

Where's the Heart of Florida?  
Unit Plan Overview

Day 1

**Diagnostic Assessment**

"Where's the Heart of Florida?" Pre-test

Day 2

**Lesson Plan**

MEMO from the Governor

Students are introduced to the Problem-Based Learning unit through this engagement activity. Students receive a mock memo from the governor to set the stage for the inquiry into the history of the current capital of Florida and criteria for proposing sites for the "heart of Florida" capital. Research Portfolios, for the purpose of recording student reflections, are created, a population chart and maps are distributed, and students work in small groups to write notes, comments, and observations using a T-chart. Formative assessment is conducted and student thinking is probed by asking questions that prompt students to share background knowledge of Florida's history, the cultural make-up, and geographic features of the state of Florida. Groups share and information is recorded on a class T-chart to begin building a blueprint for inquiry and investigation into the problem in the coming lessons.

Day 3

**Lesson Plan**

Navigating Through Capital History

This is the inquiry and investigation portion of this PBL unit. Throughout the course of this lesson, students work at defining the problem. Questions generated from the previous activity will provide a focus and set parameters for research. Students research the history of the present-day capital of Florida using the DOE Web site about the state capital and other appropriate materials to determine why the capital is where it is today. Inquiry includes geographic, industrial, economic, political, social, and cultural influences. Small groups are assigned a certain period in Florida's history to research. During the research process, students are encouraged to consider not only dates and times in history, but also people's perspectives toward the capital. Information gathered is recorded on a teacher-made timeline and in Research Portfolios. Once information is compiled, each group shares with the class.

## Day 4 - 5

### Lesson Plan

#### Top Secret Sensitive Information

Part I: This lesson is a continuation of students' investigation and inquiry into the problem, Where's the heart of Florida? Students engage in a brief review of the history of the present-day capital. Investigation of the criteria for evaluating sites for the "Heart of Florida" capital, using geographical and political features as starting points is initiated. Students work in small groups to brainstorm additional criteria. As groups share their findings with the whole class, connections between features are identified and classified as closely as possible to the following criteria: political, social, cultural, economic, and geographic features. Criteria are determined and students add this information to their Research Portfolios. A class survey is generated using word-processing software for student use as homework.

Part II: Continuing from the previous session, information from the surveys is collected and added to the "Compare / Contrast the Sites Chart" located in the students' Research Portfolios. Students record the site and reasons under the appropriate criteria.

### Student Web Lesson

The Student Web Lesson "The Face of Florida" explores the unique and diverse cultural make-up of Florida. It provides students with opportunities to engage in interactivity, which reinforces information gleaned throughout the lesson and provides practice as well as opportunities for application of information.

## Day 6

### Lesson Plan

#### What's the Problem?

This is the fourth in a series of lessons that involve the students as stakeholders in a Problem-Based Learning unit. Previously, students have been researching Florida's history, the problem, and gathering information to establish criteria for suggesting where the "heart of Florida" is located. During this lesson, students define the problem of "Where's the Heart of Florida?" and begin to formulate possible solutions using a graphic organizer.

## Day 7

### Lesson Plan

#### Mapping Possible Solutions

Students propose sites for the "heart of Florida" state capital by mapping collected data onto a Florida state map and recording data in a Travel Log according to the established criteria for locating the "heart" of Florida. Students explore and use appropriate units of measurement to determine distance as well as determine whether an accurate or estimated measurement is needed in this data collection process. Student reflections of the activities are recorded in the Reflections Log in their Research Portfolios. At this point, students begin to narrow their personal choices to one particular site, which leads into the next session during which they will begin creating a response to the governor of Florida's memo.

## Day 8 – 9

### **Lesson Plan**

Consider This!

Part I: This is the moment of truth! Students venture independently and select a site to propose to the governor for the “heart” of Florida in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Is Tallahassee still the “heart” of Florida as it was in 1823? Where is the “heart” of Florida today? Formative assessment continues throughout this session.

Part II: Students draft a simulated e-mail response in expository fashion to the governor of Florida that includes their recommendations for the “heart of Florida” capital and provides support based upon research and established criteria. Summative assessment of the students’ e-mail response to the governor is conducted at the conclusion of this session using the “E-Mail Communiqué Rubric” which is located in the Associated File of this lesson.

## Day 10

### **Debriefing Session**

The debriefing session facilitates closure to this Problem-Based Learning unit. However, the questions raised during the debriefing could lead to more inquiry and investigation in the future. During this session, discussion of information gleaned throughout the unit is facilitated as the teacher asks the following questions:

- What were your thoughts about the “heart of Florida” at the beginning of the unit?
- How have your thoughts changed about the “heart of Florida?”
- What have you learned?
- How did you learn it?
- If the capital was relocated to another city, what should be done with the capitol building in Tallahassee?

At the conclusion of the debriefing session, the teacher distributes the Study Guide for the Post-test. Each student should receive a copy at least 1 day prior to assessment. The Study Guide is located in the Post-test Assessment File.

## Day 11

### **Summative Assessment**

The post-test is a summative assessment. The teacher summatively assesses to evaluate student understanding of the information covered within this Problem-Based Learning unit. A post-test answer key is included in the Summative Assessment File.