3/31/14

Grade Nine World History

Unit: Central and Eastern Africa: Cultural History and Modern Voices

Lesson: “From Aksum to Ethiopia”

Enduring Understandings:

* Foreign occupation and encounters have lasting and complex social, political, and cultural consequences.
* Civilizations leave behind diverse types of records from which historians can learn about lifestyles, economies, social structures, and cultures.

Essential Questions:

* How have different nations confronted troubling aspects of their pasts or dark periods in their histories?
* How was the geography of Aksum and its historical positioning conducive to the development of a kingdom?
* How did trade, religion, and monarchy play a role in the development, growth, and legacy of Aksum?

Standards:

* CC.8.5.9-10.G: Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
* CC.8.6.9-10.F: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
* CC.8.5.9-10.B: Determine the central ideas of information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key ideas develop over the course of the text.

Set-up:

* Connect computer to SMART Board
* Make copies of British Museum materials

Activities:

1. **Do-Now (5 minutes):** When students enter the classroom they will sit in their assigned seats and follow the instructions posted on the SMART Board – to take out *The Guardian* article and the 3 questions assigned for homework, and discuss their answers with a partner in their letter group (1’s with 3’s, 2’s with 4’s). The 3 questions are as follows and will also be projected onto the SMART Board:

1) What is the history of the relationship between Italy and Ethiopia?

2) What is the meaning and significance of the term *Italiana brava gente*? What contradictions does Maaza Mengiste bring to light about this stereotype?

3) How does Mengiste describe Italy confrontation with their past relations with Ethiopia? How are Italy and the Italian people dealing with this history?

1. **Introduce Author (5 minutes):** Before we discuss student answers to the homework questions, I will briefly introduce Maaza Mengiste, the author of *The Guardian* article. She is a young, Ethiopian-American writer, documentarian, and human rights activist, who’s highly acclaimed 2010 novel *Beneath the Lion’s Gaze* ushered her into the international literary limelight. I will briefly discuss the intriguing premise of her book about the controversy surrounding the 1975 death of Haile Selassie, the last king in the legendary 3000 year-old line of monarchs descended from King Solomon and Queen Sheba.
2. **Homework Discussion (10 minutes):** I will return to the homework questions about *The Guardian* article and we will discuss student answers as a class. Our discussion of the third question will build into a broader discussion about how countries and societies deal with troubling aspects of their pasts and dark periods in history. In her article, Maaza offers Germany’s Nuremberg Trials and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission as examples of countries taking steps to confront their pasts. I will ask students the open-ended question of they think we as nation have done enough to confront our troubling pasts.
3. **Brief Lecture (5 minutes):** I will introduce students to the Kingdom of Aksum in modern day Ethiopia that reigned from the 1st-7th centuries. I will begin with a map of the geographic region of the Kingdom – showing rivers, mountains and other bodies of water – and ask students why they think this was an advantageous region for the development of a powerful and long-lasting Kingdom. I will also as students which Empires bordered this region during the same time period (Rome and Islamic Empire). By utilizing their general knowledge about civilizations, students will see how much they can learn about a kingdom by simply analyzing its geography. I will then present one slide about the natural resources, social structure, economy, and religion of the Kingdom of Aksum.
4. **Artifact Analysis (15 minutes):** Students will work in their “letter groups” to analyze a series of artifacts currently held in the British Museum from the Kingdom of Aksum. Each group will have a handout with artifacts and related questions about the Kingdom of Aksum, however the subjects vary across groups. Two groups will focus on trade, two will focus on religion, one will focus on the monarchy, and one will focus on urban lifestyle.
5. **Jigsaw (10 minutes):** Students will convene in their “number groups” and share their “letter groups’” findings about trade, religion, monarchy, or urban lifestyle. To focus their reporting, students will aim to share their findings with members of other “letter groups” by answering the bolded question at the top of their group’s British Museum handout. The 4 different bolded questions are as follows:

Religion: How much has Ethiopian religion changed over time?

Monarchy: How important were the Kings of Aksum?

Trade: How important was trade to Aksum?

Urban Lifestyle: What would the city of Aksum have been like?

To wrap-up, I will ask for one student in each “number group” to answer one of the above questions that was not assigned to his or her “letter group,” thereby covering all 4 subjects (religion, monarchy, trade, and lifestyle) after hearing from all 4 “number groups.” Finally, I will inform students of the writing exercise on Friday – with the help of their notes and other class materials in their possession, they will write 3 body paragraphs in support of a given thesis, or the antithesis of that thesis, related to our study of central and east African cultural history and modern voices.

Homework:

* Prepare for Friday’s writing exercise