

Presenting: The Great Falls (Informing the Public about Paterson's Historical Waterfall)

By

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School: John F. Kennedy HS,
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Paterson, NJ

Grade Levels: Mixed grades 9-12.

Academic Focus/Core Curriculum Standards, Strands, CPI:

Language Arts Literacy

Reading: 3.1.12.E.1; 3.1.12.G.13;
3.1.12.H.4 & 5

Writing: 3.2.12.A.3 & 4
3.1.12.B.4

Speaking: 3.3.12.A.4
3.3.12.B.6

3.3.12.D.1, 2, 3, & 5

Listening

3.4.12.A.3

Science

Science & Society: 5.2.12.B.2
5.10.12.B.1

Social Studies

Civics 6.2.12.A.5

NJ History: 6.4.12.D.4

6.4.12.H.2

6.4.12.I.2

Geography: 6.6.12.A.5

6.6.12.B. 2-3

6.6.12.E.3-4

Technological Literacy:

8.1.12.A.1 & 5

Project Description: A key geographical feature in Paterson's history and development is the breathtaking Great Falls, the second largest falls east of the Mississippi after Niagara Falls. As preparation for this service-learning project, students research the geography and history of the Great Falls and the Passaic River and their formative roles in shaping Paterson's development. In a field trip to Mendham, students see first-hand the river's beginning where it is 1 foot deep and contrast it with its condition 60 miles down stream. Students also take photographs and videos of the river and falls at different points. Science class students join hands with representatives from different clubs to create a pictorial record and narrative, a PowerPoint presentation and brochures that explain the rich history of the Great Falls and Passaic River as well as their environmental and economic impact on the city of Paterson. Tour dates for parents and community members to view the presentation are set up and publicized via the district's community access television station. Students act as tour guides and teachers for the community. This also serves as an important introduction to the city's fascinating history for Paterson's large immigrant population. The presentation is also featured at National History Day.

Target Audience: The Paterson community.

Timeline:

Flexible; over one marking period.

Project Scheduling: Class time; one field trip; tours are given on weekends, school holidays.

Equipment Needed:

Computers, camera, camcorder, IPOD

Academic Focus:

Science: Students learn the environmental impact of the Great Falls. They also explore the way in which the Passaic River changes, and how it has become polluted.

8.1.12.B.12

**Career Education and
Consumer, Family & Life Skills**

9.2.12.A.3

9.2.12.B.2

9.2.12.C. 2

9.2.12.D.1 & 5

Core Ethical Values:

Citizenship, responsibility,
pride in community

Hurdles Encountered:

Hurdles: Scheduling dates;
getting students to work
together.

Solution: Working with school
schedule and testing; letting
students decide on tour dates
based on their responsibilities.

Demonstration: Students give
tours

Celebration: National History
Day Celebration

Recognition: Media coverage

Key Findings: Students become
very involved in the project.
They especially enjoy giving
tours to their parents who
previously were unaware of the
significance of the Great Falls.

Social Studies: Students learn how geography and history are
so intertwined; they also explore the formative role the Great
Falls played in the Industrial Revolution.

Technological Literacy: Students develop technological skills
in creating videos and PowerPoint presentations.

Language Arts: Students develop their speaking, listening,
reading and writing skills through doing research, constructing
the narrative and presenting it orally.

Family, Consumer & Life Skills: Students work in teams,
demonstrate problem-solving and critical thinking.

Character Education: This project serves as a vital lesson in
citizenship and building a bond with the community.

Educational Strategies:

Performance-based Education: Through research and giving tours,
students develop communication skills and achieve a goal.

Cooperative Learning: Students work in groups to research
information, take turns in giving tours, and demonstrate
collaboration.

Interdisciplinary Approach: Many disciplines are involved.

Personal Growth Outcomes: Students learn they are walking in
the footprints of industrial pioneers and understand that
history is still unfolding as they acquire information. Many
students express awe at the historical significance.

Community and Parental Involvement:

Paterson Board of Recreation

Paterson Board of Education

Great Falls Historical Society

Parent volunteers

Reflection Activities: Essay Question: "Channel 13 is doing a
special on Natural National Landmarks and Their Effects on
Life. Your team has been asked to participate. What would you
say in your presentation about this project, what role did you
play, what did you learn from it, and how did it affect your
thinking?"

Means of Assessment: Rubrics to evaluate project at different
stages.