

Mark Twain Boyhood Home & Museum

Unit Plan for “Mrs. McWilliams and the Lightning” & “The Political Economy”

Created by: Edie Hollander, Petrece Metz and Michelle Priola

School: Hardin Middle School, Westridge Elementary School

City, State: Saint Charles, MO and Brighton, CO

Mark Twain Teachers’ Workshop, July 14, 2017

Hannibal, Missouri

“Narrative Writing Incorporating Extreme Weather”

UNIT PLAN for Narrative writing using “Mrs. McWilliams and the Lightning” and “Political Economy”	
Concept or Topic: Fact versus Superstition in narrative writing	Suggested Grade Level(s)/Course: 5th grade/ELA
Subject: Literature/Writing/Social Studies/American History	Suggested Time Frame: 4 to 5 days, 45 minutes each
Objective(s): Students will read and analyze both texts in order to write a narrative about a weather phenomenon that includes at least 4 weather facts and 3 superstitions.	
Common Core State Standards: <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3</u> Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.A</u> Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.B</u> Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.C</u> Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events. <u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.D</u>	

Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Assessments (at least two): Exit slips as formative assessments; narrative as a summative assessment

[5th grade Narrative Writing Rubric - Lucy Calkins](#)

[5th grade Narrative Writing Student Checklist - Lucy Calkins](#)

Vocabulary (Tiers 2 & 3):

Text specific vocabulary for “Mrs. McWilliams and the Lightning”: infirmities, afflicted, faculties, **boot-closet**, confound, profligate, Providence, **infidel**, marksmanship, solemn, cipher, rumpus, **pow-wow**, yellow-fever, draught, remnant, imprudence, peril, indiscretions, **commode**, **tumbler**, **saber**, **bull’s eye lantern**, hoarse, **night-dress**, **telegraph**

Text specific vocabulary for “Political Economy”: boarding house, countenance, custom, exigencies, novice, apocryphal, emanating, philology, vindictive, persecuted, **lightning rod**, **lacerated**, “hump”, lucid, unintoxicated, 4 and 20 hours, premises, **pyrotechnic display**, accommodate, **billiard ball**, **armament**

Science/Weather specific vocabulary: precipitation, wind, lightning, electricity, hurricane, tornado, phenomenon, atmosphere, occurrence, conductor, insulate, non-conductors

Academic terms and vocabulary: narrative, plot, dialogue, character, superstition, lead, transitions, flash-back, flash-forward, tension, resolution

Words that are bold will be presented to students with images. Please see the image document/slides in the Technology section.

Subject Area Integration: Science

Background Information Required for Lesson: Students will have studied fact versus superstition or opinion. This unit will also follow the weather unit in 5th grade Science class.

Materials: copies of “The Political Economy” and “The McWilliams and the lightning”

Technology:

A Mrs. McWilliams fact check is available at <http://baselp.com/information/mrs-mcwilliams-and-the-lightning/>

Audio version of “The Political Economy” can be found at www.loyalbooks.com or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_BBAe5EMEc

Youtube video: [4 Scientifically Sound Weather Superstitions](#)

Mark Twain Quotes from <http://www.twainquotes.com/Lightning.html>

[Vocabulary Images](#)

Related Twain Quotes/Passages:

“Thunder is good, thunder is impressive; but it is lightning that does the work.”
- Mark Twain in a Letter, 8/28/1908

“The difference between the almost right word & the right word is really a large matter-
-it's the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.”
- Mark Twain in a Letter to George Bainton, 10/15/1888

Lesson Sequence:

Day 1

Hook/Intro: Present Video clip [Lightning and Rain at Night](#) (1-2 minutes) and have the students watch the first time without sound. Students write what they saw. Fast forward to the lightning scene at 8:03. The second time, have them just listen, and then have them free write in journal any words to describe what they are hearing. Next, have students select and share 2-3 descriptive words on post-it notes making a class t-chart on the board titled “what you saw” and “what you heard.” (15-20 minutes).

Teaching of the Concept(s):

1. Have students free write for 3-5 minutes about “Think of a time you were in a extreme weather event and describe how you felt.” Three to five students can share.
2. Have students take turns reading aloud as a class, “Mrs. McWilliams and the Lightning.”
3. Students will work independently or in pairs (teacher discretion) to make an ordered list of the directives given by Mrs. McWilliams to Mr. McWilliams.

Suggested Questions: questions are front-loaded in our Introduction.

Day 2

Hook/Intro: Students will share with a partner or team their favorite absurdity or scene from the previous lesson, “Mrs. McWilliams and the Lightning.”

Teaching of the Concept(s):

1. Tell students that we will be enjoying a companion text. Students will then be given a sheet of 8 by 11 computer paper and told to draw a picture of a house from the outside view.
2. Teacher will have students fold a piece of paper hot dog style and label the two columns fact and superstition. Students will work with their shoulder partner to list what they believe are the facts versus the superstitions from the reading.
3. The class will listen to the audio version of the story “The Political Economy” online. Story length is 14:37 minutes. Students will also have a paper copy of the story in which they can highlight or underline the events for later reference.
4. Students will then draw a picture of what is happening to the house. 5-10 minutes, or longer if necessary.
5. Exit slip (formative assessment): On a post it note, students will write down 3 similarities and 3 differences from the two texts.

Suggested Questions:

Why do you suppose that Mark Twain structured the story the way he did? (a story within a story).

Who do you think is the more intelligent character in each story?

Day 3

Hook/Intro: Teacher will select and share students' work from day 2 exit slips.

Teaching of the Concept(s):

1. Students will decide which extreme weather event (hurricane, tornado, blizzard, hail storm, haboob) that they want to write about. They will be working in pairs. Teacher can allow them to self-select or choose the work partnerships.
2. Students will use available technology to research what causes their weather event.
3. Students will write several facts about their chosen weather event.
4. Students will choose 3 facts to add to the gallery wall classroom chart for each weather event.

Assessment: Students will write 3 facts on the appropriate chart for all other students to see.

Suggested Questions: Teacher will monitor on-task behavior and ask probing questions.

Day 4 and 5

Hook/Intro: Show Youtube video: [4 Scientifically Sound Weather Superstitions](#)

Teaching of the Concept(s):

1. Writer's workshop time: Students will work with their partners to write a narrative on their weather event that includes 4 weather facts and 3 superstitions.

Review/Closure: Have students share their drafts with peers and ask for feedback.

Homework:

Share their writing with their parents/guardians and ask them to identify the facts from superstitions.

Strategies for Exceptional Students: Students could create books with illustrations. Students write using the style of “Political Economy.” Students could write an advertisement with an invention for their weather event.

Suggested Follow-Up Activities: Students will be introduced to “The Watch” and “The McWilliams and the Burglar Alarm” to look at the economic issues within the text.