Title: If These Walls Could Talk - History of Independence Hall (Pennsylvania State House)

Grade Level: Grades 5-8

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Montana Standards Alignment:
MT-Social Studies Content Standard 1—Students access, synthesize, and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations.

MT-Social Studies Content Standard 2—Students analyze how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance to understand the operation of government and to demonstrate civic responsibility.

MT-Social Studies Content Standard 3—Students apply geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., location, place, human/environment interactions, movement, and regions).

MT-Social Studies Content Standard 4—Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity, and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships.

MT-Social Studies Content Standard 6—Students demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies.

MT-Communication Arts Writing Content Standard 5- Students will write to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Lesson Plan Objective: To teach students about the history of Independence Hall (Pennsylvania State House) and its connection to the history of the United States through a creative writing assignment.

Materials Needed:
- Computers with internet access
- Reference materials
- Photo of Independence Hall
- Poster board to complete KWL chart
Introduction:

This lesson is designed to give students the opportunity to research the history of Independence Hall (Pennsylvania State House), one of the buildings Benjamin Franklin frequented. Through research students will discover the wide range of historical events that have taken place in this 18th century colonial building. Students will also be given the opportunity to complete a creative writing project using the information they have learned.

Suggested Activities/Procedure:

- Show students a picture of Independence Hall and see if they can name this historical building that Benjamin Franklin and other founding fathers frequented.
- As a class, have students complete a KWL chart about Independence Hall.
- Explain to students that this 18th century colonial building has a rich history. Many might know that both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution were drafted here, but there are many more events that have taken place in this building over the years.
- Inform students that they will be given the opportunity to research the history of Independence Hall using various websites and reference books.
- Explain to students that they are to choose one event that took place at Independence Hall that is of interest to them that they can use as a basis for a creative writing assignment.
- Allow students one or two class periods to complete their research.
- Using the information they have gathered, students are to complete the following creative writing assignment: Each student will write a historical fiction story entitled “If These Walls Could Talk.” This assignment will be from the perspective of what the walls of Independence Hall would say about their particular event. Independence Hall has “seen” a lot of historical events over its long history and would therefore be able to share a lot of secrets of what it has learned. Caution students that their historical data needs to be accurate, but they can be creative in how they deliver the historical information and the opinion or vantage point of what the walls would say about what they’ve witnessed. Since historical figures are no longer alive to tell of their experience in Independence Hall, the building itself now has the opportunity to share what it has “heard and seen” over the years.
- Allow students two or three class periods to complete their writing assignment- revisions and final draft.
- Give students time to share their stories with the class.
- Complete KWL chart

Assessment:

- KWL chart
- Teacher observations of research completed
- Historical fiction story

Extending the Lesson:

- Examine primary source documents that highlight some of activities that have taken place in Independence Hall.
- Research information about another historical building that Franklin would have worked in.

**Suggested Websites:**

- Independence Hall Timeline: [http://www.ushistory.org/independencehall/info/timeline.htm](http://www.ushistory.org/independencehall/info/timeline.htm)