

Staff Class to the Past

Cady Staff, Humanities, High Tech Middle Chula Vista



Have you ever wanted to go back in time to meet someone from the past? Fifty-six eighth graders at High Tech Middle Chula Vista had the opportunity to do just that. First, we had a Socratic Seminar to determine the sixteen most significant events in U.S. history. Students then grouped themselves by events that interested them. Within groups, each student chose a historical figure and researched his or her life. Then, we “constructed” a wormhole to travel back in time (via time-traveling bus) to experience our chosen events firsthand. Students wrote multiple drafts to document their mind-blowing adventures throughout U.S. history. The result was a 164-page published book full of time-traveling escapades. The 8th graders also created an exhibition for elementary students where the younger kids boarded a cardboard bus, crawled through a wormhole and emerged on the other side to meet 8th graders dressed up as their historical figures.

Student Reflection

What inspired us to write a book about time travel? On a Monday morning our humanities teacher, Ms. Staff, came into class more excited than usual. She began to explain a dream she had over the weekend. In her dream, the entire eighth grade class went back in time with her to visit the 16 most important events in U.S. history. At first we thought she was kidding; then we realized she was serious! She was serious about making this our next history project. Thus, the time travelling began. We split into groups and chose our important events in history. Through careful and deliberate research, each person in the group wrote a vignette about their “experience” with an important historical character from the past. We put them all together and... Voila! Our book was ready. Ready for editing that is. We spent countless hours re-reading and editing, looking for grammatical errors, accuracy and clarity. Each one of us read and edited rough drafts countless times before we felt it was perfect.

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(Excerpt from Staff Class to the Past Student Editors' Introduction)

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