

Lesson Plan Title: U.S. History Fall Harvest

Concept / Topic to Teach: Crops brought to America with the African slaves

Standards Addressed:

- 8.4-4 daily lives of the people
- 8.6-1 how physical geography shaped human actions -farming
- 8.7-1 cotton production, rice and indigo
- 8.7-2 African slavery

Time needed: One class period of about 50-55 minutes usually in early to mid October. It is helpful to have the students come directly to the garden and leave from the garden at the end of class. The class will be divided into 2 two activity stations which allows about 20 minutes at each station and about 10-15 minutes for gathering, introduction and transitions.

General Goal(s):

1. To become more familiar with crops that came to America with the slaves by harvesting all the crops in the garden plot. Some of the crops will be used to make an African stew.
2. Learn about some of the foods used to feed the slaves on the journey to America.
3. Learn about foods of the slaves. This influences American culture.
4. Learn about the use of slaves for growing and harvesting cotton.
5. Learn about the use of slaves for growing rice and indigo

Specific Objectives: Students should already be familiar with the crops growing in the garden. Each student will harvest at least one of the crops. All students should be aware of all crops harvested. The garden plot will be cleaned up and, if time allows, dug for future planting.



Crops growing during summer-mid July

Required Materials:

Those marked with * should be found in garden shed – but don't count on it.

gloves *	permanent markers to label harvest *
scissors to cut twine *	white plastic labels, cut in ¼, to label harvest *
tables*	compost bins with room for plant material
pruning shears for harvest *	5 gallon black bucket for pulled plant labels *
example of a neatly tied bundle of grains *	digging forks *
cardboard box lids for harvesting cowpeas	twine/jute, hole punch to label harvest *
ziplock bags for calaloo and okra	5 gallon black buckets for garden cleanup *
examples for activity station - dried okra seeds, fresh and dried okra pods, millet, sorghum, taro, manioc, cotton, peanut plant with peanuts, broom corn. (*there may be examples in shed)	

Information and notes about African crops and slave cuisine. Also about picking cotton.
Previous year's garden plot plan for reference

Preparation prior to the garden day:

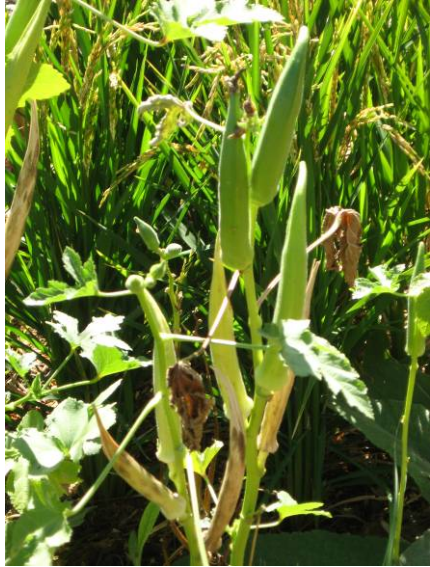
1. Get needed garden volunteer(s) and make sure other classes won't be in the garden at the same time. Check in with the Carden Coordinator or Garden Team Leader to get on the calendar.
2. Make sure the harvest day is not just after the garden is watered. It is best to harvest when the grains and paths are dry.
3. Review the Summary of Crops for 8th Grade for harvesting tips. Don't assume the plot plan was followed and that the crops were planted as shown. Make sure each crop can be identified.
4. Decide number of crops to be harvested and the number of students in each rotation. This determines how many students will harvest each crop. Students usually like to work in pairs or groups of 3 students. Flexibility is always in order here!!
5. The first rotation of students will harvest some of the crops and the second rotation the rest. Choose the crops to be harvested to give the students room to move around and work. It is important to think through a plan for harvest.
6. Decide how and where the harvest will be stored. It is nice to at least have an example of each of the crops in the classroom.
7. During summer, keep the okra picked when small and dry them in shed. Let one plant of okra in each plot go to seed. Keep the calaloo cut back to avoid going to seed and to keep new leaves coming.

Anticipatory Set (Lead-In): At previous class meeting, explain what we will be doing in the garden, harvesting the plants that were brought with African slaves to America. Harvested crops will be used to make an African stew. Remind students to meet in the garden with appropriate clothes and shoes.

Set up:

1. Set up table near the garden plot with scissors, twine, hole punch, markers, and plastic labels for bundling and identifying grains. Have an example of a neatly tied and labeled bundle.

2. Set up table near the garden plot with pruning shears. Have bucket of gloves out and a couple digging forks
3. Set up table for the second activity with examples of foods from Africa, cotton, etc. This table will be near the sitting/gathering area. Okra, fresh, dried and seeds. Millet sprays, sorghum, broom corn, taro, manioc, peanuts still on plant. Make sure notes are available to lead discussion. Have a stalk of sweet sorghum cut and ready to eat.



Okra



white cotton with fiber and bolls



dried cow peas

Step-by-Step Procedures:

1. As students arrive, have them put their backpacks in an area out of the way. Designate a gathering area.
2. When the class has gathered, give an overview of the day's activities. The class will be divided into 2 stations so everyone will do both activities. Explain that everyone will help with the harvest.
3. Crops need to be harvested in an organized and safe manner. Stress safe use of digging forks and pruning shears. If the tools are not being used safely, they will be taken away. There will be no second chances!!
4. Divide class into 2 stations. Note the time for changing stations.

5. Harvesting Station.

It always works best to explain everything to the whole group at once as there is less explaining to do and students seem to listen better before they start to work. *Explain exactly what you want to happen and how.* Demonstrate if possible. Show students the area by the shed where you want all the harvested crops to go. This explanation should only take a few minutes – but the students need to know what to expect.. The students are always excited to get going.

- a. The harvest should be very controlled – not chaos.
- b. Show plot to be harvested. May want to review crops in plot by pointing to a crop so the student can say what it is. Do this very quickly as the students need and want to get to work.

- c. Have students pair up, etc to get the number of needed groups.
- d. Decide who will harvest what. Can ask “who wants to harvest rice?” and take first response. This is a risky, but usually satisfying method. Can just assign crop to harvest. “You two will be harvesting the rice. OK?” *Be specific with instructions.* “Do you know where the rice is?” “Harvest it all.” Or, “harvest only half of it.”
- e. If a crop can be pulled out (or cut at ground level) and processed away from the garden plot this will help with congestion.
- f. Encouragement and comments on tasks well done always helps keep students happy and working. Make this fun but also productive.
- g. If someone finishes early, make sure plots are cleaned and ready to dig. If possible have some of the students dig with a digging fork- or they may dig an area of an other class that has already been harvested. Demonstrate proper use of digging fork. If a crop still needs to be harvested, ask students for help. Most are willing to help but need direction!



Processing cowpeas



harvested sweet potatoes



Students using digging fork to dig up plot. Other students are harvesting and processing crops.



Processing sweet sorghum. Bundling grain, removing leaves, will cut stalk into pieces to eat. Sorghum growing in the background.



harvesting finger and pearl millet

6. Activity station.

- a. This station can really be any activity or discussion. Some may have already been covered on a short garden visit. Some can be easily done in class another day. Below are some ideas.
- b. Have examples of millet, sorghum, taro, manioc, etc. and talk about what slaves ate on ships to America.
[Http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs_es_cuisine.htm](http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/history/hs_es_cuisine.htm) is a good starting site for information.
- c. Talk about the use of slaves for growing and harvesting cotton. Read the following passage

“It was work hard, git beatins and haf fed... . The times I hated most was pickin’ cotton when the frost was on the bolls. My hands git sore and crack open and bleed.” --Mary Reynolds, Slave Narrative from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936-1938.

A normal field hand was expected to be able to pick 150 to 200 pounds of cotton per day. Some enslaved workers were known to pick as much as 500 pounds daily.

They always harvested cotton, moreover, in the heat of late summer, commonly under a blazing sun. They had to work fast to make their quota, and they had to work carefully so as not to introduce too much dirt or trash into the bags. Woman and children were often valued as pickers because of their ability to pick clean cotton, meaning cotton free of stems or trash; and because they did not have to stoop quite so low as men, they suffered less back pain.

Show the sharp points on the cotton bolls and have the students touch them.
Class will process the cotton in the winter.

- d. Talk about the use of okra. Seeds for coffee substitute, thickener, abortions, etc.
- e. Talk about sorghum (called guinea corn) and the three uses (grain, brooms and sweetener). Have the students sample sweet sorghum by peeling off the outer covering and sucking on the sweet inner core.
- f. Talk about peanuts, their other names and how they were cooked and eaten.

There is a song sung during the Civil war.

<http://kids.niehs.nih.gov/lyrics/gooberp.htm>

Can hear the song –music- on this site as well.

Show on map how the peanuts went from the new world to Africa and back to the colonies. (Origin in S. America, taken to Europe by the Portuguese, then to W. Africa, then to the colonies with the slaves)



Peanuts grow under the ground. The yellow flower is pollinated and then produces a peg that grows into the ground where the peanut is produced. These plants are drying a few days on the fence.

Closure (Reflect Anticipatory Set):

1. View display of harvested crops. Any comments about harvest from students?
2. Have students help carry crops to classroom or storage area.

Compiled by Patricia Carpenter updated October 2008