

The Last Grand Adventure
By Rebecca Behrens

**A Common Core State Standards–Aligned US History/Social Studies
Lesson Plan for Grades 6–8**

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About This Book

Twelve-year-old Bea finds herself on a unique road trip with her grandmother, as they search for her grandmother’s long lost sister—the legendary Amelia Earhart—in this charming and poignant novel from the author of *When Audrey Met Alice* and *Summer of Lost and Found*.

It’s the summer of 1967—and Bea’s world has been shaken up. Her mother is off in San Francisco, while her father has remarried in Los Angeles, adding a stepmom and younger stepsister to the mix. Bea, unsure of the all the change happening around her, feels stuck.

So when her grandmother, Pidge, moves to a retirement community, Bea agrees to visit and help her adjust. But it turns out her grandmother isn’t interested in “settling in”—what Pidge really wants is to hop a train to Atchison, Kansas, where she believes she’ll be reunited with her long-missing older sister: Amelia Earhart. And she wants Bea to be her sidekick on this secret trip.

At first, Bea thinks her grandmother’s plan sounds a little crazy. But Pidge does have thirty years of mysterious letters, written in “Meelie’s” unmistakable voice, all promising to reunite. This journey might be just the adventure Bea needs. . . .

Bea and Pidge set off on their quest to reach Amelia. But getting halfway across the country proves to be far more of an adventure than either bargained for. Their journey takes them from the desert to the heartland, in planes, trains, and automobiles. And their search just might lead to surprising truths about their family—and each other.

About the Author

Rebecca Behrens grew up in Wisconsin, studied in Chicago, and now lives with her husband in New York City. A former textbook editor, Rebecca loves writing and reading about kids full of moxie and places full of history. She is the author of the middle-grade novels *When Audrey Met Alice*, which *BookPage* called “a terrific work of blended realistic and historical fiction,” and *Summer of Lost and Found*, which *Kirkus* praised as “a good find indeed.” Visit her online at www.rebeccabehrens.com.

About this Lesson Plan

The Last Grand Adventure’s Author’s Note states that during the time in which the book is set, the “Summer of Love” or “Long, Hot Summer” of 1967, “Change was happening throughout the country: in large social and political movements related to civil rights, women’s liberation, and the environment; in popular music and culture; and on a personal level for many people.” Thus the real history of the summer of 1967 in the United States is an excellent time period into which students can conduct deeper historical study. In this lesson plan, students will learn more about specific social and



political events and movements during that impactful summer.

The specific teaching strategy used in this lesson plan is a jigsaw activity. While this lesson plan is for a three-day activity, it could be modified for stronger or weaker students. Jigsaw activities help students to understand, summarize, and synthesize information. This strategy asks students to work independently and in different sets of small groups. In the first small-group arrangement, students become “experts” about different subjects. In the second small-group arrangement, students are rearranged and then teach those subjects about which they became “experts” to their peers in “jigsaw” groups that contain one student from each “expert” group. Finally, the whole class discusses learning together. This allows students to practice their reading-literature as well as speaking and listening skills.

This lesson plan is aligned with Reading: Literature, Writing, and Speaking and Listening Standards for Grades 6–8 as well as English Language Arts: History/Social Studies Standards for Grades 6–8. As such, it may be used in English Language Arts, History/Social Studies, or Reading classes.

Lesson Plan Objective

In this lesson, students will research, present, and synthesize information about specific social and political events and movements during the summer of 1967. Students will share their research findings with others who studied the same and different topics as they did, in a jigsaw activity. Afterward, students will synthesize and reflect on their knowledge by discussing how the events were similar and different—as well as how they relate to contemporary events.

Lesson Plan Materials:

- Copies of *The Last Grand Adventure*
- Digital and print sources to conduct research, including primary sources (**note that these materials will need to be reviewed for classroom usage, and many will need to be truncated and/or modified for middle-grade students**)
 - State historical societies are excellent resources for locating primary sources—many of which are available online. For example, the California Historical Society developed a special website to explore the fiftieth anniversary of the “Summer of Love”: <https://summerof.love>. Many historical societies have searchable digital collections of primary source materials. Check your state’s historical society website or inquire with their education department for more information.
 - The Smithsonian Institution’s webpage “1967: A Year in the Collections” has curated images and information about US history and culture that year: <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/1967>
 - Some other recommended resources for locating primary sources for the year:
 - Zinn Education Project: People’s Movement 1961–1974
https://zinnedproject.org/teaching-materials/?period=peoples_movement
 - The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History: The Sixties
<http://oa.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/1945-present/sixties>
 - The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History: What’s That Sound? Teaching the 1960s through Popular Music
<http://oa.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/sixties/resources/what’s-sound-teaching-1960s-through-popular-music>
 - UCLA Library: America in Sixties: Politics, Society, and Culture, 1954 to 1974
<http://guides.library.ucla.edu/c.php?g=563752&p=3901783>

- LibGuides at Tufts University: The Civil Rights Movement
<http://researchguides.library.tufts.edu/c.php?g=249031&p=1658358>
 - LibGuides at Michigan State University: The American 1960s
<http://libguides.lib.msu.edu/c.php?g=95940&p=4396166>
 - Teaching the Vietnam War with Primary Sources from the *New York Times*
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/29/learning/lesson-plans/teaching-the-vietnam-war-with-primary-sources-from-the-new-york-times.html>
 - PBS LearningMedia Classroom Resources: The Women’s Movement
<https://ny.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/the-womens-movement/#.WdUL9BRHYhY>
- Author-recommended resources to help students learn more about the historical context of *The Last Grand Adventure* are available at: www.rebeccabehrens.com/resources/.
- Reproducible “Expert Research” and “Jigsaw Research” chart worksheets [included below]

Lesson Plan Procedures:

Day 1:

1. “Do now” or “bell ringer”: Ask students to use their prior knowledge from reading and to look back in their copies of *The Last Grand Adventure* to brainstorm and write answers to the following questions in their notebooks:
 - a. What did you learn about events during the summer of 1967 from reading *The Last Grand Adventure*?
 - b. What is your prior knowledge about 1960s US history?
 - c. What else do you want to learn about the summer of 1967 in the United States?
2. Lesson introduction: Tell students that to answer the questions they want to know about, and to learn more about the historical context of *The Last Grand Adventure* and the summer of 1967, your class will be working on a research project and jigsaw activity. Ask students to pair with a partner and share their answers to one of the bell-ringer questions.
3. Short research project for “experts”: Divide students into expert groups of no more than five students, and assign them specific social and political events and movements to research. Students should use digital and print sources, and keep a list citing the sources in which they find information. Tell students that they should research the following information about the topic that they were assigned:
 - a. Who was involved in the event or movement
 - b. Why the event or movement occurred
 - c. When and where the event or movement started, spread, and ended
 - d. What happened during the event or movement
 - e. How the event or movement changed United States history

(Note: An easy modification for lower-level students, or way to make this lesson two rather than three days long, is to assign students separate tasks from the list above to research and share with their expert groups.)

Recommended topics include:

- The Summer of Love gathering in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco;
- The civil disturbances known as the “Long, Hot Summer,” specifically including the Detroit, MI, and Newark, NJ, riots (n.b.: Depending on where students live, the teacher could also assign riots in Tampa, FL; Cairo, IL; Durham, NC; Memphis, TN; Cambridge, MD; Buffalo, NY; Plainfield, NJ; Minneapolis, MN; Milwaukee, WI; and/or Washington, DC);

- The creation of the Kerner Commission by President Lyndon B. Johnson;
 - The *Loving v. Virginia* United States Supreme Court case;
 - The nomination and subsequent confirmation of Thurgood Marshall to the United States Supreme Court;
 - The rise to national attention by the Black Panther Party (BPP) through its protest at the California statehouse and its issuance of the original Ten-Point Program;
 - The formation and summer planning by the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (the Mobe);
 - The formation and summer planning by Vietnam Veterans Against the War;
 - The June 23 conflict between Los Angeles police and peace marchers at the Century Plaza Hotel in Los Angeles;
 - The foundation of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and its lobbying efforts toward President Lyndon B. Johnson on Executive Order 11375 (banning gender discrimination in the workplace and hiring).
4. Reflection: Ask students to complete their research as needed and to write a reflection in their notebooks about:
- a. What new information did you learn from your research about the summer of 1967?

Day 2:

5. “Do now” or “bell ringer”: With a partner, as a whole class, or in their small groups, ask students to share their reflections about the question: What new information did you learn from your research about the summer of 1967? Ask students to write down in their notebooks another student’s response that they found interesting.
6. “Expert” jigsaw group meetings: After completing their individual research about an assigned event or movement, together in their “expert” groups, students collaborate on reviewing, summarizing, and describing in depth the same material in order to master it before presenting it to their classmates outside the “expert” group. Students can do so by sharing and adding details to their “Expert Research” charts. Since members of the expert group will be separated from each other in the next step, it is important for the teacher to rotate between the expert groups to make certain that all group members understand the material well enough to share it with students outside their groups.
7. “Teaching” jigsaw group meetings: Next, students move to “teaching” groups that include one member from each of the “expert” groups. Experts then take turns at sharing information with their “teaching” groups so that materials from all the “expert” groups are shared among all students. It is helpful at this step to provide students with a graphic organizer on which they can take notes on the material that each “expert” presents. Students can do so by sharing and recording details onto their “Jigsaw Research” charts. A sample “Jigsaw Research” chart is provided in this lesson plan, along with a blank chart. Charts should be modified based on the specific, grade-level-appropriate topics you have assigned students to research.
8. Synthesis and reflection: In their “teaching” jigsaw groups, students finish the jigsaw activity by discussing synthesis questions and reflecting together. Students should answer these questions by writing in their notebooks. Finally, students should participate in a whole-class discussion about them. Possible questions for synthesis and reflection include:
 - a. In your opinion, what were the most important historical events of the summer of 1967, and why?
 - b. What were some of the similarities and differences between the events or movements during the summer of 1967 that you learned about in this lesson?

- c. Overall, after learning about the events and movements of the summer of 1967, how did it make an impact on history?
- d. What connections can you make between the events or movements of the summer of 1967 and today? Thinking back to *The Last Grand Adventure*, would you rather be living today or during the summer of 1967? Explain why you feel the way you do.

Assessment Suggestions:

To conduct formative or summative assessment of students' progress in this lesson, teachers may do the following:

1. Check the “do now” or “bell-ringer” responses and reflections in students’ notebooks.
2. Circulate around the class and give students participation points for on-task behavior during the short research project for “experts.”
3. Examine and grade students’ “Expert Research” and “Jigsaw Research” chart worksheets.
4. Circulate around the class, and give students participation points for on-task behavior during the “expert” jigsaw group meetings, and “teaching” jigsaw group meetings.
5. Listen to and award participation points for student participation in the whole-class discussion at the end of this lesson.
6. Extension: Ask students to write a longer written response about one of the possible questions for synthesis and reflection (for example, a five-paragraph essay).

Common Core State Standards: RL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1; RL 6.2, 7.2, 8.2; RL 6.3, 7.3, 8.3; W 6-8.7; W 6-8.8; W 7.9a; SL 6.1, 7.1, 8.1; RH 6-8.2; RH 6-8.7; RH 6-8.9; RH 6-8.10

***The Last Grand Adventure* US History/Social Studies Jigsaw Activity
Expert Research Chart**

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions:

- 1) Independent research: Research and complete the row for the question you were assigned in the chart below. You may use digital and print sources from the Internet, books, encyclopedias, and periodicals. You must cite your sources, so keep a list as you find and use them!
- 2) “Expert” pair sharing with a partner: Add more information to the row for the question that you were assigned in the chart below, based on what you learn from your partner.
- 3) “Jigsaw teaching” sharing with a small group: Write a summary and details for each question you learn about from other students in your small group.

Your research will be on: _____ . Your individual research is indicated by a *.

a. Who was involved in the event or movement	
b. Why the event or movement occurred	
c. When and where the event or movement started, spread, and ended	
d. What happened during the event or movement	
e. How the event or movement changed United States history	

List primary sources and secondary sources used on the back of this sheet (or if they are on a separate page, then please staple them to this sheet):

***The Last Grand Adventure* US History/Social Studies Jigsaw Activity**
Sample Jigsaw Research Chart

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: As a record of our class’s whole-group discussion, record details you learn about from other students in the chart below. (You can put X marks through the questions that you answered already in yesterday’s small-group activity.)

	“Summer of Love”	“Long, Hot Summer”	Century Plaza Hotel	Kerner Commission	National Organization for Women and Executive Order 11375
Who was involved in the event or movement			<i>Anti-Vietnam War protestors and the Los Angeles Police Department</i>		
Why the event or movement occurred				<i>President Johnson wanted to examine the cause(s) of civil disturbances in US cities</i>	
When and where the event or movement started, spread, and ended	<i>Summer of 1967 in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco</i>				
What happened during the event or movement		<i>159 riots happened in cities across the country</i>			
How the event or movement changed United States history					<i>President Johnson signed the order in October 1967 and it banned workplace gender discrimination</i>

***The Last Grand Adventure* US History/Social Studies Jigsaw Activity**
Jigsaw Research Chart

Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: As a record of our class's whole-group discussion, record details you learn about from other students in the chart below. (You can put X marks through the questions that you answered already in yesterday's small-group activity.)

	Topic:	Topic:	Topic:	Topic:	Topic:
Who was involved in the event or movement					
Why the event or movement occurred					
When and where the event or movement started, spread, and ended					
What happened during the event or movement					
How the event or movement changed United States history					