



Kentucky Heritage Council: High School Cemetery Program

Cemetery Workshop: Understanding Preservation & Local History Through Historic Cemeteries

Pre-Workshop Lesson Plan:

Below is an outline and brief description of provided lesson materials for teachers to present in class to prepare students for the upcoming Cemetery Workshop. The Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC) will provide all necessary education materials for these lessons, including presentations, reading materials (if applicable), lesson notes, and other relevant resources.

Course Topics (1-2 weeks leading up to workshop, lessons 40-45 minutes):

Preservation 101

- An introduction to the foundational principles of historic preservation – what it is, why it matters, and how it plays an important role in a community’s development. Topics will include the purpose and mission of the Kentucky Heritage Council, basic preservation principles, and examples of how historic places are identified, protected, and preserved. This lesson provides the basis for further study of historic resources and the role of community stewardship in their preservation.

Cemeteries

- This lesson introduces students to the study of burial practices through the analysis of cemeteries as cultural and historical landscapes. It examines how cemeteries reflect changing social values, ideological traditions, mortuary architectural trends, and other relevant themes. In all, students will gain insight into community identity, memory, and changing attitudes toward death and commemoration.

Ethical Stewardship

- In this lesson, students are introduced to the ethical responsibilities involved in the care and study of cemeteries. It addresses the importance of burial sites and descendant communities, with attention to applicable legal frameworks. Topics include Kentucky statutes governing cemeteries, grave disturbance, exhumation, treatment of human remains, and landowner obligations, as well as applicable federal legislation such as the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation



Act (NAGPRA). Students will examine the principles of preservation ethics, including a “Do No Harm” approach to site interaction and responsible cemetery stewardship.

Local History

- This lesson provides an overview of regional local history that incorporates indigenous populations, early settlement, economic development, immigration patterns, community demographics, and role of civic and political organizations. Students will learn how to investigate these themes through local research using resources such as historical societies, archives, libraries, genealogical records, census data, and other similar sources. The goal is to provide a deeper understanding of how historical context surrounding their community’s development.