

## **Cotton in North Carolina: Document it!**

### **Purpose**

To use given data to organize and analyze the importance of cotton in North Carolina's history

### **Competencies**

The learner will use language to express individual perspective through analysis of personal, social, cultural, and historical issues.

The learner will evaluate information from a variety of resources.

The learner will continue to refine critical thinking skills and creative thinking to evaluate print and non-print materials.

The learner will evaluate the impact of political, economic, social, and technological changes on life in North Carolina from 1870 to 1930.

The learner will use graphs and data.

### **Materials Provided**

"Cotton Production In North Carolina: 1866-1998"

Graph paper

### **Teaching Strategy**

*Preparation:* Make copies of table, "Cotton Production in North Carolina; 1866-1998" for students.

1. Share the following information with students: "You live in North Carolina which is the third largest state in the production of agricultural products. Agriculture is the largest industry in our state and generates billions of dollars of income for the economy of North Carolina. What commodities (plants and animals are raised by farmers in North Carolina for the purpose of making money)?" At this point an Internet search may be done to determine the top commodities raised by farmers in North Carolina. This information can be found at <http://www.agr.state.nc.us/stats/economic/cashreceipts/topcommodities.htm>. Ask the class if cotton is in this list. If yes, how much money does it currently generate in North Carolina's economy? Share with the class that today's lesson will be an examination of the importance of cotton in North Carolina's economy over the years.
2. Distribute copies of "Cotton Production in North Carolina: 1886-1998."
3. Assign students to use the information from the table to make a bar graph to compare quantities of cotton produced each decade since 1866. This can be accomplished using graph paper and/or computer programs.

4. Ask students to hypothesize reasons for increases and declines in cotton production in North Carolina's history. Ask students what they think cotton production was like before 1866. Challenge the class to conduct research to find out validity of their assumptions.
5. Divide class into small groups assigning each group one of the following topics:
  - slavery in the period before the Civil War
  - Eli Whitney's cotton gin
  - the Civil War and Reconstruction
  - the Industrial Revolution
  - the invasion and eradication of the boll weevil
  - mechanical cotton picker
  - globalization of textile industry in the late 20<sup>th</sup> centuryAssign each group to research and prepare a brief multimedia report on their topic to become a segment of a whole class documentary presentation.
6. Have students prepare a documentary presentation of group reports using appropriate segues from one segment to the next. This can be done using video production technology. Invite guests for a viewing. Select students to lead a discussion about the contents of the documentary. Include guests in the discussion.
7. Seek opportunities to present the documentary to various community groups (i.e. public library, historical society, museums).

### **Extension Activity**

Have students write a paragraph stating one important truth that can be extracted from the data given in the table and on the resulting graph.

Cotton Production in North Carolina  
1866-2006

Year	Number of Bales (in thousands)
1866	109
1876	212
1886	369
1896	522
1906	579
1916	654
1926	1208
1936	597
1946	440
1956	359
1966	94
1976	72
1986	109
1996	1002
2006	1285



