

**WDSE Steamship America  
Lesson Plan**

**Intended Grade Level:**

7-8

**Subject Area(s):**

U.S. History, Minnesota History, Social Studies, Economics, Geography, Technology or Digital Media, Art, and English Language Arts

**MN State Standards:**

***Social Studies Standards***

Substrand 1: Historical Thinking Skills

Standard 1

Historians generally construct chronological narratives to characterize eras and explain past events and change over time.

Standard 2

Historical inquiry is a process in which multiple sources and different kinds of historical evidence are analyzed to draw conclusions about how and why things happened in the past.

***Economics Substrands and Standards***

Substrand 1: Economic Reasoning Skills

Standard 1: People make informed economic choices by identifying their goals, interpreting and applying data, considering the short-and long-run costs and benefits of alternative choices, and revising their goals based on their analysis.

***Strand 3 Geography***

Sub strand 3 Human Systems

Standard 7: The characteristics, distribution and complexity of the earth's cultures influence human systems (social, economic and political systems).

Standard 6: Geographic factors influence the distribution, functions, growth and patterns of cities and human settlements.

8.3.3.6.1 Describe how the physical and environmental features of the United States and Canada affect human activity and settlement.

7.3.3.6.1 Locate, identify and describe major physical features in Minnesota; explain how physical features and the location of resources affect settlement patterns and the growth of cities in different parts of Minnesota

Strand 3 Geography, Sub strand

Substrand 4: Human Environment Interaction

Standard 9: The environment influences human actions; and humans both adapt to and change, the environment.

Code 8.3.4.9.1 Analyze the interconnectedness of the environment and human activities (including the use of technology), and impact of one upon the other.

### ***English Language Arts Standards***

7.7.9.9 and 8.7.9.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

8.7.6.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

7.7.6.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

8.7.3.3 Write narratives and other creative texts to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

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### **National Standards:**

#### **Visual Arts**

Standard 1: Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

### **ISTE Nets Standards:**

#### **1. Creativity and Innovation**

Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology.

- a. Apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.
- b. Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.

#### **2. Communication and Collaboration**

Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.

- a. Interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.

### **Materials:**

Steamship America DVD and a device to play the video

Computers/laptops/tablets for the students

Classroom account to StoryBird

Writing Assignment Sheet (Storybird)

Movie Guides printed or online for the students

### **Objectives:**

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the society and economy of the North Shore of Lake Superior from 1900-1928.
- Students will create a story depicting life on the North Shore. The students will explain the role the *SS America* played in the life, culture, and economy of the North Shore of Lake Superior.
- Students will locate historical information related to their story.
- Students will construct a storyboard and demonstrate effective writing and story creation.

## **Procedure:**

### **Day 1: Introduction to the Steamship America**

- Have the students make a list of devices that are used to transport goods and materials from one location to another with a partner. Tell them to think out of the box (example: Amazon trying to use drones).
  - Each pair should have between 5-10 items.
  - After some time, have one person from each pair come up and write two of their items on the board.
  - Next have the students think of how transportation will change in the next 30 years and what new devices will be available.
    - Have them write those ideas on the other side of the board.
    - Then discuss the items listed and how they are used with the entire class.
    - Estimated time 10 minutes
- Introduce the project that will be done over the next three days: ***The Steamship America Storyboard Project (see attached sheet below).***
  - Show example to the class: <https://storybird.com/books/a-north-shore-adventure/?token=bkbhdu6v4k>
  - Estimated time: 5 minutes
- Introduce the *Steamship America* and the importance of the ship in transporting goods and people to the North Shore of Lake Superior.
  - Attached PowerPoint available if need be (5-10 minutes)
- Watch the first 20 minutes of the *Steamship America* documentary. Have the students use the Day One Movie Guide to help them know what to focus on during the video and to help them prepare for their project.
- Have the students meet with their group or partner to brainstorm ideas for their characters, how to explain the setting, and to think of a plotline. The groups can write down their information on a separate sheet or via a Google Document and submit it to the teacher (15 minutes).
- Closing questions (*estimated time 5 minutes – if extra time is needed*)
  - Who travelled on the *SS America*?
  - How did the *America* make life on the North Shore better for the early settlers?
  - What advantage did the *SS America* have over other boats that it competed against on Lake Superior?
  - How did people get their supplies on and off of the *America* when it was unable to dock?
  - How did the *SS America* boast Isle Royale?

## **Day 2: Life and Culture on the Steamship America**

- Have the students start out by meeting with their groups. Have them work on a laptop or computer to see what was happening in the Duluth and North Shore region in 1905. Have the students find 2-3 events and write them on a separate sheet of paper and turn in it. For example: ZenithCity.com would be a good site for the students to reference. (Estimated time 10 minutes)
- Play the next 25 minutes of the *Steamship America* documentary by WDSE.
  - Have the students fill out the Day 2 Movie Guide.
- Have the students complete the Day two objectives for their project. (Estimated time 20 minutes).
  - Bring the class back together to go over the closing questions for the day (estimated time 5 minutes).
    - What challenges do the captains have to overcome when navigating on Lake Superior? What strategies did *Steamship America* captains use while on the big lake?
    - How did the *America* assist the people living on the North Shore during good times and bad?
    - What luxuries were on the *SS America*?

## **Day 3: The Sinking of the SS America**

- Hand out a list of adjectives to the students (one per group or partner). Have them circle words that they can use in their storyboard (estimated time 5 minutes).
  - [https://www.mobap.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/list\\_of\\_adjectives.pdf](https://www.mobap.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/list_of_adjectives.pdf)
- Watch the end of the WDSE *Steamship America* documentary (estimated time 15 minutes).
  - Have the students fill out the Day Three Video Guide. Make sure to give a few minutes when the video has concluded for students to finish their answers.
- Have the students meet with their groups to finish their Storyboard project. Their sheet will explain the objectives for day 3 (estimated time 25 minutes).
- Have the students give a small presentation explaining their character and plotline to the class (they do not need to show their Storyboard, just discuss their main storyline). (Estimated time 20 minutes)
  - Other groups can ask the presenters questions for clarification.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour: \_\_\_\_\_

## Day 2 Video Guide for the Steamship America

Answer the following questions in sentence or bullet point form. Each question is worth 2 points.

1. What happened to the *Steamer Mataafa* in 1905? Why did the *America* make it into the bay while the *Mataafa* did not?

2. What role did the *SS America* play in the small communities on the North Shore? Give 2 examples explaining the importance of the *America*.

3. What happened in Grand Marais in 1908? What role did the *America* play during the event?

4. How did former travelers or employees describe the *Steamship America*? Give 2 examples.

5. What changes happened in the 1920s that started to endanger the *Steamship America*?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Hour: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Day 3 Video Guide for the Steamship America**

Answer the following questions in sentence or bullet point form. Each question is worth 2 points.

1. How did the *Steamship America* sink? What happened in the early morning hours off June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1928?
2. Why is the sinking debated? What happened to the First Mate Wick?
3. Why was the *Steamship America* not floated? What stopped the project?
4. Who owns the *SS America* today? Are there any other plans to raise the ship?
5. What work has been done to preserve the *SS America* as a dive site?

## Steamship and the North Shore Storyboard Project

In a small group or with a partner, create a storyboard via Storybird.com or a similar site depicting life on the North Shore of Lake Superior or have your character work aboard the *Steamship America* in 1905. Create a setting, plot line, characters, and include historical information and terms. Use the terms box for assistance.

You will add to the story throughout the next three days as you learn more information about the North Shore and the *Steamship America*.

### Terminology

Captain	Duluth	Logging Industry
First mate	Grand Marais	Fishing Industry
Steward	Isle Royale	Shipwreck
Stewardess	Tobin Harbor	Navigation
Mate	Split Rock Lighthouse	Echo Locate
Deckhand	Two Harbors	Knot or Nautical Mile
Steamship America	Grand Portage	Excursion Boat
SS Mataafa	Fort William, Canada	Draft
	Washington Island	Barometer
	Norway	Anemometer

### Day One Checklist

\_\_\_\_\_ Title (1 point)

\_\_\_\_\_ Main Characters (3 points)

Describe the characters and make sure to give your main character a name.

- How will the reader relate to the character? What traits will make this character come alive?
- Are they a saint or are they a villain?
- How does the character fit into society and the time period?

\_\_\_\_\_ Setting (2 points)

Describe the area where the story takes place through words or the visuals used in the Storyboard.

\_\_\_\_\_ Plot or Storyline (4 points)

- What is the goal of the character? What must the character(s) overcome?

\_\_\_\_\_ Day One Total (10 points)

Day one's work can be written out, made into an outline, or put into a basic storyboard that can be built upon.

## Day Two

After watching some more of the video on the *Steamship America*, add more historical detail to your story and more detailed descriptions of the setting and characters. Make sure that your character is on the *Steamship America* during the story. Add terminology that also relates to the North Shore and to the *SS America*. Use 5 from the list above. Put your story into Storyboard format.

\_\_\_\_\_ Chose appropriate pictures or drawings to accompany your story (5 points).

\_\_\_\_\_ Type or speak (using speech to text technology) your story into Storybird or similar website. Each group should have 6 slides by the end of class (5 points).

\_\_\_\_\_ Historical Context (5 points)

Story demonstrates an understanding of the history of the North Shore and the *SS America*.

## Day 3

Time to finish the project! Work hard to make all the pieces come together and submit your storyboard to the teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_ Length, Grammar and Mechanics (5 points)

The final product will be a minimum of 8 scenes long when written in a Storyboard format.

Students will proof their work and fix any grammar, spelling, or mechanical errors.

\_\_\_\_\_ Characters (5 points)

Characters match the time period and the personalities of people associated with the *SS America*.

\_\_\_\_\_ Setting (5 points)

Matches 1905 North Shore culture and life.

Use various adjectives to describe the places and events in your story.

\_\_\_\_\_ Overall Writing and Storyline (10 points)

Story shows evidence of knowledge on the *Steamship America*.

The storyline or plot has a conclusion that matches the theme of the story.

Story shows creativity and critical thinking.

Historical content is relevant to the storyline.