



**Prairie Voices: An Iowa Heritage Curriculum** consists of two parts—a curriculum and a timeline. The curriculum has 52 model lesson plans in topical areas, including the land and built environment, native people, migration and interaction, organization and communities, work, and folk life. In addition, the curriculum includes an overview of Iowa history, ideas and examples for teaching local history, a list of resources, Iowa facts, timeline trivia, and additional classroom activities gleaned from several sources.

These lesson plans can be geared to any grade level. The curriculum is multidisciplinary so educators can incorporate state and local history into the study of other subject areas, including literature, math, science, social science, creative writing, art, music, and industrial arts. **Prairie Voices** encourages the use of local historical resources to tell the story of Iowa.

The second part of **Prairie Voices** is a 15-foot timeline of Iowa history. The timeline delineates Iowa events and leaves space for locally significant historical events to be recorded directly onto its laminated surface. In addition, the timeline includes important world and national events that can serve as benchmarks for placing Iowa events in historical context.

Since history is at once a body of information and a process for inquiring about the past, this curriculum incorporates both perspectives. The overview of Iowa history, background information in each lesson plan, timeline events, fun facts, and historical moments all provide the factual content and framework of events, people, and concepts that are critical to the understanding history.

By introducing students to the process of historical inquiry, the activities in each lesson plan and the attached activities directly involve young people in the discovery of Iowa history.

The **Prairie Voices** curriculum emphasizes three levels of skill development. First, it underscores basic skills, including reading, writing, oral communication, library skills and use of reference materials, the ability to distinguish between primary and secondary sources, the use of charts and timelines, and vocabulary development.

In addition, **Prairie Voices** introduces and reinforces several higher level skills. Students learn to: collect information from a variety of sources through observation and interviews; compile, organize, and evaluate information; compare and contrast; draw conclusions or inferences from evidence; consider alternative conclusions; and use creative thinking.

Finally, students develop a third level of history skills, including the ability to: distinguish fact from fiction or opinion; develop a sense of place; understand the significance of the past to their own lives; develop historical empathy by perceiving how past events and issues were experienced by people at the time; develop geographical awareness; make generalizations; recognize various points of view; understand change and cause and effect; recognize how values and traditions influence history; develop a sense of chronology; and understand events in context.

We hope that through **Prairie Voices** Iowa history will become a story well-told. Learning Iowa history means asking questions about people and events, searching for the consequences of those events, and understanding the many sides of the Iowa story. We hope students will understand that Iowa history is about real people in real places making real decisions that had real consequences.

And finally, we hope that by listening to these many **Prairie Voices**, students will come to appreciate that the real people of Iowa's past had the same feelings, hopes, dreams, and aspirations as do the students of today.