

Topic: Carpetbaggers & Scalawags

Lesson plans for primary sources at the Tennessee State Library & Archives

Author: Billie Ann McBride

Grade Level: 8th grade

Date Created: July 2015

Visit <http://sos.tn.gov/tsla/education> for additional lesson plans.



Introduction: Students will be able to define the terms carpetbaggers and scalawags, explain their role in Tennessee during the Reconstruction era, explain how Southerners perceived these people, and map the movement of each from the North to the South.

Guiding Question(s): What were the different points of view regarding the social changes following the Civil War including the role of carpetbaggers and scalawags?

Learning Objectives: In the course of the lesson, students will

- Explain what a carpetbagger and scalawag were in terms of Reconstruction.
- Analyze primary sources to better understand why southerners and Tennesseans felt threatened by carpetbaggers.
-

Curriculum Standards:

8.87 Explain the movement of both white and black Northern entrepreneurs (carpetbaggers) from the North to the South. (C, E, P)

Materials Needed:

Primary Source— [Memphis Daily Appeal, April 07, 1877, Image 2](#)

Primary Source— [The Carpetbagger](#) (from the TSLA website)

Primary Source - ["Scalawags" The Charleston advocate., September 12, 1868, Image 2](#)

Worksheet to use to examine the article and song

Map of the US

Pencils, scissors, glue

Page 1 of 7

Background:

[“Carpetbaggers and Scalawags”](#)

Lesson Activities:

The attachments needed for these activities are found following the lesson plan.

Bellringer Activity

Students will be asked to define and draw a picture of what they think of when they hear the terms “carpetbagger” and “scalawag” on a sheet of notebook paper. Then, have them consider what someone who lived in the late 1800’s would use these terms to describe.

Then look at the actual definitions of the terms, and correct their papers to show the true definitions for each of these terms. Then they will draw a picture of each to match the corrected definition.

Activity 1

Discuss with students how “carpetbaggers” and “scalawags” moved around the country. Pass out attached map to students and have them complete the activity.

Activity 2

1. Place students in groups of 2-3 students.
2. Pass out the Primary Source Analysis Sheet and [“The Carpetbagger” song](#) (primary source).
3. Students will work together to analyze the primary source and answer the questions on the sheet. After 10-15 minutes go over the source together.
4. Have students refer back to their notebook paper where they have written the definition for carpetbaggers—they should add any new information that they have learned about them to this sheet.

Lesson Activities Continued: Activity 3

1. Once students have finished examining the first primary source (“The Carpetbagger” song), hand the second one (The Memphis Daily Journal article) out to each student.
2. The questions to answer for this primary source should be given to students as well (if not already printed on the back of the first analysis sheet)
3. Students should continue to work with their partner(s). After 10-15 minutes go over the source together.
4. Have students refer back to their notebook paper where they have written the definition for carpetbaggers—they should add any new information that they have learned about them to this sheet.

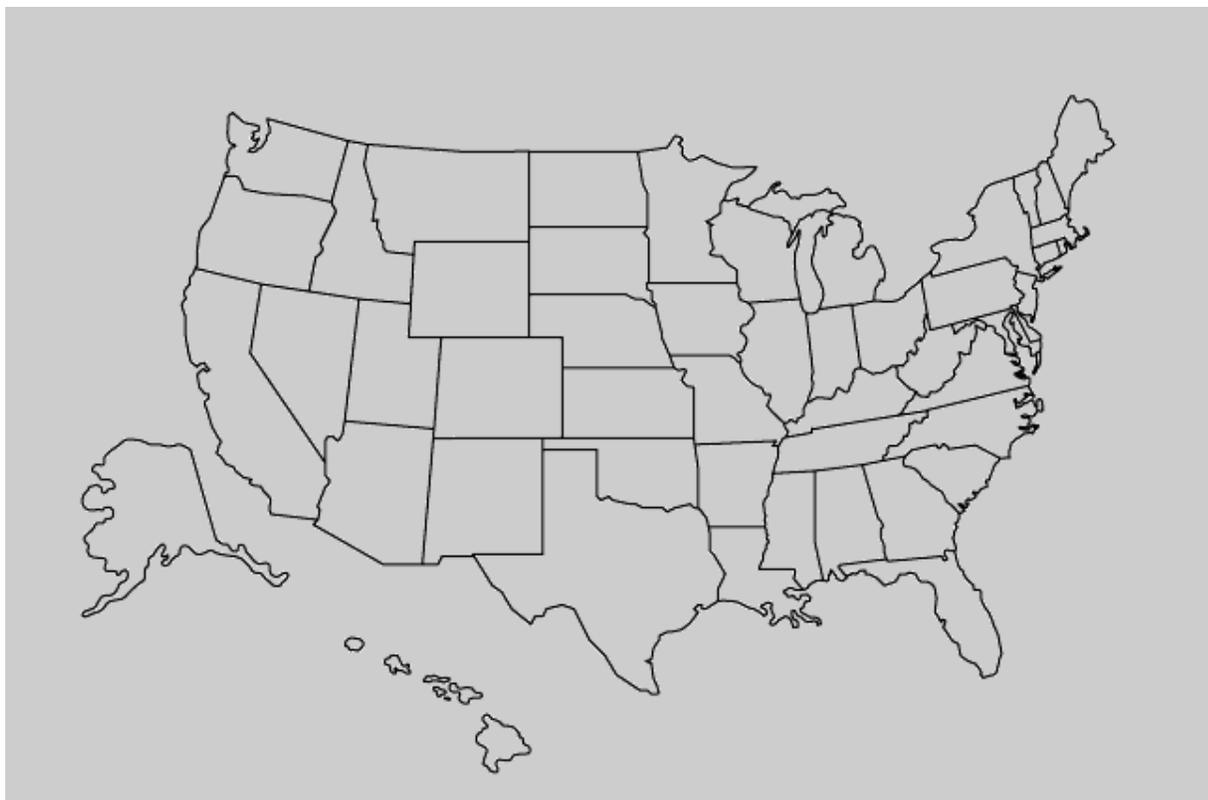
Extending the Lesson:

1. What do you now think about the carpetbaggers? Were they opportunistic businessmen who were trying to take advantage of Southerners after the Civil War? Use examples from the article in the Memphis Daily Journal and the son “The Carpetbaggers” to support your answer. Your answer needs to be 250 words at a minimum.
2. Primary Source— [“Scalawags” The Charleston advocate., September 12, 1868, Image 2](#)
If there is class time left, you could also incorporate this article about scalawags.
3. Have students research specific people who were considered to be carpetbaggers or scalawags.
4. Have students research for alternative viewpoints that are supportive of carpetbaggers and /or scalawags. Then have them create their own poster or political cartoon in support for one or both of them.

Activity 1:

Please mark on the map using a **RED** ARROW point from where the carpetbagger were to where they move after the Civil War.

Please mark on the map using **BLUE** DOTS to show the states where the scalawags lived.



Cut and paste the shapes and words below onto the map



Carpetbaggers

Scalawags

Bellringer: Carpetbaggers and Scalawags

First Impression: Use your prior knowledge to answer the following questions.

What is a carpetbagger? Define and draw a picture.

What is a scalawag? Define and draw a picture.

Now, after our discussion, answer the same questions. As we continue our investigation, add important notes about the carpetbaggers and scalawags.

What is a carpetbagger? Define and draw a picture.

What is a scalawag? Define and draw a picture.

Analysis of a Primary Source—Sheet Music

“The Carpetbagger”

1. What is the title of this song? Does it have a subtitle?
2. Using the song for context clues, what is a carpetbagger?
3. Explain how carpetbaggers are perceived by the author of the song.
4. What is the “tone” of the artwork on the cover?
5. How does the artwork on the cover of the song add to the theme of the lyrics to the song?
6. Is the artwork for the cover to the song serious, humorous, critical. Sentimental, romantic, patriotic, or something else? Provide an example from the picture to support your answer.
7. Find an example in the song where the author’s spelling or word choice reflects the time period?
8. Why is it important to know the historical context of the song?
9. What terms in the song do you not understand?
10. Examining the lyrics as poetry, identify one of the following elements: rhyme, meter, alliteration, simile, metaphor, symbolism, or tone.
11. What is the author’s purpose in writing this piece of music?

Analysis of a Primary Source—Newspaper Article
The Memphis Daily Journal—Carpetbaggers

1. What is the name of the article?
2. Who wrote the article?
3. When was the article written?
4. Does this article reflect the writer’s opinion on its topic, or is it purely objective? Give examples from the article to support your claim.
5. What is the purpose of this article?
6. Does the way the article is written encourage you to take sides on the issue? Explain by giving an example from the article.
7. How does the author feel about carpetbaggers? Explain by giving a few examples from the article.
8. What bias did the author bring to the writing of this article? Give at least one example from the article.
9. What did you learn about the topic or the time period from reading this article? Give at least two examples from the text.
10. What does this article teach you about the time period?
11. What mistaken impression of the period might the article give to outsiders?
12. What do you now think about the carpetbaggers? Were they opportunistic businessmen who were trying to take advantage of Southerners after the Civil War? Use examples from the article in the Memphis Daily Journal and the son “The Carpetbaggers” to support your answer. Your answer needs to be 250 words at a minimum.