

Fostering Historical Empathy

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enSDJd7WJiM>

Chris LaBrache: So the goal of this lesson is to talk about the fact that in Athens, even though it was a democracy, it's really just the male citizens who kind of run the show. Yet, there are other people who existed, a massive percentage of the population, who contributed and were involved in Athens running, even though they didn't really get any power or influence. So specifically talking about metics and enslaved peoples and women and they're there, but they get excluded a lot. And making them understand that from trying to make it their perspective.

Today we're going to be focusing on, like, the different classes, specifically in Athens. The 84%, which means that in the city state of Athens, women, enslaved people, and metics make up a huge majority of the population. There are four stations, even though there's only, like, three classes of people. You're actually sitting at the stations right now, and what you're going to do is you're going to gather information about these peoples and their role in Athenian society. The middle column right here asks you to look at, "What work or labor did they do?" "How did they participate or contribute to Athens?" So this is kind of like, "What is their involvement in the Athenian city state?" The second column, the far right one, is, "How were they excluded from Athens? How did the policy of Athens limit them?" You're going to go to the station. You're going to read the documents that are there, you're going to read the text that's there, gather information. Note form in these boxes, what you're learning about these people. And then after the three minutes you will rotate stations to the next location, bringing your paper and your writing implements.

Student 1: Can't participate in government.

Student 2: And also couldn't talk.

Student 1: Yeah, and also couldn't talk.

Student 3: First, I mean, they were free.

Student 4: What were some good things they did?

Student 5: They took care of the children, there could be something there.

Student 1: They received education at home, so could that be a good thing?

Student 6: They, the enslaved usually worked for male citizens for like workshopped for, for businessmen.

Chris LaBrache: Work and workshops for, what'd you say, businessmen?

Student 7: They were not allowed to participate until the Athenian democracy.

Chris LaBrache: Okay so they can't participate, which means they can't vote. They can't own land, and they have to pay that special tax.

Student 8: They were an important part of society and government.

Chris LaBrache: I think as far as content-wise, I was hearing pretty much what I was expecting from them. This isn't the first time the students have run into information about these different classes. And so their conversations, content-wise, were pretty much on target. They ran into some new details, especially the specifics of the percentage of the population, that they hadn't seen before. Which, I think to some of them was relatively eye-opening, seeing that they make up so much of the population and still don't get any power in the government.

Student 9: Like, they're not allowed to vote.

Chris LaBrache: That's an exclusionary thing. Okay, cool. Forced to do variety labor. All right. What did you find in your reading?

Student 10: I found that they were, like, considered property. And so they were like, forced to do all kinds of labor.

Chris LaBrache: Okay.

Student 10: Like ten years older? Yeah, maybe more.

Student 11: That's a lot.

Student 10: That's a lot!

Student 5: So like a 14-year-old getting married to like a 20-year-old?

Chris LaBrache: Probably higher.

Student 5: 30s?!

Chris LaBrache: That could happen.

Chris LaBrache: As you find stuff, like, you want to share out what you found. So like, I don't know, if you two want to attack the backside because Clark's already rifling through the front, and then find what you share with each other so you can get as much you can in the three

minutes. So let's not classify it as good or bad. They're not saying, that's actually not the question. How are they involved?

Chris LaBrache: I guess that's a fair statement, that being an enslaved human isn't good. Right. But that's not really what they're asking. So we have to make sure we're answering the questions being asked.

Student 4: So, if they can't participate in the government.

Student 2: They, um, forging crafts like shoes, shields, pottery.

Student 5: Okay. Many of the people were captured or kidnaped. Yeah. Well, like, I didn't want to be sold.

Student 1: I mean, that's how slavery in the United States worked, you could be sold off at any time.

Student 12: This is basically just saying the same thing as the other one was saying.

Chris LaBrache: So if you drew hearts, you're handling the information from the enslaved peoples. If you drew spades, y'all are doing the metics. And if you drew diamonds, you are handling the information from the women. You're going to share with us information about your class of people. But the way you're going to do it is in this, like, format of this TikTok, "of course", showing thing. You need to come up with five "of course" statements, and then the bottom one is a little bit different format. You should read what's there, and then you're going to assign it and you're all in your group going to have to share out one of your statements.

Chris LaBrache: I would say over 90% of the way that this lesson ran today was straight out of the Investigating History lesson flow, as you would call it. For the most part, I use their exact wording in the different stations, putting in some definitions of words that may be difficult. But in order to make the kids kind of get a different perspective and really own the personalities of the people that they're talking about, we decided to add at the end, in the "Putting It Together" part, sort of something that makes it more personal and kind of in their lives now. Hence why we use the TikTok like, "of course", routine. For this particular activity, instead of making a kind of the same old routine where they're going to just report out information, I wanted to make it more personalized. So, they could see that these are real people, and then having to deliver it through this TikTok like, "Of course, a metic would..." I felt it added another level, where they could see that it's something real that connects to them, and maybe possibly get to be like, "Oh, women in Athens, like you did run the show." Really buy into that, like historical empathy and kind of seeing that these are real people and it's not just facts and information.

Chris LaBrache: So you're going to say, like, "if women were included" and then you to like, how it would be different if they were involved.

Student 13: Rights and that they could do stuff.

Student 14: And, be a more equal...citizen! Yeah.

Student 15: There would be more equality and they would have a larger role in society.

Student 14: Having a larger role than just like, having babies.

Chris LaBrache: 25 seconds.

Chris LaBrache: If you prefer, you can stand up. You read yours unless you have it memorized, and then pass it to the next person who's going to do theirs next. And that's basically how we're going to do it. It's not going to be as fancy as the TikTok videos, but it's fancy enough because, I mean, let's be honest, this is way more informative and educational than those are. So, who wants to go first? Wow!

Student 11: Of course enslaved people in Athens were considered property.

Student 5: Of course, enslaved people in ancient Athens were treated poorly.

Student 16: Of course metics had to pay extra tax.

Student 17: Of course metics in Ancient Athens were an important part of Athenian economy.

Student 6: Of course metics couldn't own land.

Student 16: Of course metics were not citizens.

Student 18: If metics were included in Athenian democracy, there would be more diversity in the citizen's assembly, making the welfare increase, making everyone happy.

Student 13: Of course women in ancient Athens participate in religious rituals and festivals.

Student 4: Of course women in ancient Athens couldn't go to school and got educated at home.

Student 14: If women were included in Athenian democracy, there would be more equality and women could be a larger part of society.

Chris LaBrache: The big thing for me as a social studies teacher, especially in seventh grade, where kids are developing their identity and their personality and they love to question authority, uh, I like to give them a structure and tools to really be critical analyzers of details and information. We're trying to get the kids to own that these are like real humans who made society. I think is good because it gives them power to see that they can

actually influence change in their world. There's always things that can be improved, and so I'm trying to teach the kids to like, continually like be critical analyzers and question those details.