms and how, whether it was 200 years ago or today, the challenges that may face an “outsider” appearing in this area.

Washington Irving & *The Sketch Book*

Washington Irving (1783-1859)



Born April 3rd, 1783...

The very same week New York City residents learned of the British ceasefire that ended the American Revolutionary War!

His mother chose to name him 'Washington', after the hero of the war.

Tarrytown, NY

- Outbreak of *yellow fever* in 1798
- Irving was 15, and sent away from the city to stay with a friend upstate in Tarrytown, NY
- Irving was inspired by Dutch settler's customs and local ghost stories, especially by the nearby town of *Sleepy Hollow*

War of 1812

- Irving was an editor in Manhattan when the British invaded America, once again
- When Washington D.C. was attacked in 1814, Irving enlisted in the U.S. military



The Sketch Book

- Irving relocated to England
- It was during these times that he composed *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent...* a compilation of short stories including *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*
- Published in 1820

Bibliography

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- Burstein, Andrew. *The Original Knickerbocker: The Life of Washington Irving*. (Basic Books, 2007).
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- Hellman, George S. *Washington Irving, Esquire*. (Alfred A. Knopf, 1925).
- Jones, Brian Jay. *Washington Irving: An American Original*. (Arcade, 2008).