

Electrifying Minnesota

A traveling exhibit from the Minnesota History Center and The Bakken Museum.

Blackout! Life without Electricity

Overview:

This activity has the students reflect about life without electricity.

Fifteen minute version:

As a whole class or in small groups, have students brainstorm all the things they use electricity for. Then have them share experiences where they have had to make do without electricity (Ex. during a power outage or a camping trip). Have them rate on a scale of 1-5 how much they would miss the things that use electricity. What could they use or do instead for each item if they didn't have electricity?

Uses electricity	How much would you miss it? 1-not really, 5-so much	To do the same thing, I could use...
Example: Lights	During the day: 1, At night: 4	Candles/flashlight

Extend to class period or homework:

Many good books relate what it's like to live without electricity. Read a book together in class and return to the chart to see if the characters' experiences have given the students anything to add or change. Or let the students choose a book to take home to read and then write a response to.

Reflection Questions

- Was living without electricity a choice for the people in the book?
- How were their lives different from yours because they lived without electricity?
- Was there anything about how they lived without electricity that sounded appealing to you?

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Resources:

Books including a power outage:

When Charlie McButton Lost Power by Suzanne Collins

Meet the Austins by Madeleine L'Engle (novel--Chapter 4)

Novels about a time before electricity was common in homes:

Little House books by Laura Ingalls Wilder

Betsy-Tacy books by Maud Hart Lovelace

Dragonwings by Lawrence Yep

Novels about survival in the wilderness without electricity

My Side of the Mountain by Jean Craighead George

Hatchet by Gary Paulsen

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Worksheet for Blackout

Uses electricity	How much would you miss it? 1-not really, 5-so much	To do the same thing, I could use...
Example: Lights	During the day: 1, At night: 4	Candles/flashlight