Connecting Themes in History

Learning Objective

Students will create an idea map to identify themes and ideas connecting the biographies of one or more Wisconsinites.

Sample Essential Questions

How are people connected in time through history? How
am I connected to those from the past?

Standards

Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in Social Studies

B.4.4 Compare and contrast changes in contemporary life with life in the past by looking at social, economic, political, and cultural roles played by individuals and groups

Common Core in English Language Arts

RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text

RI.4.2 Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text
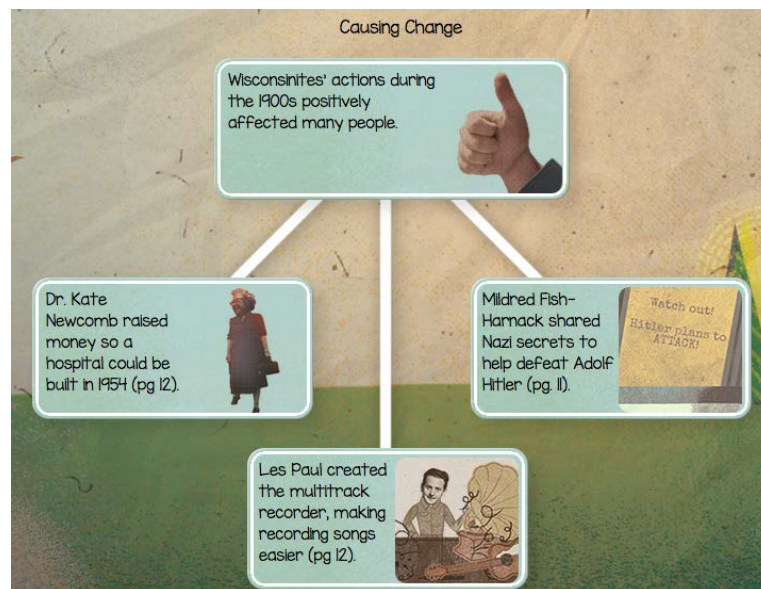
Procedure

This activity can be done using any of the following idea maps: **Web, Topic Chart, and Venn Diagram.**

Instruct students to choose two or three people featured in *Wisconsin Biographies*. Then have students read the biography or watch the animation of the selected people. Next, tell students to analyze the texts for which themes and ideas were shared in the stories. Finally, instruct students to create an idea map using images and text to show the stories' common themes and ideas.

As a modification, students may choose to do this activity using information about them, connecting themselves to the themes and ideas in *Wisconsin Biographies*.

Example

Identifying Significant Events

Learning Objective
> Students will analyze a text for significant events and sequentially organizing the events in an idea map in order to summarize a biography.

Sample Essential Questions
> What makes something significant or important?
> What causes change?

Standards
> **Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in Social Studies**
>> B.4.2   Use a timeline to select, organize, and sequence information describing eras in history
>> B.4.3   Examine biographies, stories, narratives, and folk tales to understand the lives of ordinary and extraordinary people, place them in time and context, and explain their relationship to important historical events
>> B.4.7   Identify and describe important events and famous people in Wisconsin and United States history
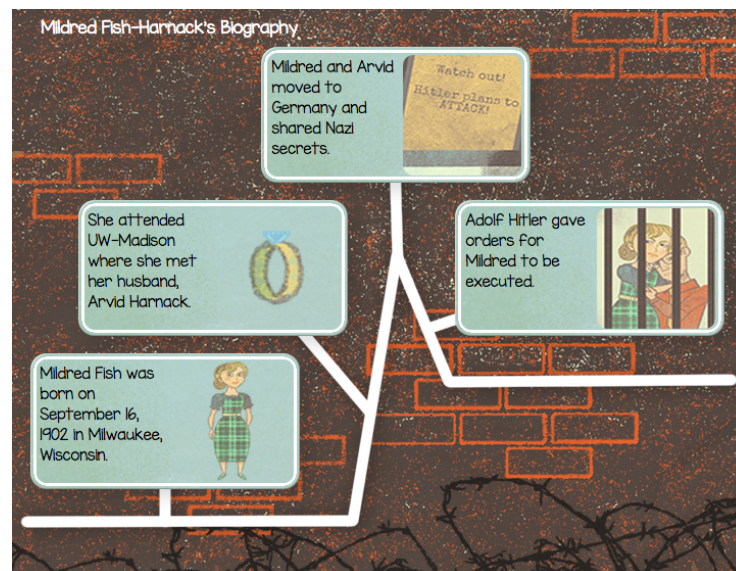>
> **Common Core in English Language Arts**
>> RI.4.5   Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
>> RI.4.9   Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Procedure
> This activity can be done using any of the following idea maps: **Plot diagram and Timeline.**
>
> Have students either read a biography or watch an animation from *Wisconsin Biographies*. While they are watching or reading, tell the learners to make a list of the story's important events. Then instruct students to circle or highlight the three to five most significant events. Finally, have students use *Idea Mapper* to create a graphic organizer detailing the selected events.

Example

Analyzing Change: Cause and Effect

Learning Objective

Students will identify actions that led to other events and organize them in an idea map.

Sample Essential Questions

How can examining cause-effect relationships from the past help you understand the present? What motivates people to take action?

Standards

Wisconsin Model Academic Standards in Social Studies

B.4.1   Identify and examine various sources of information that are used for constructing an understanding of the past, such as artifacts, documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, paintings, architecture, oral presentations, graphs, and charts

B.4.7   Identify and describe important events and famous people in Wisconsin and United States history

Common Core in English Language Arts

RI.4.1   Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.4.5   Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.

Procedure

This activity can be done using the following idea maps: **Cause-Effect**

Instruct learners to read a biography or watch an animation from *Wisconsin Biographies*. Next, have them identify one to three instances of cause and effect relationships in the text. If students are reading a biography, have them cite the page number where they discovered the information. Students must then use text and images to describe the events (or the *cause*) and the effects using the Idea Mapper's Cause-Effect chart. They will also include the biography's page number if applicable.

Example