

Lesson Plan

War Words

Book: The Battle of San Juan Hill

Series: Major Battles in US History

Level: Navigator

Objective

To help students analyze the differences in meanings of similar or related words, using context and reference materials to clarify their understanding.

Supplies

- *The Battle of San Juan Hill*
- Whiteboard
- Pencils and paper
- Merriam-Webster online dictionary: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Before the Activity

Read through *The Battle of San Juan Hill*, or assign it to the students to read on their own. Write the following pairs of words on the whiteboard:

- blockade vs. siege
- armistice vs. treaty

Activity

Have each student choose one of the word pairs on the whiteboard to investigate. The words in each pair are similar but not identical. Students should write the word pair at the top of a piece of paper.

The students should complete the following steps for each word in the pair:

1. Find the first time the word is used in *The Battle of San Juan Hill*. Write that sentence down, including the page number where you found it.
2. Look up the word in the book's glossary and write down that definition.
3. Look up the word in the Merriam-Webster online dictionary and write down the simple definition.
4. Scroll down to the section of the Merriam-Webster online dictionary that defines the word for kids and write down that definition.

The students should use what they learn from these four definitions to write a short explanation (three to four sentences) of the differences between the two words' meanings.

Evaluation

Using the attached answer key, give the students 1 point for completing each of the four steps for each word. Give them 3 points for describing the differences between the two words.

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' language standards, grade 6 (L 6.4; L 6.5).

Answer Key: Blockade vs. Siege

blockade:

1. in the text: "The US ships formed a blockade to keep Cervera's ships in the harbor" (p. 20).
2. in the glossary: "The closing off of a place to prevent entrance or exit" (p. 31).
3. simple definition (of the noun form): "an act of war in which one country uses ships to stop people or supplies from entering or leaving another country."
4. kids' definition: "to close off a place to prevent the coming in or going out of people or supplies."

siege:

1. in the text: "The US would have to lay siege to the city" (p. 25).
2. in the glossary: "An attack in which soldiers surround a town or building" (p. 31).
3. simple definition: "a situation in which soldiers or police officers surround a city, building, etc., in order to try to take control of it; a serious and lasting attack of something."
4. kids' definition: "the act of moving an army around a fortified place to capture it."

Answer Key: Armistice vs. Treaty

armistice:

1. in the text: "Then, on August 12, 1898, Spain signed an armistice, ending fighting in the Spanish-American War" (p. 27).
2. in the glossary: "An agreement to temporarily stop fighting" (p. 31).
3. simple definition: "an agreement to stop fighting a war."
4. kids' definition: "a pause in fighting brought about by an agreement between the two sides."

treaty:

1. in the text: "The United States signed a peace treaty with Spain later in 1898" (p. 28).
2. in the glossary: "An official agreement between groups" (p. 31).
3. simple definition: "an agreement that is made between two or more countries or groups."
4. kids' definition: "an agreement between two or more states or sovereigns."