



4TH GRADE

VOLUME 4.3

Historical Fiction Writing Unit for *Streams to the River, River to the Sea*

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Welcome to the 4.3 Historical Fiction Writing Unit for *Streams to the River, River to the Sea!*

If this is your first time using this guide, you will want to read through this introduction carefully, as it provides information that you will find critical to your establishment of a successful language arts block!

This historical fiction writing unit is meant to be taught in conjunction with the *Read Side by Side Reading Program*, Unit 4.3, *Streams to the River, River to the Sea*. The book *Streams to the River* will be used as a mentor text to build students' background knowledge and expose students to the craft of writing.

This unit takes approximately 15 days to complete, from brainstorming and planning to sharing the published piece! Lessons in this unit give students explicit instruction in the steps of the writing process and the structure of narrative writing. Some craft and grammar lessons will be incorporated as students revise and edit their writing. You may want to supplement with additional craft, grammar, and spelling lessons between writing units.

Prior to starting the unit, you will want to consider how students will publish and share their writing. Here are a few suggestions:

- illustrated book,
- chapter book,
- handwritten book;
- audio book.

Students might read their story to their own classmates, visit another classroom, or make their writing available for others to read in the classroom, library or other public location.

After students have had the opportunity to publish their writing, assess their work using the checklist for grading a historical diary provided at the end of the unit.

Schedule

To complete this unit, you will need to set aside 30-minutes for writing, 2-4 times a week.

Instructional days begin with a whole-class lesson. Lessons will be 10-15 minutes in length, allowing a short time after the lesson for students to work on the assignment. While working, students will access the help of a writing partner as needed. It may be helpful to seat partners next to each other during the work time. The teacher then confers with partnerships as needed.

Working days allow students to get started right away on writing projects. During the work time, students will continue to access a partner or the teacher for help as needed. If it is challenging to find time every day for writing, teachers might assign these work-projects as homework.

Narrative schedule:

1. Brainstorm & Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a list of story ideas.• Select a strong idea from the list.• Complete a <i>Narrative Writing Map</i>.• Write a blurb.• Design a cover.	Day 1-4
2. Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a draft using the 4-quadrant method.	Days 5-8
3. Revise & Edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show the passage of time.• Use figurative language (simile/metaphor).• Include historical language.	Days 9-11
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edit and revise using a checklist.	Day 12
4. Publish & Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a final product that is handwritten, typed, or other.• Share with a real audience.	Days 13-15

Day 1: Brainstorm Ideas & Plan

Lesson Goals: Brainstorm several ideas for writing and select one to write about. Begin to plan a piece of writing using the *Narrative Writing Map 1*.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 1

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Lewis and Clark wrote about their journey in diaries. The structure of a diary is typically a collection of entries, with each entry telling the events of one day. This format allows the reader to see the events unfold from the perspective of the author. Through each entry, the reader learns his/her thoughts and feelings.
2. In the book *Streams to the River, River to the Sea*, Scott O'Dell tells the story of the Lewis and Clark journey from the perspective of Sacagawea. The events of the book are true, but the thoughts and feelings of Sacagawea are invented; because Scott O'Dell did not have the opportunity to talk to Sacagawea, he had to imagine what she might have thought or felt. Because of this, you could argue that his book is historical fiction.
3. A historical fiction story tells a fictional story with fictional characters. The story is believable and is based on real people and real events from history. To make historical fiction believable, authors study primary documents, and first-hand accounts of the events of the time-period they are writing about.
4. *Introduce the writing prompt:*
Write a series of four diary entries written from the perspective of one of the Corp of Discovery members or tribe members from the book *Streams to the River*. Each diary entry should tell about one or more important event and reveal the thoughts and feelings of the narrator.
5. *Brainstorm:* Model brainstorming 2-3 events you could write about from the Lewis and Clark Journey. Examples might include the following:
 - Arrival at the village of the Metaharta,
 - Wintering at Fort Mandan,
 - The Pirogue tipping and loss of supplies,
 - Grizzly bear encounter,
 - Sacagawea gets sick,
 - 18-mile journey around the falls,
 - Arrival at the Shoshone village,
 - Crossing the mountains,
 - Going down the Snake River with the Nez Perce,
 - Reaching the Columbia River,
 - Reaching the ocean.

6. *Brainstorm:* Model brainstorming a character that could be writing in a diary about these events. Examples might include:
 - Captain Clark,
 - Captain Lewis,
 - York,
 - An unnamed member of the Corps of Discovery,
 - Charbonneau,
 - Sacagawea,
 - Running Bear,
 - Cameahwait, or
 - Scannon.

7. *Select:* Model selecting one or more big event from your list and choosing a character to write about this big event. The story should include the events leading up to the big event and events that happened because of the big event (cause and effect). Model selecting a character that would have strong feelings about this event or offer a unique perspective.

8. *Plan:* Model filling out *Narrative Writing Map 1* for the story you will be writing, saving the last section (question/prediction) for Day 3. Demonstrate how to think about and jot notes about the:
 - main character,
 - secondary characters,
 - setting (time, place, and circumstance); and
 - problem/conflict.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time brainstorm ideas, select an idea, and fill-out *Narrative Writing Map 1*. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story idea?
- What might I do to improve my story idea?

(Title)

Main Character			
Secondary Character(s)			
Setting	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Circumstance</u>
Problem/ Conflict			
Question / Prediction			

Day 2: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing using the *Narrative Writing Map 2*.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 2

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be planning for the events of their story. They will write their story in four-quadrants. Each quadrant will be a diary entry.

Time is an important part of planning your diary entries. Diary entries can be written daily or can have gaps in time where no diary entry is written. When planning your diary entries, label each quadrant with the date of the diary entry. If the entry will be about a real event in history, make sure to get the date right (Example: Departing Fort Mandan, April 7th, 1805).

2. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 1 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How does the problem start?
3. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 2 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How does the problem continue?
 - How does the main character feel?
4. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 3 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - What causes the main character to change? How does the main character change?
5. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 4 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How is the problem resolved?
 - What does the main character learn?

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to fill-out *Narrative Writing Map 2* for their own story. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

NARRATIVE WRITING MAP 2

Q1	How does the problem start? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q2	How does the problem continue? How does the main character feel? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q3	What causes the main character to change? How does the main character change? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q4	How is the problem resolved? What does the main character learn? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Day 3: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing by writing a blurb.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 1

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will be writing a blurb for their story. Remind them that the blurb does not give away how the story will end. The blurb usually ends with a question so that the person reading the blurb will want to read the story.
2. *Plan:* Model writing a question to use in the blurb of your own story.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to finish filling-out *Narrative Writing Map 1* and then write the blurb for their own story about conflict. Then, give time for partners to share their blurb and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my blurb?
- What might I do to improve my blurb?

Day 4: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing by making a cover.

Materials:

Blank paper and art materials for designing a cover or illustration software.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will be designing the cover of their book. Every book cover begins with a great title. Share tips for writing a good title:
 - It should provide a clue about the conflict in the story.
 - It should be relatively short.
 - It should get the reader interested.
 - It should put a picture in the reader's mind.
2. *Plan:* Model writing a title for your own story.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to create a cover for their book. Then, give time for partners to share their covers and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my cover?
- What might I do to improve my cover?

Day 5: Draft, Quadrant 1

Lesson Goals: Begin drafting a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be drafting quadrant 1 of their story.
2. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 1 of your story (diary entry #1). Demonstrate how to write in the structure of a diary:
 - Include the date and/or location.
 - Jump right into the description or start with the words “Dear Diary”.
 - Limit the use of dialogue.

3. *Draft:* Model including details about the:

- Characters
- Setting
- Conflict

Model using descriptive language and details to help the reader picture the characters and the setting in their mind.

TIP: Share with students that an appropriate length for a diary entry is about 1 page, handwritten. (Each quadrant should be about the same length so that the full story is about 4 pages.) To help keep students organized, it may work best to have students use a new sheet of paper for each quadrant, even using different colors of lined paper if available.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to draft quadrant 1 of their book. Then, give time for partners to share writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

Day 6-8: Draft, Quadrants 2-4

Lesson Goals: Continue drafting a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be drafting quadrants 2-4 of their story.
2. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 2 of your story (diary entry #2). Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Conflict
 - The main character's actions, words, and feelings.Model using descriptive language and details to help the reader feel how the main character is feeling.
3. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 3 of your story (diary entry #3). Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Conflict
 - Change in the main characterModel using descriptive language and details to help the reader understand that the main character is changing.
4. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 4 of your story (diary entry #4). Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Resolution
 - Author's messageModel using descriptive language and details to help the reader understand how the story ends and a lesson is learned.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to continue drafting their own stories. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

Day 9: Revise, Transitions to Show the Passage of Time

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make revisions.

Materials: *Passage of Time List*

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be revising their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.

Diary entries are written to describe events of a person's day. For this reason, diary entries will start with a date and/or location. While some diaries show daily entries, others have large gaps in time. Authors use description at the beginning of diary entries to communicate time and the passage of time.

2. *Read* the examples of transitions to show the passage of time from the *Passage of Time List*. For each category, encourage the students to write one or two transitions of their own.

Discuss: How do these transitions communicate the passage of time?

3. *Revise:* Model adding transitions to the beginning of each diary entry to better show the passage of time.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise their own stories to include transitions that show the passage of time. Then, give time for partners to share their dialogue and receive feedback.

- What do you like about the way I used transitions in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

PASSAGE OF TIME LIST

MORNING	MID-DAY	EVENING
<p>Early morning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Just before the sun came up...</i> • <i>I woke up to the sound of...</i> • <i>When I awoke...</i> • <i>As the sun came up...</i> 	<p>Noon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By mid-day...</i> • <i>At noon...</i> • <i>When the sun was overhead...</i> 	<p>Evening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Just before supper time...</i> • <i>Near nightfall...</i>
<p>Morning...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>During breakfast...</i> • <i>In the morning...</i> • <i>Before we started out...</i> • <i>The sun rose...</i> 	<p>Late afternoon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In the afternoon...</i> • <i>We made camp...</i> • <i>The sun was hot...</i> • <i>Later that day...</i> 	<p>Night:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When the moon...</i> • <i>That night...</i> • <i>As night fell...</i> • <i>At dark...</i>

A FEW DAYS PASSING:	A FEW WEEKS PASSING:	A NEW SEASON:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The past few days have been...</i> • <i>It took ___ days...</i> • <i>On the third morning...</i> • <i>Day after day...</i> • <i>___ days later...</i> • <i>I waited ___ days...</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The past few weeks have been...</i> • <i>It took ___ weeks...</i> • <i>By the third week...</i> • <i>Week after week...</i> • <i>___ weeks later...</i> • <i>I waited ___ weeks...</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The weather has turned from ___ to ___...</i> • <i>The sun sets/rises earlier now...</i> • <i>In anticipation of...</i>

Day 10: Revise, Figures of Speech

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and add figurative language.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be revising and editing their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.

Today we are going to add figures of speech to our stories. Figures of speech are the use of nonliteral words or phrases to describe something.

A **simile** is a figure of speech that compares two things using the words *like* or *as*. In the book *Streams to the River*, Scott O'Dell uses **similes** when he writes:

Like:

- My heart sounded like a woodpecker beating on the roof. P. 13
- It looked like a great floating bird, with its sails spread out like silver wings. P. 62
- Beaver teeth are long and wide and curved like a chisel. P. 86
- You look like a ghost, but a pretty ghost. P. 93
- The land stretched away like a great silver lake. P. 104
- The words fell like stones. P. 130

As:

- Quick as a snake strikes. P. 8
- His hair was black as a blackbird's wing. P. 18
- This one had blue eyes and hair as bright as copper. P. 62

A **metaphor** is a figure of speech that describes an object or action in a non-literal way. In the book *Streams to the River*, Scott O'Dell uses **metaphor** when he writes:

- The speck grew larger. It became a river, a dark river of buffalo. P. 96

2. *Revise:* Model revising your own writing to include figures of speech.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise their own stories by adding figures of speech. Then, give time for partners to share these examples of figures of speech.

- What do you like about the way I used figures of speech in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

Day 11: Edit & Revise: Historical Language

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make revisions.

Materials:

Historical Language List

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be revising and editing their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.

Today we are going to add historical language to our stories. A historical language is a form of language that is attested to the past and has evolved into a more modern form.

In the book *Streams to the River*, Scott O'Dell uses historical language to make his story believable.

2. *Read* historical language list. Point out that the modern words are in alphabetical order, making it easier to find words to replace with historical words in your writing.
3. *Revise:* Model looking for modern words in your writing and replacing those words with historical words. Also model highlighting words from the list that could be used in your own historical story and revising your story to include them.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise their own stories to include historical language. Then, give time for partners to share their stories and receive feedback.

- How did I use historical language in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

HISTORICAL LANGUAGE LIST

WORDS:	
Modern	Historical
almost	nearly
a silence	a hush
barely	scarcely
bed	sleeping place
campsite	camp
cane	walking stick
container	basket
cowboy	horsemen
deny	forbid
dinner	supper
dinnertime	suppertime
dress	tunic
evening	dusk, nightfall
except	save
flashlight	torch
give permission	grant
group	band
guns	firesticks
happy	pleased
house	lodge
in fact,	In truth,
interrupted	broke in

irritated	displeased
jacket	cape, robe
land	country
lived	dwelt
lotion	bear grease
material	deer hide
nights	sleeps
pants	trousers
passed by	overtook
perfume	vermillion
pot	kettle
premonition	omen
rainstorm	torrent
rarely	seldom
rob	plunder
run away	flee
shelter	lean-to
shoe	moccasins
steps	strides
stopped	halted
strong	stout
town	village
troubled	stricken
walked	strode

Day 12: Edit and Revise

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make edits and revisions.

Materials:

Editing and Revision Checklist

Instructional Procedures:

4. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be editing and revising their narrative writing pieces to make them easy to read as well as convincing.

5. *Edit:* Model rereading your writing and marking edits as you go:

- Capitals
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Paragraphing

As you make editing marks, discuss the changes you will make and how they will help the reader understand the piece of writing better. Give students time to reread their writing and record editing marks.

6. *Revise:* Model rereading your writing and marking revisions as you go:

- Complete sentences
- Transition words
- Figures of Speech
- Details and elaboration to help the reader visualize
- Key vocabulary

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to their edit and revise their writing. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

Editing Checklist:

- _____ Sentences start with a capital letter.
- _____ I used capital letters for proper nouns.
- _____ I have punctuation at the end of each sentence.
- _____ I checked my words for spelling.
- _____ I indented paragraphs.

Revision Checklist:

- _____ I started with an introduction that is clear.
- _____ I ended with a conclusion that is clear.
- _____ I used transition words at the beginning of paragraphs.
- _____ I used language to show how one event may have caused another event.
- _____ Sentences make sense.
- _____ Sentences stay focused on the topic.
- _____ I added details and elaboration that are important to the topic.
- _____ I used key vocabulary.

Day 13-15: Publish & Share

Lesson Goals: Publish a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be preparing their piece of writing for others to read. This is called publishing.
2. *Discuss:* how stories will be published—handwritten, typed, or other. Let them know when and how their stories will be shared with the class.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to publish their writing and share their writing with an audience.

Ideas for publishing:

- illustrated book,
- chapter book,
- handwritten book; and
- audio book.

Ideas for sharing:

- read stories aloud to classmates,
- read stories aloud to another class,
- make stories available for others to read (in the classroom, library, or other); and
- take stories home to share with family.

An **author's chair** is a fun classroom tradition. It is a decorated chair in which an author sits to share his/her writing. Teachers can paint a wooden chair or have each new class decorate a pillowcase to go over the back of a chair. This quickly transform a standard classroom chair into something special for young authors.

Checklist for Assessing a Narrative Story

<p>Cover _____/6</p>	<p>____ Has a title that is short. ____ The title puts a picture in the reader's mind.</p> <p>____ Includes a blurb that talks briefly about the story. ____ The blurb entices the reader to read the book.</p> <p>____ The cover gives the reader a clue about the story. ____ The cover gets the reader interested.</p>
<p>Exposition ____/6</p>	<p>Characters ____ Introduces more than one character. ____ Gives important details about each character. ____ Is written in the first or third person.</p> <p>Setting ____ Establishes a setting: time and place. ____ Gives important details about the setting.</p> <p>Problem ____ Introduces a problem/conflict.</p>
<p>Rising Action ____/8</p>	<p>Text Structure ____ Presents a logical series of events that result from the conflict. ____ Events build toward a climax. ____ The events reveal the author's central message or theme.</p> <p>Craft ____ Includes the development of a main character. ____ Includes dialogue and/or interior monologue. ____ Uses language to show the passage of time. ____ Uses descriptive language. ____ Includes humor and/or figurative language.</p>
<p>Falling Action & Resolution ____/3</p>	<p>____ The problem is resolved. ____ The character has changed or learned something. ____ The ending is satisfying to the reader.</p>
<p>Revision and Editing ____/5</p>	<p>____ Writing is edited for spelling. ____ Writing is edited for grammar. ____ Writing is edited for punctuation. ____ Writing shows evidence of revision. ____ Published writing is polished.</p>
<p>Collaboration & Effort ____/4</p>	<p>____ Worked well with a partner. ____ Respectfully gave feedback to a partner. ____ Respectfully received feedback from a partner. ____ Showed good effort and persistence.</p>
<p>Total: ____/32</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

Crossing the Bitterroot Mountains

Blurb: In these four diary entries, a member of the Corps of Discovery writes about crossing the Bitterroot Mountains. Deep snow, hunger, and steep trails make the journey very hard. Will they reach their goal?

September 13, 1805

Dear Diary,

Today we began crossing the Bitterroot Mountains. The trail is narrow and rough and sharp rocks cut our feet. We move slowly because the horses slip on the rocks and ice. We grow more tired each day.

The mountains rise high in the sky and snow covers the ground like a thick white blanket. The cold air stings my face and makes my fingers ache.

My pack feels like it is filled with heavy stones. Part of me doubts that we will make it, but Captain Lewis stays calm and his steadiness helps me stay strong.

The wind whipping through the trees feels like a warning to turn back.

September 15, 1805

Dear Diary,

Day after day we trudge along. The snow is deeper and the weather is rainy, wet, and cold. We never warm up, even though we build fires along the way. The thick snow means that there are no deer, antelope, or other game. Our supplies are almost gone. Hunger follows us like a shadow.

Today we killed a stray horse for food. We had no other choice because we were so hungry. We cooked the meat over a small fire. The smell of smoke filled the cold air. The meat was tough, but it gave us strength.

I feel the hardship in my body and in my heart. But I tell myself we must endure. If we give up now, all our hard work will mean nothing.

At night, the stars shine bright like tiny lanterns above us.

September 20, 1805

Dear Diary,

Today, Captain Lewis decided we must find help. We were too weak and almost out of food.

We met the Nez Perce people. At first, I felt nervous. The Nez Perce shared food with us. They gave us roots and dried salmon to eat. To them, we must have looked thin and tired. Their kindness felt like good fortune after many hard days. Now our strength will slowly return.

The rivers here rush loudly over rocks. The land feels wide and sacred.

I am thankful. Without help from the Nez Perce people, we might not have survived.

October 7, 1805

Dear Diary,

For several weeks we rested while we made our canoes. First, we chopped down a tree and then we shaped the ends into points. After that, we used hot coals to char the wood before carving it out and smoothing the inside. The canoes will allow us to continue our journey down the river to the sea.

As we continue west, I feel calm inside, like quiet water at sunset. Now that we have crossed the mountains and are rested and fed, I believe we can reach the sea.