

**“It’s News to Me!”
Teaching with Colorado’s Historic Newspaper Collection
Model Lesson Format**

Lesson Title:

The Crime Beat



(graphic from BlogSkins.com)

Subject and Grade Level:

Social Studies Grades 5-8

Focus of Lesson: A brief explanation of what students are to learn in this lesson (content and/or skills). What is the purpose of the lesson?

Survey the Colorado Historic Newspaper Collection to get an idea of the types of crimes reported in old time papers. Students will then compare this to current newspaper reporting of crime. What crimes are the same and which crimes are reported most frequently? How was punishment handed out then and now?

Standards Assessed: Which standards will you be assessing in this lesson? Identify the content area, the standard number and any key components or benchmarks that are applicable.

Reading and Writing Standard 1: Students read and understand a variety of materials.

Reading and Writing Standard 4: Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.

Reading and Writing Standard 5: Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference and technological sources.

History Standard 2: Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.

History Standard 3: Students understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time.

Information Literacy Standard 1: The information literate student accesses information efficiently and effectively.

Assessment: Explain the assessment. (Include the formal 'assessment assignment' and any forms, worksheets, etc. in the Materials Section)

Daily assessment for Days 1 & 2 are the News Article Analysis worksheets, three each day covering the 5 W's. The final assessment will be a Venn diagram students will create with the Kidspiration (or Inspiration) software program.

Standards Addressed: Which standards will you be addressing (but not assessing) in this lesson? Identify the content area, the standard number and any key components or benchmarks that are applicable.

N/A

Time: The number of class periods required for the lesson as well as the length of class period.

Three 45-minute class sessions in the computer lab.

Materials / Teacher Preparation Section: List the technology, handouts, chart paper, text resources, etc. needed to complete the lesson. Include what you need to do to prepare ahead of time for your students to complete the lesson.

BEFORE beginning the Crime Beat project, have students complete the Crime Beat Vocabulary sheet.

Technology needed: You'll need a computer lab with enough stations for each student and a projection system for the teacher.

- You'll need an email address and password to login to the Post and News electronic editions. Contact the Post News Education Department for this login/password.
- If you have a school website, create a new page and post this project with all the hyperlinks so the students can "click and go" without typing in the URL.

9 Copies of the Crime Beat Newspaper Worksheet for each student.

Possible Procedures: Enumerate the procedure teachers can follow to teach the lesson to students. Provide the URL for the digital primary sources that you will use.

Day 1

I. Introduction to project (10 minutes)

Class discussion: Why study crime? Why use historic newspapers?

What will crime articles from then, and now tell us?

Read the first five paragraphs from the book *Covering Crimes for Justice* by Dave Krajicek, available at

http://www.justicejournalism.org/crimeguide/chapter01/chapter01_pg05.html.

II. Hands-on introduction to the Colorado Historic Newspaper Collection

(CHNC): approximately 10 minutes

- A. Browse
- B. Search
- C. Browse with map

III. First crime articles (10 minutes)

These three articles from CHNC will give students the look and feel of crime reporting in the late 19th century.

1. "Alleged Rustler" from the July 4, 1896 *Aspen Weekly Times* on page 4.
2. "Head Split Open" from the April 7, 1900 *Breckenridge Bulletin* on page 3.
3. "Train Robbery" from the June 10, 1893 *Aspen Weekly Times*.

IV. First class assessment (15 minutes)

- A. News Article Analysis Worksheet (attached)

Have students fill out a worksheet for each of the three crime articles.

Day 2

I. Review Browse All and Search All functions. (10 minutes)

II. Browsing for Bad Guys (15 minutes)

A. Have students use the Browse All function to find three more examples of crime reported in the historic newspapers. Give students the option of browsing by the map, or choosing a particular city. For each crime, students should fill out a News Article Analysis Worksheet.

III. Search for particular crimes. (15 minutes)

A. Search the Castle Rock Journal for lynching.
--in the search box, put lynching. (singular, no quotes)
--choose the Castle Rock Journal
--click Entire collection, press GO

Have students read three articles from the search results.

IV. 5 minute wrap-up

Day 3

I. Drawing crime conclusions

A. Finish lynching topic (10 minutes)

Students should read these two articles to finish up the Day 2 topic.

“An Illinois Lynching” in the *Aspen Weekly Times* on February 16, 1896 on page 1.

“Lynching” in the *Elbert County Banner* on July 31, 1903 on page 4.

Lead a short discussion on the lynching topic and how rampant this kind of “frontier justice” was in the late 19th century. Make the transition to today’s world and begin browsing current news web sites.

II. Browse current newspapers (20 minutes)

A. Have students go to the new Rocky Mountain News / Denver Post online edition (www.post-newscustomercare.com) and scan the papers for crime news. Fill out three Crime Beat worksheets.

B. For a more of a neighborhood crime perspective have students go to the Rocky Mountain News’ website YourHub.com

-- after logging on to YourHub, select state and a neighborhood
-- under Featured Postings, click on More Postings.
-- on the right side under View Stories by Categories, click News
-- again under View Stories by Category, click Crime

III. Pull it all together (15 minutes)

A. Students make a Venn diagram showing what crimes reported in newspapers fall into the “historic crime”, “modern crime” or both. My students will use Kidspiration software, but Kid Pix could also be used.

Name _____
Date _____ Room _____

Crime Beat Project - News Article Worksheet

Newspaper: _____

Page: _____

Headline: _____

Date: _____

What type of crime is reported?

Was the crime local, national or international?

The 5 "W's" and "H"

Who was the article about?

What happened?

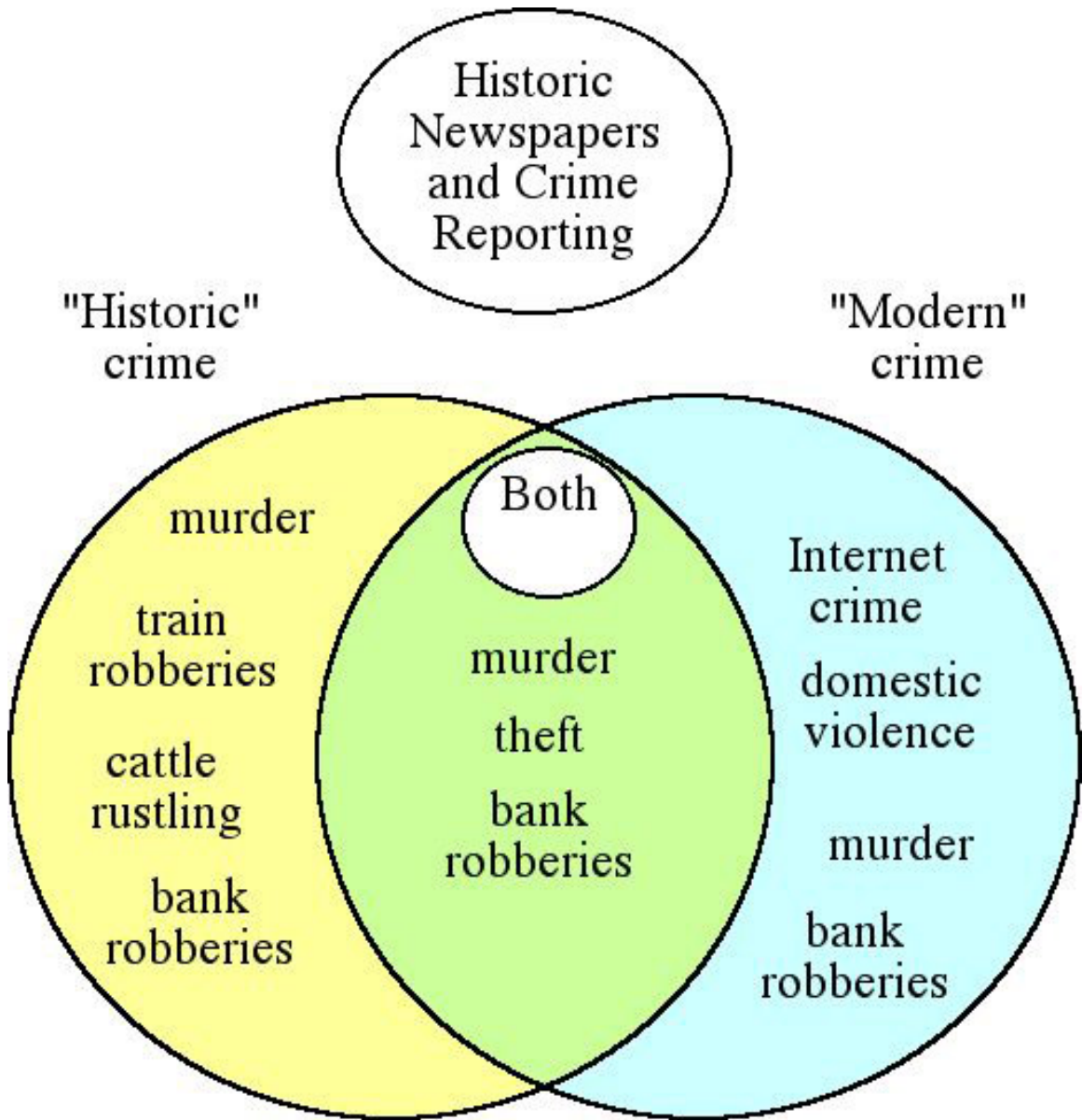
Where did it take place?

When did this occur?

Why was this crime committed?

How was the crime committed?

Crime Beat Venn Diagram



Name _____ Date _____

The Crime Beat—Vocabulary

Students could use the online [Yahooligans dictionary](#) to look up the following words:

1. rustle

2. lynch

3. engage

4. reassure

5. heinous

6. larceny

7. warrant

8. inquest

9. testimony

10. audacity

11. In the book *Covering Crime and Justice*, it says people who read crime stories like “the grass to be browner on the other side of the fence”. Explain.