

Let's Visit the Hoover Dam | Lesson Plan

What was the significance of the Hoover Dam?

Students will understand the purpose and historical significance of the Hoover Dam through the story of Otto and Smidge, recognizing that determination and teamwork were critical values in the dam's construction.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the main characters and setting in *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit the Hoover Dam*.
- Recognize the sequence of events in the story.
- Understand the historical significance and purpose of the Hoover Dam.
- Identify key vocabulary related to the Hoover Dam.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Hoover Dam:** a big wall built across the Colorado River located on the border between Nevada and Arizona, forming Lake Mead
- **Herbert Hoover:** an American politician and engineer who served as the 31st president
- **Colorado River:** the sixth-longest river in the nation
- **Electric power:** a form of energy that gives things the ability to move and work
- **Lollygagging:** to fool around and waste time

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.7, CCRA.L.6, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.L.5, CCRA.SL.4

Academic Subject Areas: America, American Values, History

What You'll Need

- Video: Otto's Tales - Let's Visit the Hoover Dam (Watch [Here](#))
- Book (optional): Otto's Tales: Let's Visit the Hoover Dam (Purchase [Here](#))
- Coloring Page: Otto's Tales: Let's Visit the Hoover Dam (Click [Here](#))
- Playdough or clay, shallow trays, water (if feasible)
- Images of the Hoover Dam

Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (10 mins.)

1. Begin by showing students images of the Hoover Dam.
2. Ask them to guess what it might be for and allow for initial responses.
3. Explain that the Hoover Dam is one of the biggest walls in the world and is used to hold back a river and make a lake.
4. Divide the class into teams of two or three and give them playdough, a shallow tray, and a small amount of water. Ask them to use the playdough or clay to create their own mini dams within the tray. Demonstrate how the dam stops the water from flowing.



5. When finished, discuss their experience with their mini dams. How did they stop the water? What makes a good dam?
6. Explain that just like their mini dams, the Hoover Dam was built to hold back water. Introduce the video *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit the Hoover Dam* to the students and ask them to listen to what happens as Otto and Smidge go on another adventure.

Watch and Complete: (20 mins.)

1. Play the video *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit the Hoover Dam* for the students.
2. Pause at opportune moments in the video to ask questions and check for understanding of key vocabulary words and their meaning.
3. Discuss the things the characters learned while visiting the Hoover Dam.
4. (Book) if you have the book, discuss different pictures and ask students to explain details of what is happening in that part of the story.

Wrap-Up: (15 mins.)

1. After the video, ask each student to share one fact that they learned about the Hoover Dam from the video.
2. To assess comprehension, ask students to retell the story in their own words. Here are some assessment questions:
 - Who are the main characters in the story?
 - What happened first, next, and last in the story?
 - What problem did Otto and Smidge face at the gas station?
 - How do you think Otto and Smidge felt when the bus left them behind?
 - Who helped Otto and Smidge find their way after being left behind?
 - Why is the Hoover Dam important, based on what Otto and Smidge discovered?
 - Can you name some facts about the Hoover Dam?
3. Distribute *Otto's Tales: Let's Visit the Hoover Dam* coloring page for students to work on in class or take home.

Don't have time for the complete lesson? Quick Activity (15-20 mins.)

After watching the video, distribute the coloring page and allow students to discuss their favorite character or part of the story.