

LESSON 3

FISHING FOR LIVING DINOSAURS

Activity 3: Reeling in Oral Histories

Oral histories are a type of primary source that historians and others use to learn about events in the past. These first-hand accounts are recollections of people, experiences, emotions, and thoughts from a specific time or event in history. Oral histories have proved invaluable in understanding the history of lake sturgeon conservation in the Upper Midwest.

In this activity, students will individually or in a group create a series of questions for consideration in an oral history interview. Students will conduct an interview and create an oral history document that summarizes the information gathered.

Activity Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Oral history: a method of documenting lived experiences in history using audio and sometimes also video. **Cultural sensitivity:** the ability to respect values and beliefs of people from different cultural backgrounds than your own.

Interview subject: the person interviewed for an oral history.

Files Needed

- My Oral History (handout)

Materials Needed

- Recording device

Activity Steps

1. Provide students with a description or definition of the term “oral history.” Direct students to two oral histories collections related to sturgeon for inspiration:
 - a. “People of the Sturgeon” oral histories
go.wisc.edu/Octui9 or
 - b. “People of the Sturgeon” oral histories (abbreviated versions)
go.wisc.edu/j6i524
2. Work with the students to select a good interview subject for oral histories about lake sturgeon. A good approach would be for students to interview a family or community member. See “Choosing a topic and someone to interview,” in the “My Oral History” handout.
3. Work with students to prepare questions for their interview. Have them consider the question, “What do I want to learn?” Offer suggestions.
4. Once students complete their interview, review their draft summary.

Objectives

After participating in this activity, students can:

Develop an interview protocol, conduct an interview, and summarize the information gathered during the interview process.

Wisconsin Academic Standards

Covered

English Language Arts

SL.6.1.c, SL.7.1.c, SL.8.1.c, W.6.1, W.6.2.c, W.6.3, W.6.4, W.7.1, W.7.2.c, W.7.3, W.7.4, W.8.1, W.8.2.c, W.8.3, W.8.4

Great Lakes Literacy Principles

Principle 6

The Great Lakes and humans in their watersheds are inextricably interconnected.

Principle 7

Much remains to be learned about the Great Lakes.