

Letters from the Oregon Trail

Grade Level: 4th Grade	Subject: Social Studies
Central Focus: Oregon Trail	Class Period: Writing Estimated Duration: 45 minutes
Where does lesson occur? End	Grouping: Whole class, partner, individual
Prior knowledge, skills and/or experiences needed: Have previously read <u>Bentley's Tale of the Oregon Trail</u> by Susan Templeton Sullivan (provided in teaching kit) AND/ OR <u>Your Life as a Pioneer on the Oregon Trail</u> by Jessica Gunderson Some knowledge of narrative story writing/ letter writing.	

Common Core Standard(s)

Social Studies; 4.3.1: Understands that there are multiple perspectives regarding the interpretation of historical events and creates an historical account using multiple sources.

W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

Learning Objectives:

Students will be able to write narrative letters to develop an imagined experience using 3 factual descriptive details of the Oregon Trail.

Targets for Students:

I will write an imagined narrative letter about the Oregon Trail using 3 factual details.

Assessment Strategies:

Oral- Ask students about their ideas

Written Narrative Letter

Rubric

Student Feedback Strategies:

Oral- Use prompting questions and suggestions to ensure that all elements make sense to the point of view they are telling.

Written- Provide students with specific feedback about which element(s) of the rubric they need to improve and how.

Category	4	3	2	1
Content Accuracy	The letter contains at least 3 accurate details about the Oregon Trail.	The letter contains 2 accurate details about the Oregon Trail.	The letter contains 1 accurate details about the Oregon Trail.	The letter contains no accurate details about the Oregon Trail.
Point of View	The letter is clearly written in the point of view of someone other than an adult on the Oregon Trail (e.g. a pet, oxen, child, Native American, etc.) and shows an understanding of this character's point of view.	The letter is written in the point of view of someone other than an adult, but lacks a clear understanding of this character's point of view	The letter is written in the point of view of an adult on the Oregon Trail.	The point of view the letter is written in is unclear.
Letter Format	Complies with all 4 components for a narrative letter (greeting, body, closing, signature).	Complies with 3 of the requirements for a narrative letter.	Complies with 2 of the requirements for a narrative letter.	Complies with 1 or less of the requirements for a narrative letter.
Narrative Elements	Contains a setting, characters, and events which make sense to the point of view chosen.	Contains a setting, characters, and events some of which clearly connect with the point of view chosen, and some which do not.	Contains a setting, characters, and events which are disconnected from the point of view chosen.	Letter lacks either a setting, characters, or event(s).

Academic Language Demands:

Vocabulary:

Narrative- A kind of writing which tells a story (contains: characters, plot, setting, events, problem, and a point of view).

Letter- A written form of communication (contains: greeting, body, closing, signature).

Language Supports:

Provide examples of narrative letters if students are confused.

Students can refer back to the text(s) to clarify questions about the trail/ use academic language.

Accommodations and/or Modifications:

Students who have trouble generating/ writing ideas may work in partners.

Materials Needed (include technology)

Bentley's Tale of the Oregon Trail by Susan Templeton Sullivan
AND/ OR

Your Life as a Pioneer on the Oregon Trail by Jessica Gunderson
Oregon Trail Routes Map

Graphic Organizer attached, or one students have previous experience using.

Teaching Plan:

Time	Teacher Behavior	Student Behavior	Assessment to monitor learning
Opening of Lesson			
5 minutes	We have previously read (name of story). Now, we are going to write a narrative letter. Let's review some characteristics of a narrative story: Create a list of letter characteristics on the board. We are going to use some of these characteristics to help us write a letter back home from the Oregon trail.	Students turn to talk with their partners for 1 minute and create a list of narrative letter parts. Random groups are selected to each share a characteristic of a letter. (Greeting, body, closing, signature).	Observation
Body of Lesson (include additional rows to make your steps explicit)			
3- 5 minutes	You need to chose which point of view you want to tell your story from. It must be one other than an adult on the trail. (e.g. a pet, oxen, child, Native American, etc.)	Student writes in the graphic organizer which point of view they will be telling the story from.	Observation
3-5 minutes	When you know who's point of view your letter will be from a.k.a. your main character, you can choose an appropriate setting. Students can	Student writes in the graphic organizer which setting the letter's story will be taking place at.	Oral- Ask students about their ideas and provide oral feedback including prompting questions and suggestions to

	refer to the Oregon Trail Routes Map to help them choose an appropriate location.		ensure that all elements make sense to the point of view they are telling.
10 minutes	Who will be some of the other characters you will talk about in your letter? What event(s) will take place? You get to include 3 factual events to show what you have learned actually happens on the trail.	Students quietly listen to teacher instruction, then begin to work on their own.	Observation
20 minutes	When students complete their graphic organizer, hand them lined paper to write their letter on.	Students write their letter using the graphic organizer they have created.	Observation
Closure and End of Lesson			
1 minute	If time provides, allow students to share the letters with each other/ the class. Looking into the future: Now that we have explored what happened on the trail, we can investigate what happened when those who made it settled somewhere.	Students will complete the letter as homework or continue during free time if they have not yet finished. Students who are finished turn them in.	Written Narrative Letter- use rubric provided to assess and give students written feedback about their writing.

Letter from the Oregon Trail

Author:

Setting:

Characters:

Point of View:

Events:

Factual Details From a Source:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.