

Software and Society Lesson Plan

Title: Software and Society		Grade Range: 6-8
Integrated Curriculum Area: Language Arts	Concepts and Competencies: Research, Oral Communication	Tool: Computer
Summary: Students choose an application, research and interview to find out how the application is used, describe how their application could help complete a chosen task, and hold a class debate about which programs are best for certain tasks.		

Warm-up

- Make sure students have completed the EasyTech lesson **Computer Fundamentals: Software, Buttons, and Controls** and its prerequisites.
- Teacher holds a class discussion about how different computer programs help people complete tasks. What are some examples? What qualities are important when deciding which program is most appropriate to complete a task?
- Teacher reviews the basic functions of software such as word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, graphics, database, email, and web browsing programs.
- Teacher writes on the board a list of tasks that can be completed using computer software, such as writing a report, organizing large amounts of data, researching information, writing a message to someone, creating a poster, organizing images, and drawing a picture.
- Teacher puts students into groups so that each group in the class represents a different computer application.

Activity

Students choose applications and research how they are used by society:

- Each group chooses a type of software.
- Students describe their personal observations about how the type of software helps people complete tasks.
- Students research the different ways the software is used and record two examples.
- Students write interview questions to help them find out how students in another group use the software.
- Each group interviews two students from a different group.
- Students take notes during the interviews.
- Each group chooses a task from the board that they think could be completed well using their software.
- Each group creates an outline describing how and why their chosen software could be used to complete the chosen task.
- Students use their outlines to present oral reports to the class.

Wrap-up

- Students take notes on another student's presentation.
- Students hold a class debate about which software is most appropriate for each task, based on what they learned in the presentations.

Extension

- Students interview two adults with the same questions they used to interview the students, and make a comparative outline that describes the differences and similarities between students' and adults' responses.

Name: _____

Software and Society Activity Page

Write your computer application below.

Think about and discuss how your computer application helps people complete tasks. Write your personal observations below.

Research how your application is used by society. Use sources such as magazines, books, or websites. Describe your findings below.

Source: _____

Application Use: _____

Source: _____

Application Use: _____

Think of three interview questions to ask two students from a different group about how they use your software to complete tasks. Write your interview questions and the responses below.

Question 1: _____

Response 1: _____

Response 2: _____

Question 2: _____

Response 1: _____

Response 2: _____

Question 3: _____

Response 1: _____

Response 2: _____

Choose a task that you read about in your research that could be completed well using your software. Write your task below:

Create an outline below that describes how and why your software would be a good choice to complete the task you chose. Describe the pros and cons.

Software and Society Model

Write your computer application below.

Database software

Think about and discuss how your computer application helps people complete tasks. Write your personal observations below.

Database software is good for organizing large amounts of information. It helps people put things in a certain order, and people can find what they need really fast using a database.

Sometimes if you have information on lots of pieces of paper, it gets lost, or the paper takes up a lot of room. For example, it's a lot quicker to use the computer database in the library than to use the library card catalog.

Research how your application is used by society. Use sources such as magazines, books, or websites. Describe your findings below.

Source: Lund, Cherlyn. Databases in Society. New York: Lupine Press, 1999.

Application Use: Search engines are popular databases used on the World Wide Web.

People use databases programs at jobs, such as to log employee hours.

Stores organize their things for sale by using an inventory database

Program. Student grades and records are often kept in databases too.

Source: www.databaseuse.com

Application Use: Databases help people organize information very quickly. A long time ago,

before database programs were made, it took people many more hours

to update and organize information. Now many home computers have

database programs. They are easy to work with and have many uses.

Think of three interview questions to ask two students from a different group about how they use your software to complete tasks. Write your interview questions and the responses below.

Question 1: What kinds of things have you done using database software?

Response 1: I have used the database in the library to look up information. My family has
a program at home that we use to organize our friends' and relatives'
addresses and phone numbers.

Response 2: I used a database on the library's computer just yesterday to look up
information about a book. I also used a database in science class to enter
data from a class experiment about volcanoes.

Question 2: Would you rather use traditional ways to organize large amounts of data, or
use database software?

Response 1: I would rather use a database instead of going through a bunch of paper
or taking a lot of time to look for something. Like at the DVD store, they
have a database where they can look up movies, which is much easier
than going to the shelf to look for a movie!

Response 2: Most of the time I'd rather use database software. One example when I
wouldn't want to is when I want to look up someone's phone number. It's
quicker to look it up in the phone book instead of calling Information and
asking them to look up a phone number in their computer database.

Question 3: How often do you use database software?

Response 1: I use database software a few times a week, mostly in the library.

Response 2: I used a database program yesterday, last weekend, and the week before.

So I probably use it about four times a month.

Choose a task that you read about in your research that could be completed well using your software. Write your task below:

Making an address book

Create an outline that describes how and why your software would be a good choice to complete the task you chose. Describe the pros and cons.

- I. What is database software?
 - A. Using a database
 - B. Examples of how database software is used

- II. Pros of using database software to make an address book
 - A. Databases are good for organizing large amounts of information
 - B. Databases can easily be updated
 - C. Databases let you sort information
 - D. Databases let you find information quickly

- III. Cons of using database software to make an address book
 - A. Databases take a long time to make sometimes
 - B. It might be easier to use a paper address book

Software and Society Rubric

Student Evaluation

- _____ Computer application is chosen
- _____ Personal observations about how software is used to complete tasks are described
- _____ Software use is researched
- _____ Two sources are recorded
- _____ Questions are written to interview students
- _____ Two students from another group are interviewed
- _____ Notes are taken during interviews
- _____ Task is chosen from teacher's list that could be completed using chosen software
- _____ Outline is created that describes how software could be use to complete chosen task
- _____ Group oral report is presented to the class

Teacher Evaluation

- _____ Computer application is chosen
- _____ Personal observations about how software is used to complete tasks are described
- _____ Software use is researched
- _____ Two sources are recorded
- _____ Questions are written to interview students
- _____ Two students from another group are interviewed
- _____ Notes are taken during interviews
- _____ Task is chosen from teacher's list that could be completed using chosen software
- _____ Outline is created that describes how software could be use to complete chosen task
- _____ Group oral report is presented to the class