

India Lesson 2

A Spicy Story that Sells

The Basics

Objective: To introduce students to the ancient spice trade.

Performance of Skill Expectations/Enduring Understandings: The students will gain understanding of the importance of spices to the ancient world.

Prerequisite Lessons: none.

Estimated Materials Preparation Time: 10 minutes.

Duration: Instructor discretion.

Materials Provided in the Box: Jars with spices and herbs, Spice Stories of Herodotus Sheet, Spice Trade Information Sheet, Artifact Information Sheets, and Story Elements Sheet.

Materials to be Provided by the Instructor: A smartboard, chalkboard, or easel pad, and associated writing materials; paper and writing instruments for each group; a small paper plate for each group; a world map or globe, if possible.

Other Notes: The participants will work in groups for this lesson.

Concepts/Vocabulary

- Spices: pungent or aromatic foods of vegetable origin, as pepper, cinnamon, or cloves.
- Herb: a flowering plant whose stem above ground does not become woody; such a plant when valued for its medicinal properties, flavor, scent, or the like.

Procedure

Preparation:

1. Have one paper plate ready for each group. Each plate should have on it about 1 teaspoon of one of the spices/herbs provided. A copy of the written description of the group's spice/herb should be placed with the plate.
2. Have paper and writing materials and the Story Elements Sheet ready to distribute to each group.

Introduction/Instruction:

1. Use these questions to start a discussion on spices/herbs:
 - What are they? How do we use them?
 - How many spices/herbs can you name? (Make a list as they are given.)
 - What are your favorite spices and herbs? What recipes do you use them in?
 - Where do spices and herbs come from?

Development:

1. Using the information from the Spice Trade Information Sheet, introduce the participants to the importance of spices in the ancient world.
2. Using the information from the Spice Stories of Herodotus Sheet, introduce the participants to the ancient tradition of selling spices by telling wild stories of how the spices needed to be collected. Read the two stories to the participants.
3. Divide the participants into groups of 4-6 people. Give each group one of the small paper plates with the spice/herb, the spice/herb description, and the Story Elements Sheet.
4. Give the groups 20 minutes to work together to write a short story about how their spice/herb is gathered. It should be a complete fabrication, like the stories recorded by Herodotus. Have the groups use the appearance and smell of their spice/herb as a guide.

Closure: Have each group read its story aloud.

Reflection: Generate a short discussion with these questions:

- What was hard about writing the story?
- What was easy?
- Do you think you would have believed a person long ago telling you a story like yours? What do you think you would have known about faraway places back then?

Assessment: Did the participants appear to understand the assignment? Did they complete the assignment and work well together?