

Applying a Content Enhancement Routine

Content

Social Studies – World Geography

Grade Level

9th graders

Unit

Russia and Central Asia

Five Big Ideas

1. Physical environment/landscape of Russia and Central Asia
2. Russia's environmental problems
3. Russian Revolution
4. Impact of communism on the region
5. Aspects of Russian culture

Challenges the Big Ideas Pose to Students with Disabilities

(Numbers correspond with those above)

1. This big idea is focused on learning what the physical landscape looks like (where are the mountain ranges, rivers, plateaus, etc.). This idea requires a lot of memorization that students struggle with. It is difficult for them to make connections and relate to physical geography.
2. Students will have a difficult time relating to this information because the environmental problems faced in Russia and Central Asia are not faced by Americans.
3. Students will be challenged by the ideas of the Russian Revolution because this idea pulls from other ideas and previous units on cultural, economic, and political geography. Students need to make the connections and use prior knowledge gained from the course.

4. Communism is always a tough concept for students to comprehend for a couple reasons. First, they cannot relate to it. Communism is so far from the economic and political systems that they have experienced that the students cannot relate. Second, communism is more than just an economic system, so the concept of communism requires students to pull from prior knowledge and apply it to a theory.
5. This big idea poses problems from students in making connections between words and images. Students are shown pictures of aspects of Russian culture and need to associate the image with the name of it and what it represents. Often times, the students will recall the image, but cannot make the connection to the significance of the cultural item (St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow and being able to identify the dominate religion of Russian as Eastern/Russian Orthodox Christianity).

Content Enhancement Routine

The content enhancement routine that I have been using in my classes for the past two weeks is the Frame Routine (I am currently receiving professional development from the University of Kansas and James Madison University to become a certified professional developer of the Content Enhancement Routines they have developed. Our school is also implementing the Content Literacy Continuum (CLC)). The Framing Routine is a part of the broader Content Enhancement Routines developed by the University of Kansas.

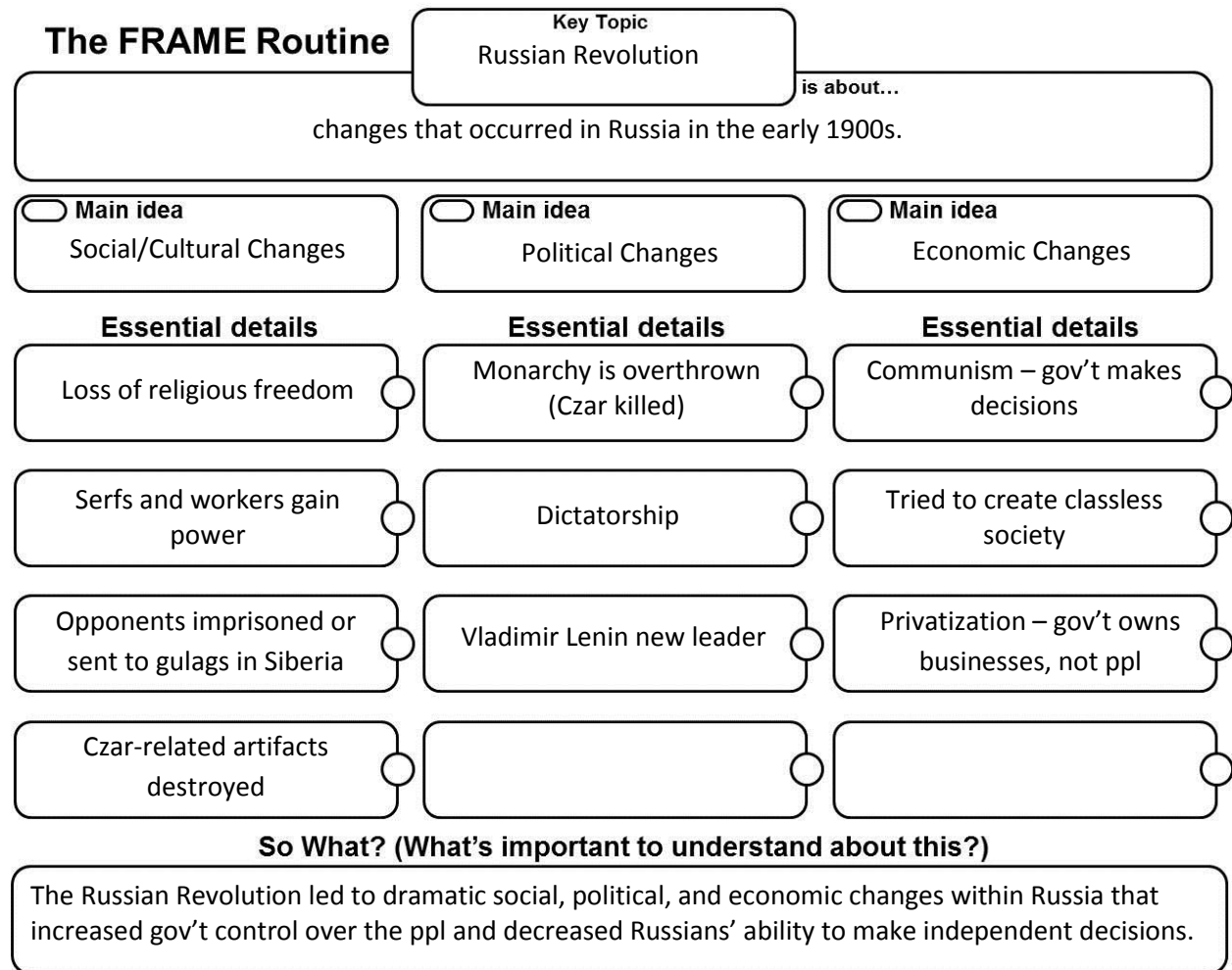
Incorporation of the Frame Routine

I am incorporating the Framing Routine to teach the big ideas identified above. At the conclusion of teaching the big ideas (which usually takes two classes each), the students and I co-construct a Frame for the big idea (called a Focus Topic in the Framing Routine). I provide the students with the focus topic and together we come up with the main ideas of the focus topic, followed by the essential details of each main idea. The essential details for each main idea are identified by the students. I put them in group of two or three of varying ability levels and have them discuss and identify what the essential details are. After a given period of time, we come back together and complete the Frame as a class. The third step is to come up with a "So What Statement" that identifies why this information is really important and why they need to understand and comprehend it. The last step is to extend the learning beyond the Frame. This Framing Routine is effective because it organizes the information that the students have in their head. It also helps the students by making the connections from one unit to another. The more Frames we make, the more they see the connections to previous material. The Frames help the student figure out what is really important out of all the information they are taught. It

helps students weed out the information that is not critical for comprehension. We have also begun placing pictures in the Frame to help students make connections between images and terms and ideas. This especially helps with the aspects of Russian culture.

Example of the Frame Routine

This is a Frame that was co-constructed with my students last week.



Extended Learning

1. Link the Russian Revolution to the current revolutions spreading across Southwest Asian and North Africa (Egypt, Libya, and Yemen in particular).
2. Video – *The Last Czar of Russia*