

Travel the World, Cheap: A Travel Adventure for Eighth-Grade Students

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INTRODUCTION

When I was a kid growing up in Pennsylvania, I was fortunate enough to have parents who liked to travel. We never went to Europe or anything like that, but we did travel extensively across the United States. My earliest memory of travel is to Wildwood at the New Jersey shore. My brother and I loved the beach and would spend the day frolicking in the surf and building castles in the sand. At night, we would all go to the boardwalk to ride the rides, play the games of chance, and eat. One vacation, my parents took us crabbing. We got all the necessary equipment, stepped into a small motorboat, and headed out into the swampy backwaters of the Atlantic Ocean. The cage and bait were lowered into the murky water, and we waited anxiously for several minutes. The anticipation was killing us. Would we catch one? Might there be some other creature inside that basket? Finally, my dad raised the cage and to our pleasure, there were five or six crabs. We spent the rest of the morning squealing with delight as each drop of the basket yielded more crustaceans. Once, a crab got loose on the boat and it was funny to watch my dad try to round it up before it could wreak havoc on our toes. As my brother and I got older, our trips expanded to other states: Florida, California, New York, Arizona, and the Carolinas. I loved these adventures with my family and enjoyed learning about and seeing new places.

While my immediate family was exploring America, my maternal grandparents were jetting off to exotic locations overseas like Cairo, Bangkok, and Istanbul. They loved to travel abroad, and my grandmother used to sit with me and tell me about all the places they would be visiting. I was so excited for them and awaited their return, when I knew there would be more stories in addition to pictures, postcards, and souvenirs. I dreamed of one day traveling to these same places.

When I was not traveling or dreaming of far off lands, I was reading. Both of my grandmothers were voracious readers, and thankfully, I inherited this trait. The first book I remember truly affecting me is *Charlotte's Web*. I must have been about six when I read it, and I cried terribly when the arachnid heroine died. As an adult, I cherish all these memories of travel and literature and truly believe they directed the course of my life. Unfortunately, not all kids are as fortunate as I was. Recently I asked one of my eighth grade classes how many had ever been to the beach, and only ten in a class of twenty-two raised their hands. This is sad considering that here in Houston we live only about 40 minutes from the coast. Some kids have never been outside the city limits; some have never been on a plane, train, or boat; to camp or a nice restaurant; or to an amusement park. Unfortunately, most come from single parent families where the sole

parent might work two jobs and the money that parent earns is barely enough to pay the rent and buy food: there is nothing extra for travel and adventure. Also, some of these same kids have never read a book except the ones their teachers have assigned, and even then, they read only a few chapters. When they get home from school, there is no time for homework because there are chores to do and children to watch while the parent is at work. All of these facts alarm me, so I have decided to do something about it. I will allow my students to travel without ever leaving the classroom. The trip will be “cheap”—no money needed—because we will be journeying within the walls of my classroom. We will venture to popular areas of the world as well as to places the kids might have never heard of.

Having a master’s degree in liberal arts, I will use a liberal arts approach to learn about these far away lands. We will primarily study a genre of literature from the country, but added to that will be the study of languages, sciences, history, music, and art. In looking at all these aspects of each culture, it will be just like the students are really there.

Francis Bacon, the English philosopher, once said, “Travel, in the younger sort, is part of education; in the elder, a part of experience” (Daintith 726). Travel **is** part of education, whether it is actual travel or traveling in the mind through literature and other studies; therefore, this is my intention in teaching this unit. Hopefully, the lessons involved in “Travel the World, Cheap” will inspire some of my students to yearn for adventure, or at the very least, inspire them to learn about other countries on their own through literature and the liberal arts.

BACKGROUND

The unit “Travel the World, Cheap” will cover a six-week marking period. The classes are block scheduled, which means each class meets every other day for 90 minutes; therefore, in a six-week period, there are approximately 18 class periods. The lessons will be taught to my eighth-grade English classes of all levels—remedial, regular, and gifted and talented—and assignments and assessment will be adjusted accordingly. On the first day, for 45 minutes, I will facilitate a discussion on travel. I will ask students to share the places they have been, the adventures they have been a part of, and the memories they have. Even if the place is a theme park like AstroWorld, it is still a relevant experience for our unit. Next, our discussion evolves to literature and books they have read. I will mention a few of my favorites and hope to have students share their memories of reading. Here, I will draw a parallel between literature and travel and how we will be reading different types of literature in each country. Moving on, I will explain the liberal arts and ask what experiences the students have had with music, art, language, and science. At this point, all will be clear: the class will be traveling to new countries via literature and the liberal arts.

The countries to which we are traveling are Mexico, the Galapagos Islands (part of Ecuador), South Africa, France, and China. After our 45-minute discussions on day one, students will be given a blue book to decorate: markers, crayons, stickers, stencils, etc. will all be provided. This personalized booklet will serve as a travel journal for them to write in after each class period. At the end of the unit, this journal full of thoughts, emotions, and opinions will help them to decide on a country to choose on which they will write a short story (details discussed later). Before we embark to each country, the students will be given the map and flag of the country; they will appropriately color each and paste them into their travel journal. These items will serve to mark the title or initial page of each section/country. All of this is completed on day one. In addition, before we “leave” for each country, students will receive a worksheet, which asks them to research and answer such items as the capital of the country, size, language, religion, etc. This research, in addition to the map and flag, will give the students some background information on the country to which we are traveling; this will cover the history/geography portion of the liberal arts. On day two of the unit, we are ready to depart to our first country. *Bon Voyage!*

OUR JOURNEY BEGINS

Mexico

Mexico is the most northern of the Latin American countries and is situated between the United States and Central America. It is the third largest Latin American country; only Brazil and Argentina are larger. Mexico is a country of varied physical diversity: snow-capped volcanoes, high plateaus, jungles, grasslands, and deserts. The people are mostly mestizo, a blend of Spanish and Indian, and the culture is a fusion of Spanish, Indian, and African elements (Meyer).

The reason I selected Mexico for our first stop is because of its history with Texas. After many battles with Mexico like Goliad and the Alamo, the tide was turned for Texas in April of 1836 at the battle of San Jacinto. The Texas forces surprised the Mexican troops, and when it was over, 630 corpses were scattered across the battlefield. Mexican general Almonte surrendered about 200 more who were in consternation after the slaughter that had just taken place. Sam Houston reported that only thirty Texans were wounded and nine killed. He also said that more than 700 Mexicans were taken as prisoner of war in addition to the 630 dead. The outcome was clear: the Mexicans were annihilated, whereas the Texans were virtually unscathed. On April 21, 1836, Texas became free from Mexico, and thus the West was won (Fehrenbach 233). Hopefully, the students will remember this because it is prior knowledge for them; they studied Texas history in seventh grade.

I also selected Mexico because many of my students are of Mexican heritage. As we learn about Mexico, I am hoping that some of my students will add their own insights and experiences of the country. After observing the Mexican map and flag, which we colored

on the first day of the unit and is now pasted in the Mexico section of the travel journal, we will discuss our findings from the research homework. Now that we know a little about Mexico, I will introduce the genre of literature we will study: folktales.

Folktales are typically about the rituals, customs, traditions, and beliefs of ordinary people. These stories are of unknown origin, and have been collected through oral transmission. Folktales are like ancient myths: they explain what cannot be explained, and the study of folklore gives insight into the practical and spiritual history of man (Murphy 356). There are two websites where I found collections of folktales. One is *Magic Tales of Mexico* and the other is *Mayan Folktales*. The first tale we will read is entitled “The Rabbit and the Coyote.” This story is about a foolish coyote who is constantly deceived by a cunning little rabbit. Our second story, “The Disobedient Son,” is the story of a young boy who gets into much trouble and is sent to live with his godfather, the priest. The boy continues to wreak havoc, and his actions become more malevolent until he is sent somewhere unexpected. The ending is surprising. “The Giant’s Secret” is like our fairy tale; a prince travels the world in search of adventures only to find a princess in distress. The forest animals give the prince special powers in order to save her . . . a happy ending ensues. Finally, “White Flower” is a tale of a beautiful yet vain queen who has a very beautiful daughter. The queen is very jealous of her daughter, so she decides to have her killed, and thus be rid of her rival. The dead girl is found and immortalized in a crystal coffin. Of course, a prince is involved and the story ends up with a happy ending.

Next, we will study paintings from Mexican artist Diego Rivera, who loved his homeland and felt that his art should reflect and belong to the Mexican people. With this in mind, he painted many of his works on the walls of popular buildings. When he returned to Mexico from Europe in 1921, he painted his murals to depict the life, history, and social problems of Mexico (*Yahoo! Education*). A few of his paintings that we will look at and analyze to see how they show the aforementioned are “The Embrace,” “The Sugar Refinery,” “The Market,” and “The Exploiters.”

Furthermore, we will learn a few phrases of Spanish: “My name is _____ (*Me nombre es _____*),” “Hello, how are you? (*Hola, como esta?*),” “Where are you from? (*De donde es usted?*),” and “I like to _____ (*Me gusta _____*).” Here, I hope my native speaking students will help by actually leading this part of the lesson.

Finally, students will get into groups of four to make piñatas. Originating in China and moving into Europe in the 14th century, the piñata was used to celebrate Lent. In the 16th century Spanish missionaries to North America used the piñata to attract converts. The indigenous people already had a similar tradition. To celebrate the birthday of the Aztec god of war, Huitzilopochtli, priests put a clay pot, decorated with feathers and filled with trinkets, in the temple. When broken with a stick, the treasures fell to the feet of the god’s image as an offering. Later, the Mayans, who loved sports, devised a game where the player was blindfolded and given a club to swing at the suspended piñata. The

missionaries transformed this game into a religious ritual; they covered the clay pot with colored paper giving it a festive yet sometimes scary appearance. Today, the piñata is not part of a religious ceremony; instead, it is used during Las Posadas, which is the ringing in of the Christmas season, and at birthday parties. While trying to break the piñata, a song is sung:

*Dale, dale, dale, no perdas el tino,
porque si lo perdes, pierdes el camino.
Esta piñata es de muchas manas, solo contiene naranjas y canas.*

Hit, hit, hit, don't lose your aim,
Because if you lose, you lose the road.
This piñata is much manna, only contains oranges and sugar cane.

Piñatas can be found in all sizes and shapes: cartoon characters, animals, and even political figures. Traditionally, they are filled with candy and fruit, but at Christmas in Mexico, it is filled with candy, peanuts, guavas, oranges, jicama, sugar cane and crab apples. The piñata remains popular because of its versatility and fun (Devlin).

Galapagos Islands

The Galapagos Islands are a group of rough volcanic islands in the Pacific Ocean some 600 miles off the coast of South America. The archipelago, or group of islands, consists of sixteen islands and numerous islets, which are scattered over an area of 36,000 square miles near the equator, although the total land area is only 3,000 square miles. Officially, the Galapagos Islands are called the Archipiélago de Colon (Cockrum). A part of Ecuador since 1832, the Galapagos Islands' first recorded arrival of humans was in 1535. On this day, a ship carrying Bishop Tomas de Berlanga from Panama to Peru landed on the islands after strong equatorial currents swept them off course. In his report to Spanish King Charles V, the bishop told of giant tortoises, iguanas, and numerous birds inhabiting the islands. Through the years, many others stopped to explore the islands, but none was more famous than Charles Darwin, who arrived in 1835 on his boat the HMS Beagle. Darwin spent five weeks in the Galapagos collecting and preserving specimens, which led him to write *On the Origins of Species by Natural Selection (History of the Galapagos)*.

This stop on our journey will cover the scientific strand of the liberal arts as we learn about the birds, reptiles, and marine animals found here that exist nowhere else in the world. Land animals native to the Galapagos include many insects and other arthropods, land snails, lizards, snakes, a land tortoise, one kind of bat, two genera of rodents, and several birds, many of which show no fear of humans. The birds and bats probably flew to the islands after being blown off course by a storm; the land animals were probably carried on rafts of debris from the mainland. Marine animals include sea lions and iguanas. As time passed, many of the plants and animals evolved so much from their

mainland ancestors that they no longer even resembled them. The primary example of this evolution is the giant land tortoise. The uniqueness of the life on the Galapagos has continued to amaze biologists. In the 1960s, the Galapagos International Scientific Project was organized to study the ecology of the archipelago. All of the islands are administered by the Ecuadorian National Park Service, and most of them are game preserves where many of the animals are strictly protected (Cockrum). The reason I selected the Galapagos Islands is because it is so very different from the other locations we will be studying. It is a wild and fascinating place that is virtually in pristine condition where animals and wildlife live free and protected. It is very expensive to travel to the Galapagos Islands, and not many people ever get to go there.

Our genre reading here will focus on non-fiction pieces. Non-fiction is writing that tells about real people, places, and events. Often, teens who do not particularly like to read will enjoy non-fiction, and even avid readers sometimes overlook it. Non-fiction selections include excerpts from *Origin of Species*, as well as various articles from *National Geographic* magazine. The art form to be studied is photography and video making, and we will enjoy various wildlife photographs and view a video entitled *Exploring Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands*. After viewing this video, students will have to write a newspaper article, which is a non-fiction piece, pretending they were reporters traveling along as the video was being filmed.

South Africa

Traveling over the continent of South America and continuing across the Atlantic, we arrive next in the Republic of South Africa, which is the largest and most powerful of the southern states on the continent of Africa. The population of South Africa is very diverse. The blacks, who make up 76% of the population, come from nine main ethnic groups. The whites, who make up 13% of the country, descended mainly from Dutch and British ancestors. The remaining 11% is made up of Asians and people of mixed heritage. Although the whites were the minority in the country, they held political power until the early 1990s (Carter). The policy of apartheid was implemented in 1948 when the National Party came to power. Apartheid, meaning separateness, dehumanized blacks with racist legislation. Blacks were not individuals, but pariahs in their own country. As a rule of apartheid, blacks were forced to leave their land and homes and live in “black only” areas such as the ghetto of Soweto, where their lives were not pleasant, and where they were often forced to lead lives they would otherwise have never chosen. Blacks had no identity, and this fact was continually enforced by laws that stated that they were not human (MacPhail).

The black people fought back by establishing a movement called “Black Consciousness.” Under this movement, blacks were encouraged to liberate themselves from the sense of inferiority that white rule had instilled. This message even became popular with school age children, whose education suffered as a result of apartheid. In 1975, in the township of Soweto, an acronym for Southwest Township, schoolchildren

began to protest. White police eventually opened fire, killing two children. More protests arose, and again, the white police responded. In 1977, when the protests finally ended, 575 people had been killed and 3,389 wounded. The police then rounded up black leaders and tried them on charges of inciting riots (Connolly 40-41).

While in South Africa, the genre we will be studying is poetry. Reading poetry can bring us intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic pleasure. It sharpens our perception of the world around us, since it draws energy from our observations of life. Poetry increases our understanding of our world and ourselves, making us aware of things we did not know (DiYanni 4). With this in mind, the students will attempt to understand the egregiousness of apartheid by reading the poetry of the Soweto poets. In the 1970s, South Africa experienced a literary revival of black voices that had been silenced for years by apartheid; and during this period, blacks became politically conscious. As a result, the Black Consciousness Movement became very popular. This group believed in the affirmation of black cultures, values, and racial solidarity. Literature, drama, and poetry became a way to promote the ideals of anti-apartheid, and South Africans such as Joyce Nomafa Sikakane, Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshai, Mongane Wally Serote, and Modikwe Diobe emerged and expressed the angst and disgust of being forced to live in the ghetto of Soweto during apartheid (*Soweto Poets*). The following is an excerpt of a poem by Zinzi Mandela that exemplifies this feeling:

There's an unknown river in Soweto
some say it flows with blood
others say it flows with tears
a leader says it flows with health and purity
the kind of water
that nobody drinks in Soweto. (*Arts and Culture*)

Joyce Nomafa Sikakane is one of the most popular of the Soweto poets. The following is a just a part of his poem, which also shows the feelings of the black South African living in the world of apartheid:

. . . You mustn't trust a White man
my grandfather used to tell me
when I was a child
you mustn't think a White man cares for you
my people caution me. (MacPhail)

Next, after looking at select paintings from artist Georgie Papageorge, listening to South African music, and learning a South African dance, we will discuss how artists, writers, and musicians directed their frustrations into their craft, and the beauty that came from so much hatred.

France

For hundreds of years, France has symbolized civilization. Not only has France always been a strong political power in Europe, but it has also set the norm for art, literature, social behavior, culture, and *joie de vivre* (joy of life). French thinking became preferred as writers like Voltaire and Proust became popular all over the world. In addition, the French language became the predilection of aristocrats, particularly in places like Russia, where Catherine the Great was a proud Francophile (Ardagh). Lately, the French have gotten bad press, especially when they refused to participate in the Iraqi war with the United States. Regardless, France is a fascinating country in all aspects and is one of my personal favorite locations to travel.

While we visit France, we will learn about short stories, which are not just abbreviated novels, but have their own particular characteristics:

- The plot is simple.
- The opening sentence/paragraph arouses and holds attention.
- Every character is essential.
- One life experience is dealt with instead of several.
- The end may contain a twist or surprise to fulfill its author's purpose (Strouf 150-1).

In order to study the short story, we will venture off to France. The stories to be read, "The Necklace" and "Out on the River" are written by Guy de Maupassant, a French writer who was an apprentice to the famous French novelist, Gustav Flaubert. During Maupassant's career, he wrote over three hundred short stories, which appeared in popular magazines of the day. He wrote about ordinary people and their experiences with such things as politics, prostitution, perversion, the supernatural, and hypocrisy (Cassill 582). In reading and discussing these stories, not only will we learn about the genre of the short story, but also the language, customs, food, and art of France.

Next, the students will learn the same phrases in French as they did in Spanish: "My name is ___ (*Je m'appelle* ___)," "Hello, how are you? (*Bonjour. Comment ça va?*)," "Where are you from? (*Tu est d'ou?*)," and "I like to ___ (*J'aime bien* ___)."

On the last day of our "visit" to France, the class will have a *boum* or party. Previously, the students volunteered to prepare French food, and on this day that food will be brought to class so that we may enjoy it during *une boum*.

These will be quick, simple, and inexpensive dishes, not the elaborate *faire* that is associated with French cuisine. A few suggested recipes include the following: *cervelle de canut* or herbed cheese dip, *les croque-mitaines* or ham and cheese sandwiches, *croustades* or filled bread cases, *gougeres* or cheese puffs, *gâteau au chocolat* or chocolate cake and *quatre quarts au citron* or lemon pound cake (Weber). Some recipes are so simple that we may prepare a few in the classroom. An example of an extremely simple French appetizer is Debra Weber's recipe for Grapes with Herbed Chèvre and

Toasted Almonds which can be found at About.com through the following web address <<http://frenchfood.about.com/od/horsdoeuvresappetizers/r/champgrapes.htm>>.

While we eat our delicious French cuisine, we will discuss French artist Claude Monet, who founded the style of painting called impressionism. Impressionism is a practice in painting where the natural appearances of everyday objects are painted with dabs or strokes of colors in order to simulate actual, reflected light. Standing very close to the painting, it is difficult to decipher what the subject is, but stand back a few feet, and the picture starts to emerge—this is impressionism. At first, the French hated Monet's work; they wanted to see paintings of famous battles or historical events, not ones of bridges and haystacks. Eventually, people started to appreciate his work. In later years, he settled down in Giverny, a lovely, quaint, French town where he continued to paint. Today, Claude Monet is remembered as one of the most famous artists of all time (Venezia 20-9). As we enjoy our French cuisine and practice our French, we will talk further of Monet and pass around various picture books that include his work. Students will understand impressionism when they view a large Monet poster up close and far away. Some of the Monet paintings we will view are *Haystacks End of Day, Autumn*, 1890-91, *Haystacks End of Summer, Evening*, 1890-91 and *Japanese Footbridge*, 1899. We will also view a video of his hometown, Giverny.

China

As, the most populated country in the world and one credited with such inventions as the compass, paper, gunpowder and ice cream, China will be our next destination. With the last longest continuous history of any present-day country, China has been a center of civilization for over 3,000 years. Since 1949, the country has been divided into two entities, the People's Republic of China (the mainland) and the Republic of China (Taiwan). China has been a communist country since 1949 when Mao Tse-tung and his supporters took over the country. Tse-tung used the ideas of Marxism and Leninism to create the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which would not only bring a new government to China, but also transform its society. The CCP sought to mobilize mass political participation, modernize the economy, destroy old family loyalties, and establish a zealous commitment to party and country.

Mao died in 1976, and in 1980 China's ruler became Deng Xiaoping, who abolished many of Mao's policies. He kept the authoritarian political system, but instituted many reforms that would raise the standard of living (Genzler). Today, China remains one of the few communist countries in the world. Like with France, the United States has had its problems with China, especially after the shooting down of one of our military jets a few years ago. Nevertheless, China is a fascinating country with an old and sometimes violent history. I traveled to China in 2003, and was mesmerized by its history, people, customs, and architecture.

The genre of literature to be studied with China is the novel—a work of fiction that is longer and more complex than a short story. The elements of setting, plot, characters, and theme are developed in greater detail. Since time is limited, we will read only excerpts from a novel; the book selected is Pearl Buck’s *The Good Earth*. Born in West Virginia, Buck is not Chinese. Her parents were missionaries who were stationed in China, and when she was three months old, Buck was taken to China, where she would spend most of the first forty years of her life. She spoke both English and Chinese and was very knowledgeable in Chinese history, customs, and traditions. Buck used her life in China as inspiration for her many novels (Conn). *The Good Earth* is Buck’s most famous work. It takes place in northern China and focuses on the poor family of Wang Lung and his wife Olan. Wang Lung’s luck changes, and he becomes a very wealthy man; subsequently, his wealth makes him a not so nice guy. The plot is strong and interesting and focuses entirely on Chinese culture. Although Buck is American, she gives the reader clarity on Chinese culture because she has experienced it. The novel demonstrates how the Chinese celebrate weddings, holidays, births, and deaths. Additionally, it shows the relationship between men and women in this culture. The important theme in *The Good Earth* is that money is not as important as joy and family.

Next, we will study *Shu Fa* or the Chinese art of calligraphy, which dates back to the earliest days of China and is still practiced today. Calligraphy uses “characters” to convey words. Like handwriting, each person who practices the art will have a different style and form. In China, calligraphy is not only an art, but also a discipline. As a branch of learning, it incorporates rules, techniques, history, and education. This learning is an important aspect of Chinese culture. After studying the art of calligraphy, students will learn several characters and learn how to write them. These characters will then be written in calligraphy as students use ink and a brush to practice their strokes.

Finally, the class will participate in an authentic Chinese tea ceremony and learn about the eight classes of Chinese tea: green, oolong, black, red, white, yellow, flower, and compressed. Following the etiquette of the ceremony, we will prepare and sample various types of Chinese tea.

CLOSURE

Welcome Home! As we arrive back in Houston, we must go through immigration and customs. We will briefly talk about why this needs to be done, particularly in light of September 11, 2001, when terrorists were able to enter the United States illegally and unnoticed. After we “unpack” and get settled, we will discuss our trip. Students will be asked to share entries from their travel journal with the class as well as give any comments on the journey or ask any questions. On this last day, the students will be asked to write about what this travel unit meant to them. Some prompts they will be given are: Has this unit inspired or discouraged you from traveling and why? Of the countries we visited, is there one you would truly like to visit? What aspirations do you have to travel? Where are some places you would like to go? What type of literature did

you enjoy the most? Has this unit inspire you to read? What might you read as a result of this unit?

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed throughout the unit with small quizzes, five to 10 questions each, pertaining to the previous day's lessons. These quizzes will account for 15% of the overall six-week grade. Various homework assignments, such as the mini-research assignment at the beginning of each destination, will account for 10% of the overall grade. The travel journal, to be handed in at the end of the unit, will be worth 25%. The newspaper article written about the adventure in the Galapagos Islands will be worth 20%. Finally, the short story, which will be written at the very end of the unit, will serve as the main assessment and count for 30% of the grade. The writing assignments and travel journal will be graded by using a rubric, which the students will receive beforehand. These percentages and assessments are open for revision as I see necessary.

LESSON PLANS

Lesson Plan 1: Travel Journal

The unit will be introduced with the creation of a travel journal.

Objectives

- Students will understand the requirements of journal writing.
- Students will design and decorate their own travel journal.

Materials Needed

blue books	markers
colored pencils	crayons
glue sticks	construction paper
travel magazines	personal photographs

Procedure

Our lesson will begin with a discussion about travel. Students will share places they have been and the memories and impressions they have evoked. I will explain to them that these are the types of thoughts they will be writing down in their journal entries. Next, we will have a similar discussion on reading. Students will share their thoughts on reading and some of their favorite books. Why do they like these books? Is it the characters? Plot? Theme? Again, I will explain to them that these are the same feelings they will be writing down in their journal. Anything goes in these journals: positive or negative feelings.

Each student will be given a basic blue book. Students will decorate these to become their own personal travel journal. Students will decorate these journals using magazine

pictures, paper, markers, and/or personal photos. Their name and class period must be located somewhere on the front cover.

The last 15 minutes of the class on this day and subsequent days, the students will have to write a required length journal entry showing their expressions of the day's lesson.

Lesson Plan 2: Writing the Short Story

Objectives

- Students will understand what elements are needed to compose a short story.
- Students will show understanding of the elements of plot, characterization, theme, and setting.

Materials Needed

travel journal
pen

notes taken about the short story
paper

Procedure

At the culmination of the unit, students have learned about five different countries and genres of literature. They have also studied the history, geography, culture, food, dance, and science.

After a review of the short story genre and its elements, students will be required to write their own short story. After perusing their travel journal and deciding on what their favorite country of the unit is, they will write a short story. The criteria are as follows:

- The setting must take place in the country that is selected.
- There must be at least two characters; and they must dress, talk, eat, and adhere to the customs of that country.
- The story must have a clear plot, a definite tone, and an identifiable theme.
- The story will be written first as a rough draft, which will be peer-edited, then rewritten and typed into a double-spaced final copy: two pages for regular students, three pages for honors students, and four pages for G/T students.

This short story will serve as the final assessment for the unit and will count for 30% of the final grade for the six-week marking period.

Lesson Plan 3: Writing a Newspaper Article

Objectives

Students will:

- Understand what makes up non-fiction writing
- Understand journalistic terms and vocabulary
- Understand the structure of news articles

- Produce written work
- Develop peer editing and proofreading skills.

Materials Needed

copies of “How to Write a Newspaper Article” and “The Language of News Stories”
examples of news stories
video: *Exploring Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands*
pen
paper

Procedure

As we finish our journey to The Galapagos Islands, students will be required to demonstrate their knowledge of writing a piece of non-fiction, namely, a newspaper article. After reading many non-fiction pieces and learning about Charles Darwin, marine life, animals, and ecology (to name a few), and after viewing photographs of the islands and animals, students will view a video entitled *Exploring Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands*. This video was directed by award-winning videographer, Sheryl Brakey. Students will be instructed to watch the video, jot down any notes they find relevant, and pretend they are newspaper reporters who have been invited along on this journey and are unseen people in the video. When they return from their journey, they will be required to submit an article to the newspaper for which they work.

Using the handout “How to Write a Newspaper Article” (written by me and covering the basics of journalism), students will learn that newspaper articles have a lead paragraph, which presents the most important facts to answer these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? Other supporting details are presented in the rest of the article. The conclusion wraps up the news article with an interesting fact or quotation from someone connected to the article. Students will then learn how to outline an article by using the pyramid structure

Next, using the handout, “The Language of News Stories” (written by a fellow teacher of mine), students will learn that newspaper writing is, for example, impersonal, written in third person, simple, punchy, and somewhat formal.

Using actual news stories cut out from various newspapers, students will read and identify the Who? What? Where? When? and How? as well as the supporting facts and conclusion. They will also make sure the story is written using the conventions mentioned previously.

After learning all this and watching the video, students will analyze their notes and write their own news story using the criteria they have learned. The rough drafts will be peer-edited and prepared for the final draft, which must be typed to simulate an actual article. On the date due, students will be invited to share their articles with the class before handing them in. The newspaper article will serve as an essay grade, which counts for 20% of their overall grade for the six weeks.

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