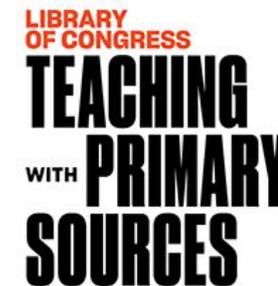|	
1.Title / Content Area:	Ghost Towns of Colorado
2. Historic Site:	St Elmo National Register Historic District
3. Episode:	https://www.pbs.org/video/ghost-towns-kdqpuh/
4. Developed by:	Michelle Pearson, Adams 12 School District Laura Israelsen, Denver Public Schools
4. Grade Level and Standards:	*Grade Level:* 3rd – 5th *Standards:* Colorado Social Studies Standards 1-4 *Prepared Graduate Competencies:* Content in this Document Based Question (DBQ) link to Prepared Graduate Competencies in the Colorado Academic Standards 3rd : PGC 1-5, 7 4th : PGC 1-5, 7 5th : PGC 1-5, 7
5. Assessment Question:	Why is St. Elmo important to the history of Colorado and why has it survived when others have not?
6. Contextual Paragraph	St. Elmo is a historic ghost town in Chalk Creek Canyon near Buena Vista, Colorado. Recognized as one of the most well-preserved historic ghost towns in the state it is an example of the rise and fall of a small mountain mining community over time. The National Register Nomination for the St. Elmo Historic District States: *"St. Elmo owed its existence to the emergence of the minerals industry in a mountainous area of Chaffee County. Exploration and development began in the vicinity of Chalk Creek in the early 1870s, if not earlier, notably with the opening of the Mary Murphy Mine, the region's most important and long-lived producer. Settlement grew primarily along Chalk Creek, which drew its name from the nearby cliffs. In October 1880 the inhabitants of the area, about 400 in number, obtained a plat for a town to be known as Forest City on account of the thick cover of evergreens, but the U.S. Postal Service objected to the name on the grounds the community might be confused with Forest City, California. The town then changed its name to St. Elmo, St. Elmo's greatest era of prosperity came in the 1880s. Both*

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the Denver South Park & Pacific and the Denver & Rio Grande railroads ran lines into town, while stagecoach firms set up offices to use the community as the point of origin for routes that ran over Tin Cup Pass to Aspen, Gunnison, and Tin Cup. For a time St. Elmo also served as the staging point for construction of the Alpine Tunnel, built under the continental divide 12,000 feet above sea level. But St. Elmo never became a great mining center. Except in the Mary Murphy Mine, the silver-lead ores never proved exceptionally rich or extensive. Population peaked out at around 1800 people in the mid-1880s. Then the decline began. The mines petered out, the railroads tore up track, and the populace drifted away. St. Elmo remained "frozen" as a mining town that never attained the eminence of Central City, Leadville, or Cripple Creek. Unlike most mining communities St. Elmo never sustained a cataclysmic fire that destroyed entire towns and lead to rebuilding in masonry. Thus a substantial amount of the early, architecture remains today a reminder of the early days in the evolution of most mining communities."

| 7. Connection to Historic Preservation | Listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the St Elmo Historic District houses some of the best preserved historic buildings in the ghost towns of Colorado. The National Register nomination states: *"St. Elmo itself consists of a group of commercial buildings and several clusters of homes. Forty-three structures dating from the 1880s and 1890s contribute to the historic integrity of the town. All buildings are located along or near unpaved streets some of which have wooden sidewalks. The architecture is entirely vernacular and reflects the haste of construction, the cost and availability of building materials, and the desire to project a more prosperous, permanent appearance than was actually the case. This was characteristic of mining camps of that era. St. Elmo remains in this condition because it never grew into an important center of mineral production."*

After listing the district in the National Register, owners of several of the buildings created the St Elmo and Chalk Creek Canyon nonprofit to help preserve, protect, and interpret the historic buildings in the area. Through the architecture in this area, visitors can trace the creation, development, and decline of a typical historic mining town in this region. | |

Document Based Question (DBQ)

Western Mining History: Main Street St Elmo (Photo A)	GUIDING QUESTIONS:
https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/colorado/st-elmo/	1. What kind of activity do you see on Main Street? 2. How do the buildings on Main Street reflect that this is a business (commercial) area? 3. How does this photo differ from Photo B? 4. The photos you are looking at are from two different time periods. Do you think St. Elmo has changed much? What's the same? What's different?

Main Street St Elmo, Colorado (Photo B)	GUIDING QUESTIONS:
https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/image/st-elmo-historic-district	1. What materials are these buildings made of? 2. How would the weather of this region contribute to the deterioration of the buildings? 3. Why would fire be a huge risk in this area? 4. What special skills would someone need to help preserve these buildings in the future? 5. What challenges would there be to preserving buildings such as these in a high mountain location?

St Elmo, Colorado	GUIDING QUESTIONS:
	1. What is the significance (importance) of St Elmo?
	2. Why was St. Elmo important when it was first started?
	3. What happened that made St. Elmo become a ghost town?
https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/st-elmo	

Assessment Question
Why is St. Elmo important to the history of Colorado, why has it survived, and why should we help preserve it?
Response