

Lesson Plan

Historical Prisons

Book: *Alcatraz*

Series: Visit and Learn

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students practice conducting a short research project to learn more about historically important prisons around the world.

Supplies

- *Alcatraz* book
- Computer access for each student
- Whiteboard

Before the Activity

Read the *Alcatraz* book, or assign it to students to read on their own.

Activity

The *Alcatraz* book describes one of the most infamous prisons in the world. Although this book focuses on Alcatraz, there are many other prisons around the world. Copy the following list of prisons on the board, and ask students to choose one of them to research:

- The Tower of London
- Robben Island
- Elmina Castle
- Port Arthur Penal Colony

Students should look up information about where the prison is located, why it was built, and any notable people or groups of people who were imprisoned there. Students should use this information to type a short description (approximately 100 words) of the prison. Then, they should find a photo of the prison. Students should use a word processor to create a poster about the prison. The poster should include the following elements:

- A “Historical Prisons” title at the top
- A subtitle with the name of the prison
- A short description of the prison (approximately 100 words)
- A photo of the prison
- A short caption explaining the photo

Evaluation

Give students up to 16 points for their posters, using the following rubric

- 1 point for including the “Historical Prisons” title at the top
- 1 point for including a subtitle with the name of the prison
- 2 points for explaining where the prison is located
- 4 points for explaining why it was built
- 4 points for explaining the notable people or groups imprisoned there
- 1 point for including a photo of the prison
- 1 point for including a short caption explaining the photo
- 2 points for using correct spelling and grammar

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards’ reading standards for informational text, grade 4 (RI 4.3, 4.5).