



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
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The History of Richmond through Maps

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If I'm being completely honest, the unit topic that I find the most boring to teach to my 10th grade history class is the Industrial Revolution. As much as I tried, I could not find inspiration enough to make this topic interesting. The following curriculum unit sets up an in-depth analysis of Richmond, Virginia through the lenses of industrial, environmental, and artistic changes. By studying maps, students will gain a deeper understanding, more than just geographical representations, on how maps are cultural documents. This unit aims to improve students' historical knowledge while developing their critical thinking, empathy, and visual literacy skills to understand the impact of industrialization. Teaching strategies in this unit will include lectures, discussions, map analysis, identifying key features, and examining what these sources reveal about their time. We will also analyze artistic responses to industrial changes and how the society and landscape changes of Richmond is seen through the various paintings, illustrations, and interpretations from people of their time. The close connection between the Industrial Revolution and the city of Richmond also makes this topic particularly relevant and engaging for my students because it offers them a unique perspective of their local history within a global context.

(Developed for World History 2, grade 10; recommended for U.S. History, grade 11)

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