

Middle School Lesson:

Anticipatory (opening) set:

Ask students to create a diagram which shows the order or structure of their school. If they were to put someone at the top of the order, who would it be? Who has the most power? Who comes after that person at the top and so on?

Direct Instruction:

Discuss with students their diagrams and how they show a social order or hierarchy. Everyone in the school has a particular place on the social hierarchy and that place determines their role, responsibilities, and privileges. Explain that society also has a social order and that order has changed over the course of American history.

Video:

Show *The Accused* to the class. As they view the video, students will create a diagram in which they place the individuals from the video into a social order. After viewing the video, students will summarize the main idea of the performance and generate questions about the Albany Fire of 1793 based on their summary of the video.

Document Analysis:

Explain to students that they will now be asked to analyze the evidence from the fire and determine whether the three slaves were treated fairly in the process of their conviction and execution. After careful analysis, students create a timeline of events related to the fire to demonstrate chronological understanding.

Assessment:

Write an argumentative essay setting the historical background, discussing the treatment of the three slaves accused of setting the fire, and determining the fairness of their treatment. Be sure to cite evidence from the documents to support claims made in the essay.

For each document, ask the following questions:

1. Who wrote this document?
2. Why was this document written?
3. When was this document written?
4. What is the main idea of this document?
5. Is the information in this document accurate?
6. How does the information in this document compare to the information found in the other documents?

Extension Activities:

1. Divide students into groups of 4 or 5. Have each group write and perform a new dramatization of the events following the Albany Fire of 1793 from a

different perspective than that of the video *The Accused*. Students should use evidence from the documents to support their interpretation of the events. Conclude this activity with a whole-class discussion about how these perspectives varied based on the individual.

2. Students can practice higher level analysis by comparing the evidence from the primary sources to the interpretation given by the secondary sources. In this activity, students will evaluate the validity of the secondary sources.