



1850-1874

Notable Nebraskan: J. Sterling Morton

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Nebraska Department of Education Academic Standards
<https://www.education.ne.gov/contentareastandards/>

Nebraska Department of Education Social Studies Standards
<https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Nebraska-Social-Studies-Standards-Final-11-2019.pdf>

National Archives <http://www.archives.gov/index.html>

Library of Congress Learning Page Lesson Plans <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/index.html>

L1

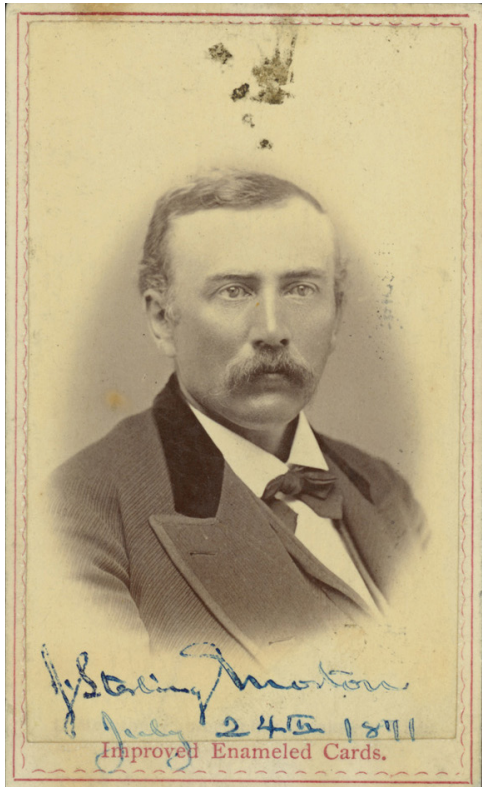
LESSON PLAN

Notable Nebraskan: J. Sterling Morton, A Life of Service

Activity Grade Level

4

This lesson plan was funded in part by the Cooper Foundation, Abel Foundation, and the Nebraska Humanities Council.



Lesson Objectives

1. Students will locate electronic sources on J. Sterling Morton.
2. Students will identify examples of J. Sterling Morton's contributions to his family, community, state, and nation.
3. Students will interpret sources to determine most important contributions.
4. Students will create visual symbols for these contributions.

Introduction

J. Sterling Morton was a great Nebraskan who served others in many ways. In this lesson, students will search the Nebraska Studies website to discover information about J. Sterling Morton's life and accomplishments. Students will learn why J. Sterling Morton has been honored as an outstanding citizen and notable Nebraskan.

The Task

Using a variety of online sources, students will gather information about the life of J. Sterling Morton, and use this information to make symbols that stand for his greatest accomplishments and contributions to his family, community, state, and nation. Students will then arrange their symbols on one of 4 puzzle pieces, with each piece representing one of these 4 levels of service mentioned above. Together these 4 puzzle pieces form the state of Nebraska.

Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Social Studies: [SS 4.3.1](#); [SS 4.3.2](#); [SS 4.3.3](#); [SS 4.3.4](#); [SS 4.3.5](#); [SS 4.4.2](#); [SS 4.4.3](#); [SS 4.4.4](#)

Language Arts: [LA 4.1.6 Comprehension](#); [LA 4.4.1 Information Fluency](#)

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The Resources

The teacher will need to review the information available on this and related Web sites and print a copy of a map outline of the state of Nebraska for each student. Determine the size of the map by deciding how you want to display the projects. It can be small enough to fit on a notebook page or large enough to be displayed on a wall.

Nebraska Outline Maps

http://www.netstate.com/states/maps/ne_maps.htm

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/usa/states/nebraska/outline/>

Julius Sterling Morton, National Statuary Hall Collection, Architect of the Capitol

http://www.aoc.gov/cc/art/nsh/morton_j.cfm

Nebraska Studies 1850-1874, J. Sterling Morton section

<http://nebraskastudies.org/1850-1874/j-sterling-morton-founder-of-arbor-day/>

Nebraska Dept. of Education Academic Standards.

<https://www.education.ne.gov/contentareastandards/>

Nebraska Dept. of Education State Social Studies Standards.

<https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Nebraska-Social-Studies-Standards-Final-11-2019.pdf>

Nebraska State Historical Society.

<http://nebraskahistory.org/oversite/research.htm>

Nebraska State Historical Society: Nebraska History magazine

<https://history.nebraska.gov/publications/nebraska-history-magazine>

Nebraska State Historical Society: Nebraska Trailblazer

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/museum/teachers/material/trailist.htm>

Rubrics: General Rubric <http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/rubric.htm>

The Library of Congress Learning Page: The Historians' Sources: Analysis of Primary Sources. "Questions for Analyzing Primary Sources."

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/psources/analyze.html>

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The Process

The teacher should prepare for this lesson by becoming familiar with all phases of the lesson and Nebraska Studies website, determining procedures best for the situation, setting up and making resources available in the classroom and/or computer lab, and by obtaining a copy of an outline map of Nebraska for each student.

Then guide students through the following steps:

1. Introduce the lesson. Discuss:
 - a. What makes someone an outstanding citizen?
 - b. What is the difference between a good citizen and an outstanding citizen?
 - c. How is citizenship related to responsibility and service?

2. Have each student fold a regular sheet of notebook paper in half and in half again. When opened the sheet should then be divided into 4 sections. Label each of the sections with one of these 4 titles: • home • community • state • nation

Students will use this note sheet to record information about Morton's contributions and accomplishments in these 4 areas.

3. Guide students to the NebraskaStudies.org website, and show them how to use it. Have students read the J. Sterling Morton section of the 1850-1874 timeline:
<http://nebraskastudies.org/1850-1874/j-sterling-morton-founder-of-arbor-day/>

Use the information to collect data about Morton's accomplishments and contributions. Categorize each of these into one of the 4 areas, and record notes in the appropriate section of the note sheet.

4. Allow time for the students to locate and read through several sources. At some point during this research time, stop and discuss where students are finding the most interesting or most useful information. If necessary, have students exchange information to complete their notes.

5. As a class and/or individually, prioritize the list of accomplishments and contributions. Think of visual symbols (pictures) for those deemed most important.

6. Give each student a copy of the Nebraska outline map. Have students cut out the map. Turn the map over to the "wrong side" and draw lines that divide the map into a puzzle with 4 pieces. Also on the "wrong side" label each piece to match the 4 categories on the note sheet (family, community, state, nation). Turn the puzzle pieces over, draw or find pictures to symbolize Morton's greatest accomplishments and contributions, and arrange these pictures artistically on the appropriate piece.

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The Process, continued

7. Mount the 4 pieces of the Nebraska “puzzle” on a larger sheet of construction paper or on a page in each student’s notebook. Decorate with colors, and write a title that includes J. Sterling Morton’s name and the word “Nebraska.”

8. Have each student put the finished project on his/her desk. Lead the students in a “gallery walk” up and down the rows of desks so that everyone in the class will get to see each project. When the walk is complete, have a short “brag fest” where the class talks about the positive and creative aspects of student work on this project.

9. Debrief the class by discussing why J. Sterling Morton was an outstanding citizen and a notable Nebraskan. Talk about how his actions influenced the lives of today’s Nebraskans and write a generalization about the most important thing they learned from studying Morton’s life.

Learning Advice

Teachers should take care to make sure students understand puzzle directions and should monitor successful completion of the project. Teachers may also need to adjust this lesson to suit the amount of available time or the abilities of the learners. Some suggestions for adjusting include:

1. Students can work in pairs from the beginning of the project. Give each student in the pair 2 categories to research and 2 sections of the Nebraska puzzle to complete. Students could even work in groups of 4, giving each student only one category to research and 1 piece of the Nebraska puzzle to complete. Completed projects would then have to be displayed where all students could look at them.
2. To control the amount of time spent on this lesson, teachers may set a certain amount of time for research. When this time is up, have students share their answers with others who researched the same categories.
3. To extend the lesson, have students draw and label some key physical features of Nebraska before cutting the map into puzzle pieces. Students can then add their symbols to the map.
4. To add interest, use old Nebraska road maps to mount projects or to form the puzzle pieces.
5. To extend the lesson, list the important character traits that allowed J. Sterling Morton to achieve his goals.
6. Write a paragraph or short essay entitled, “J. Sterling Morton: A Great Citizen, A Great Nebraskan.”

L1

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Conclusion

To conclude this lesson, complete steps 8, 9, and 10 listed in the section labeled Process.

Assessment Activity

To assess this lesson, simply note the completion of Lesson Objectives. This can be done by noting participation on a class roster. Listen carefully to student discussions. Also note the generalizations generated by the students. These can be easily graded if the teacher chooses to do so.

Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

■ Social Studies Standards

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SS 4.3.1 Explore where (spatial) and why people, places, and environments are organized in the state and around the world.

SS 4.3.2 Compare the characteristics of places and regions and their impact on human decisions.

SS 4.3.3 Explain how human and natural forces have modified different environments in Nebraska and how humans have adapted.

SS 4.3.4 Compare and contrast the characteristics of culture statewide.

SS 4.3.5 Use geographic skills to make connections to issues and events.

SS 4.4.2 Analyze and explain multiple perspectives of events in Nebraska, including historically marginalized and underrepresented groups.

SS 4.4.3 Analyze past and current events throughout Nebraska history.

SS 4.4.4 Develop historical inquiry and research skills.

Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

■ Language Arts Standards

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LA 4.1.5 Vocabulary: Students will build and use conversational, academic, and content-specific grade-level vocabulary; LA 4.1.5.b Apply context clues (e.g., word, phrase, and sentence, and paragraph clues) and text features to infer meaning of unknown words.

LA 4.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by using prior knowledge and text information while reading grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 4.2.1 Writing Process: Students will apply the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish writing using correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other conventions of standard English appropriate for grade-level.

LA 4.2.2 Writing Modes: Students will write in multiple modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.

LA 4.3.1 Speaking: Students will develop, apply, and refine speaking skills and strategies to communicate key ideas in a variety of situations.

LA 4.3.2 Listening: Students will develop and demonstrate active listening skills across a variety of situations.

LA 4.3.3 Reciprocal Communication: Students will develop, apply, and adapt reciprocal communication skills.

LA 4.4.1 Information Fluency: Students will evaluate, create, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats (textual, visual, and digital).