

1. Title / Content Area:	Colorado Prisons
2. Historic Sites:	Colorado Territorial Prison, Colorado Penitentiary, Grand Junction Jail, Haswell Jail, Westcliffe Jail, Crested Butte Jail, Georgetown Jail
3. Colorado Experience Episode	<a href="#">Colorado Experience: Imprisonment</a>
3. Developed by:	Laura Israelsen, Denver Public Schools
4. Grade Level and Standards:	<p><i>Grade Level:</i> 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup></p> <p><i>Standards:</i> Colorado Social Studies Standards 1-4</p> <p><i>Prepared Graduate Competencies:</i></p> <p>Content in this Document Based Question ( DBQ ) link to Prepared Graduate Competencies in the Colorado Academic Standards</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> : PGC 1-5, 7</p> <p>4<sup>th</sup> : PGC 1-5, 7</p> <p>5<sup>th</sup> : PGC 1-5, 7</p>
5. Assessment Question:	How do prison and jail structures help us tell the story of city and government establishment in Colorado?
6. Contextual Paragraph	<p>Jails and prisons have been part of every settlement, town and city since the beginning of Colorado. Incarcerations from 19<sup>th</sup> century, one-room “drunk tanks” to the “Prison Valley” have been in historic jails and penitentiaries, which have evolved with the changing criminal times. Initially only a single building in the middle of a 25-acre plot of land near Cañon City, Colorado’s first prison was erected in 1868 before statehood.</p> <p>Colorado’s history of imprisonment has taken a turbulent journey through rebellions, riots, and escapes. The story of Old Max and its architectural journey tells the story of changing attitudes towards crime, justice and punishment. Each jail serves its community and tells the story of the place. There have been uprisings, escapes and a women’s wing at the state penitentiary but there are also some humorous stories behind some of the jails. The Haswell Jail usually held unruly booster club members and a few car thieves. When it was empty, men would secretly meet here to play poker without their wives finding out. The Westcliffe Jail held many</p>



	<p>prisoners until it closed in the mid-1920s, but few knew of the secret in the walls: during construction, Scherer artfully assembled one section of the building without mortar so the stones were removable. When the builder himself served ten days in the jail, no one knew that he spent his days in the cell but his nights sleeping in his own bed at home thanks to the unmortared wall.</p>	
<p>7. Connection to Historic Preservation</p>	<p>History is told from many points of view. Prisons and jails tell the story of difficulties and rule establishment. How are governments formed and what works for us to create law and order? We can learn from buildings that will help us to create better facilities for incarceration in the future or to deter criminal activity.</p>	

## Document Based Question (DBQ)

### Document Set

Colorado Territorial Prison, 1896



[\*Historic image of the Colorado State Penitentiary\*](#)  
[\*Photo courtesy of Denver Public Library Z-6637\*](#)

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. How does the geographic location of this prison assist in its function?
2. Notice the stone buildings in the town. Why would they add a false front made of wood to the building?
3. What materials are used for prison construction?
4. What does the size of the building tell you?
5. Can you name any other unique architectural features in the prison or town buildings?

Colorado State Penitentiary at Canon City 1900



[\*Historic image of the Colorado State Penitentiary\*](#)  
[\*Photo courtesy of Denver Public Library\*](#)

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. What did you notice first?
2. What are the architectural features of the prison? How is it different than the prison building in 1896?
3. What is the physical setting?
4. What tools were used to create this?

1921 Haswell Jail



*Haswell Jail*

Photo by Jeffrey Beall,

<https://www.historycolorado.org/story/preservation/2015/06/28/3-historic-colorado-jails-and-one-prison-you-dont-know-about>

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

1. Examine all of the Jails in this set built in the 1800's. What do their structures have in common?
2. What materials are used for construction?
3. How does form follow function in these jail buildings?

Westcliffe Jail



GUIDING QUESTIONS:

4. Examine all of the Jails in this set built in the 1800's. What do their structures have in common?
5. What materials are used for construction?
6. How does form follow function in these jail buildings?

Photo History Colorado National Register, site number 5CR.218, Photo 1993 before restoration

Crested Butte Jail



*Historic photo of the Crested Butte Jail*  
<https://www.historycolorado.org/media/564>

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

7. Examine all of the Jails in this set built in the 1800's. What do their structures have in common?
8. What materials are used for construction?
9. How does form follow function in these jail buildings?

Georgetown, Colorado Jail 1883



*Historic image of the Georgetown Jail*  
<https://digital.denverlibrary.org/digital/collection/p15330coll22/id/79174/rec/1>

10. Examine all of the Jails in this set built in the 1800's. What do their structures have in common?
11. What materials are used for construction?
12. How does form follow function in these jail buildings?

**Assessment Question**

How do prison and jail structures help us tell the story of city and government establishment in Colorado?

Response