



“All Aboard”

A Reader’s Theater

Judy Chesley, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Burning Question:

How can students better understand and experience the road made of rails built to cross the country as people traveled across America looking for a better life?

Objective:

English Language Arts and Literacy! Reader's theater addresses: literature, language, fluency, and even writing. Roleplay reading is an activity spanning every corner of the subject!

Context:

A sixth grade elementary classroom, easily adapted for grades 4 – 9

Materials:

- **Locomotive** by; Brian Floca
- Reader’s Theater script

Time Span:

1. Two class periods

Procedures:

1. Read aloud **Locomotive** by; Brian Floca
2. Hand out scripts
3. Assign parts
 - Narrator 1 and 2
 - 12 or more passengers
 - Chorus 6 students
 - Conductor
 - Fire-man
 - Engineer
 - The Butch

Task: Performance of script: Passengers are frozen in place until the Conductor cries! “All Aboard!”

Chorus: **CLANG-CLANG-CLANG CLANG-CLANG-CLANG**

Narrator 1: See a puff from her stack, a puff of smoke, a smudge in the sky.

Chorus: **CLANG-CLANG-CLANG-CLANG**

Narrator 2: Here she comes! See a puff, a smudge, a cloud...

Chorus: **WHOO-OOOOO**

Narrator 1: The iron horse, fifty feet and forty tons, wheels spinning, rods swinging, motion within motion, coming down the track.



Chorus: **CLANG-CLANG! CLANG-CLANG! CLANG-CLANG!**

Narrator 2 and Chorus: (Chorus bold and caps) Hear the **HISSESSSSSS** and the **SPIT** of the steam!
Hear the engine breath like a beast; **HUFF, HUFF, HUFF!**

Conductor: “All Aboard!” Step up, settle in quick! The Train’s about to leave!

Narrator 2: Up in the cab, small as a closet, hot as a kitchen, it smells of smoke, hot metal, and oil.

Fireman: I am the fireman I keep the engine fed. I scoop, lift, and throw the coal from the tender to the firebox.

Engineer: Engineer that’s me, they call me the hogger. I push forward the Johnson bar, blow the whistle, pull the throttle lever...this train is about to go. I release the steam into the pipes and here we go.

Narrator 1
and

Chorus: The engine **HUFFS** and **HISSES**, the engine **BANGS** and **CLANKS!** Metal rolls on metal and the locomotive **MOVES!**

Conductor: Tickets! Tickets! Have them ready, or have a short trip, Tickets, Tickets.

Chorus: **CHUG-CHUG, CHUG-CHUG, CHUG! FULL STEAM AHEAD!**

Passenger 1: Faster, Faster, Faster breathes the engine.

Passenger 2: Westward we go through the prairies, to the Great Plains, to the frontier.

Passenger 3: The hours and miles roll by. The country opens wide smell the switchgrass. Here is where buffalo roamed, the Cheyenne, Pawnee, and Arapaho lived.

Passenger 4: Covered wagons traveled here too, foot by foot, mile by mile, going West.

Passenger 5: Faster, faster we travel, people, mail, the telegraph words traveling by wire...the world is speeding up.

The Butch: I am a boy who walks the isles to sell books, magazines, maps, yesterday’s paper, fruits, candies, soap, towels, coffee tea, sugar, and all the cigars you can smoke. “Get your paper here.”

Narrator 2: There is a stove in one corner to keep you warm, and a convenience in the other, don’t us the toilet when the train is stopped. No plumbing here, only a hole in the floor.

Passenger 6: It looks like we are stopping at a city for the train to take on coal and water.

Passenger 7: I am ready to stretch my legs, and get some food at the hash house.

Passenger 8: Look at that menu; Buffalo Steak, Antelope chops, and chicken stew.

Passenger 9: Yep, but if the chicken tastes like prairie dog, don’t ask why.



- Narrator 1: At the end of each day a new crew and engine are put in place. The engineer blows the whistle as a warning the train is backing up. When all is set the train and passengers are ready to roll again.
- Chorus: **FULL STEAM AHEAD, AGAIN WESTWARD, WESTWARD. WHOOOOOO! WHOOOOOO! WHOO!**
- Narrator 2 and chorus: Slow trains to 4 miles per hour...crossing bridge. Slowly, slowly the engineer drives, the train is so heavy, the bridge is so narrow and **RICKETY RICKETY RICKETY! WESTWARD ROLLS THE TRAIN.**
- Passenger 10: Look into the night, I can see canyons, in the moon's pale light: castles, pulpits, witches, slides.
- Passenger 11: There is sign hanging from a tree; it reads 1,000 mile tree.
- Passenger 12: One thousand miles! That is how far we have traveled since our trip began.
- Passenger 1: Still westward, westward we roll, rolling beneath the stars.
- Passenger 2: It's Salt Lake City, and then on to Promontory Summit a high and lonesome place where the two railroads met one from the east and one from the west.
- Engineer: All aboard! All aboard!
- Narrator 1: In the West there was more wood than coal, so wood is what the engines burn.
- Narrator 2 and chorus: Moving through the Great Basin, a bleak and silent land except for the **HUFF** and the **BANG** and the **HISS** of the engine, the **CLICK**, and the **CLANK** of the cars.
- Passenger 3: We are rolling through the desert, the home of the Paiute and the Shoshone.
- Passenger 4: It is a land of dust and bitter rivers, rivers that never reach the sea.
- Passenger 5: Think of those who came before, who crossed in covered wagons, traveling foot by foot, under the beating sun no water for drinking mile after mile.
- Passenger 6 and chorus: There is one more set of mountains to cross the Sierra Nevada. They will need a second engine to pull us **UP, UP**, into the spruce and pines of the mountains as there is no way around.
- Narrator 1 and chorus: **UP, UP** over stone and under. Through the mountain's summit. Where granite was drilled and blasted. Here black powder and nitroglycerin **BOOMED!** Now in the dark engines echo: **CHUG-CHUG CHIP-CHUG! CHUG-CHUG!**
- Narrator 2: Down, down, down past orchards and towns, down toward cities, down to stop at the depot, to stop at the end of the line. Here with the people you have waited and wanted to see.
- All: Thanks to the locomotive, we've crossed the wide plains and deserts.

Extensions:

- Put students into groups to write their own reader's theater the share with the class
- Students could write a found poem



Rationale:

For readers to better comprehend the hardships, challenges that came along with the success of the locomotive. of the Chinese as they worked on building the railroad across the west.

Resources:

- Brian Floca, *Locomotive*:
- Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 1230 Avenues of the Americas, New York, New York 10020

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Are We There Yet?

Pat Lowe, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Summary:

This lesson will introduce students to the early transcontinental railroad and its function in transportation and the unification of the United States. It can be used for units on United States history, the Westward Expansion, the development of technology, geography or social relationships in the 1800s.

Objectives:

- Give students an opportunity to understand travel in a way they have not experienced.
- Explore differences between historical and present-day travel.
- Examine cultural relationships in the late 1800s.
- Teach about early steam-powered railroad trains and travel.
- Highlight a significant period of United States history.

Context:

This lesson could be used as part of a social studies unit on the westward expansion of the United States, an examination of various technologies and their development, or social relationships. It could be adapted for use with any age student.

Materials:

- Books from the resources list
- Copies of selected passages: individual sheets or pages to be projected on a screen
- Large sheets of poster paper for display in the classroom (optional)
- Paper or individual student notebooks/journals
- Internet access for research

Time Span:

The material can be presented in multiple sessions of 20 minutes each, with time in between for student reflection and writing. It could be a stand-alone lesson in a longer secondary time frame.

Procedures:

1. Using chart paper or projector, the teacher will record ideas as students brainstorm what they know and wonder about early train travel.
2. Make a list of states in which students have travelled.
3. Ask students to respond in their writing journals to the prompt, “Travelling a long way is....”
4. Show each of the books and some of the pages from each book. Discuss the obvious differences and predict how they may be similar as well as different.
5. Allow students to further examine the books, select one to read, and then choose a topic for study.
6. Give students time to conduct further research on one aspect of the content material: the construction of the tracks, Union and Central Pacific; the “Wedding of the Rails” – trains themselves – types of cars and engines; reasons why people used the railroad; the geography of the transcontinental route; topography of the land through which it passed; communication about the opportunities provided by the railroad; the use of primary sources, etc.



7. Consider the effectiveness of the various authors' choice of form in telling about the railroad.
8. Have students write in their journals an opinion about the form and content of one of the texts.
9. Have students reread their response about travelling a long way, and then compare and contrast their personal experience with early travel on the railroad.
10. Ask students to write a text using what they learned from their study. The format could be a series of fictional diary entries, a story, poem, travel brochure or fictional newspaper article from the period.
11. Have students share their work aloud.
12. Examine the chart of previous knowledge and questions. Consider what the students learned from this unit of study. Have them record their thoughts and opinions in their writing journal.

Extensions:

- Let groups of students create and present a PowerPoint demonstrating what they learned.
- Make a timeline about the construction of the transcontinental railroad.
- Create an illustrated map of the route.
- Graph the states that students have lived in or visited. How do they compare with the route of the transcontinental railroad?
- Research the amount of time required by various means of transportation today.
- Compare the images of people, places, and things shown in the various books. Are there any which appear more than once? Why might that be?
- Study the life and work of men such as Robert Louis Stevenson and Andrew J. Russell.

Rationale:

These books introduce early transcontinental travel. Conditions for the passengers are portrayed in detail, as well as the country through which they rode. They each offer a rich visual experience: photographic images and vivid illustrations. They present facts about construction and travel of early steam powered transportation and also offer readers a glimpse of the human side of the experience.

Resources:

Floca, Brian. *Locomotive*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013. Print.

Fraser, Mary Ann. *Ten Mile Day: and the Building of the Transcontinental Railroad*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993. Print.

Murphy, Jim. *Across America on an Emigrant Train*. New York: Clarion Books. 1993. Print.

Nardo, Don. *The Golden Spike: How a Photograph Celebrated the Transcontinental Railroad*. North Mankato, MN: Compass Point Books, 2015. Print.

Yin. *Coolies*. New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 2001. Print.

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“Coolies”

Judy Chesley, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Summary:

How can students better understand the plight of the Chinese who came to America looking for a better life?

Objective:

- Describe how a particular story’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward resolution.

Context:

A 6th grade elementary classroom, easily adapted for grades 4-12

Materials:

- Index cards 4x6
- Pencil and paper
- Colored pencils
- Re-sealable plastic storage bag or envelope
- *Coolies* by Yin

Time Span:

2 class periods

Procedures:

4. Read aloud *Coolies* by Yin.
5. Have students take “jot notes” (simple notes of 2 or 3 words) to recall information from the reading.
6. Students will create 3 postcards to send to their mother in China.
7. Using the file cards, the blank side will have an illustration and the lined side will be used for writing.

Tasks:

1. Students will complete three 4x6 postcards.
2. Use the information from their jot notes to complete their postcards.
3. Maintain their postcards neatly by placing them in re-sealable plastic storage bag or envelope.

Extensions:

- Have students write a letter to their parents explaining the relationship of the Chinese workers on the railroad.
- Students could share their postcards with one another or with another class.



Rationale:

For readers to better comprehend the hardships and challenges the Chinese faced as they worked on building the railroad across the American West.

Resources:

Yin. *Coolies*. New York: Penguin Putnam Books for Young Readers, 2001. Print.

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Gandy Dancer, Hogger, Ballast

Judy Chesley, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Summary:

Students will have an understanding of terms relating to the Transcontinental Railroad Teaching vocabulary across content areas as necessary before, during, and after students read a text. Pre-teaching of keywords and phrases at the beginning of a lesson will help students understand the text better, develop stronger reading comprehension, and produce higher quality writing.

Objective:

- Students will be able to show their understanding of the vocabulary by displaying the word, knowing the definition, using the word in a complete sentence, and illustrating their sentence.

Context:

A 6th grade elementary classroom, easily adapted for grades 4-8

Materials:

- *Ten Mile Day* by Mary Ann Fraser
- List of vocabulary words and definitions
- Paper, vocabulary notebook, or journal
- Pencil and colored pencils
- Dictionary or provided vocabulary list with definitions
-

Time Span:

1 or 2 class periods, or more as needed

Procedures:

1. Explain to students that in order to understand the concepts in this unit they need to have a working knowledge of these terms.
2. Students may be assigned the entire list of words or assign each student a word to share with the class. All students will enter the words presented in their vocabulary list.
3. Students may work alone, with a partner, or a small group of 3 or 4.

Task:

1. Read the book *Ten Mile Day* by Mary Ann Fraser
2. Have students take “jot notes” (simple notes of 2 or 3 words) to recall information from the reading.
3. Students will each have their own record of the unit’s vocabulary as follows:
 - a. Fold a piece of paper in half to make two columns; use a ruler to darken the center line.
 - b. Use the left side for writing the word, definition, and sentence.
 - c. Use the right side of the paper for their illustration or thumb nail sketch.
 - d. When finished with each word, use a ruler to frame off each word.
4. Reread *Ten Mile Day* as students add to jot notes.
5. Discuss: was it easier to understand what was happening in the story after learning the vocabulary?



(Suggested format)	(Suggested format)
<i>ballast</i> : gravel or rocks used to hold ties in place and provide good drainage. The men had the <i>ballast</i> in place, so the ties could be laid.	Illustration for the vocabulary word <i>ballast</i> . These are thumbnail sketches which are simple, but done neatly and colored.

Terms and Definitions

ballast	gravel or rocks used to hold ties in place and provide good drainage
couple	to hook two train cars together
end o' track	the railhead, or end of the tracks
engineer	1. a driver of a train 2. a person who designs and directs construction of a railroad
fishplate	a flat piece of metal used to connect two rails end to end
flatcar	a railroad car without any sides
gandy dancer	a man who aligns the rails; also called a track liner
gang	a crew of railroad workers
grade	ground that has been leveled and smoothed for a railroad
hogger	the engineer, or driver of the train; also called a hoggie, or hoghead
iron car	a flat car pulled over rails by men or animals, used to carry iron rails, tools, and supplies
Iron Horse	the Native Americans' name for a locomotive
ironmen	the men who lay rails onto the ties
maul	a hammer for driving spikes
pioneer	a person who aligns the ties
rail	an iron bar forming a train track
roadbed	the ground upon which the rails, ties, and ballast rest
siding	a set of tracks running alongside the main track



spike	a large nail for securing the rail to the tracks
surveyor	a person who measures the land to determine the route for the railroad
tamper	a person who packs down the ballast
thrusting bolt	a pin used to secure a fishplate to a rail
tie	the wooden supports to which rails are fastened

Extensions:

- Using a select number of vocabulary words, have students write: a poem, newspaper article, design a postcard, etc.
- Create a crossword puzzle
- Create a word search puzzle

Rationale:

Vocabulary is central to learning and language. Without sufficient vocabulary knowledge students cannot understand what they read, what others say, or express their own ideas.

Resources:

Fraser, Mary Ann. *Ten Mile Day*. New York, NY. Square Fish, an imprint of MacMillan, 1991. Print.

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Locomotive – Text Features

Felicia Bedwell, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Summary:

Students will read *Locomotive* by Brian Floca. Students will recognize and discuss text features and how the author uses various types of font to help readers visualize the story and invoke emotional responses.

Objectives:

- Students will interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings; students will also analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Students will analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Students will assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Context:

A 2nd -5th grade elementary lesson. It can be adapted for any grade.

Materials:

- The *Locomotive* by Brian Floca
- Text Features worksheet for each student
- Pencil/pen

Time Span:

1 to 2 class period times, more or less as needed

Procedures:

1. Students brainstorm a list of text features. List them on the whiteboard.
2. Add any text features the students may have missed. Make sure to cover fonts, bold words, the inside covers of the book, etc. (Refer to the appendix for a chart of common text features.)
3. Ask and/or discuss with students why authors and designers include text features when they write.
4. Read *Locomotive* by Brian Floca.
5. Optional: Teachers may consider this a first read and just read through the story or teachers may read a page and point out various text features. Depending on what choice is made, hand out the text features worksheet and have the students go through it individually. (It can also go together as a large group, depending on the age of the students and teacher preference.)
6. Hand the students the text features worksheet.
7. Students will fill out the worksheet in preparation for a class discussion.
8. Discuss with the students their responses from the worksheet.
9. Students will take a moment to record and write their findings either on a separate paper or in a reader response journal.



Extensions:

- Students choose another book to repeat the same process on their own.
- Students choose a nonfiction text and look for text features describing what the text feature is and why the author chose to use the text feature.

Rationale:

Text features allow students to have a deeper understanding and comprehension of what they are reading, how to find information, and how a text is set up. Recognizing that authors choose various types of font to express emotion to the reader allows readers to better connect to the text. Understanding text features and how text is set up allows deeper comprehension of text. “After all, that’s the power that fonts have on people. Just the act of looking at a certain font face can involuntarily stir up powerful emotions or instill a sense of nostalgia. This is why a font like Comic Sans can be so hated by designers and yet so widely used; because Comic Sans was designed to feel fun and playful, and that’s a tough emotion to resist.”

Font Psychology: How Typefaces Hack Our Brains by Vladimir Gendelman.

Resources:

Floca, Brian. *Locomotive*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013. Print.

“Guiding Students Through Expository Text with Text Feature Walks.” *Reading Rockets*, 8 Jan. 2018, www.readingrockets.org/article/guiding-students-through-expository-text-text-feature-walks.

“Utilizing Text and Font Features in Your Writing | Worksheet.” *Education.com*, 28 Oct. 2017, www.education.com/worksheet/article/utilizing-text-and-font-features-in-your-writing/.

“Text Features - Form DL-H.” *Schools.archmil.org*, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2012, <https://schools.archmil.org/CentersofExcellence/DOCsPDFs/Learning-Support-Teams/2013-LST/7TextFeatures.pdf>

Chi, Felix. “Your Text Tells a Story – But Your Font Evokes Emotion. What Does Your Font Say?” *Peak Seven Advertising*, 6 Mar. 2015, <https://peakseven.com/blog/text-tells-story-font-evokes-emotion-font-say/>

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Text Feature Scavenger Hunt

1. Where in the story, *Locomotive* by Brian Floca, can you find information about steam power?

2. Where in the story can you find a map of the path the railroad took? What else did you find on that page?

3. Choose a page the author has used various types of fonts for certain words. Why do you think the author chose to use the types of fonts used for those words?

4. Which part of the story was your favorite? Why?



Appendix

Common text features to explicitly teach students

Name of text feature	Purpose of text feature
Title	Quickly tells the reader what information they will learn about
Table of contents	Shows students the different chapter or section titles and where they are located
Index	Directs students where to go in the text to find specific information on a topic, word, or person
Glossary	Identifies important vocabulary words for students and provides definitions
Headings or subtitles	Help the reader identify the main idea for that section of text
Sidebars	Are set apart from the main text (usually located on the side or bottom of the page) and elaborate on a detail mentioned in the text
Pictures and captions	Show an important object or idea from the text
Labeled diagrams	Allow readers to see detailed depictions of an object from the text with labels that teach the important components
Charts and graphs	Represent and show data related to, or elaborate on, something in the main body of text
Maps	Help a reader locate a place in the world that is related to text
Cutaways and cross sections	Allow readers to see inside something by dissolving part of a wall or to see all the layers of an object by bisecting it for viewing
Inset photos	Can show either a faraway view of something or a close-up shot of minute detail
Italics	Italics are usually used when formatting titles of works (including books, movies, newspapers, and art), forging words, and the unspoken internal thoughts of characters. They can also be used simply to give emphasis to words.



Colored or bold	Colored or bold font is used to draw a lot of attention to a word (for example to introduce important terms in nonfiction texts), to set a word or name apart from the text, or to format subtitles.
Underlining	Underlining can be used in place of italics when writing titles of works by hand. It can also be used to format subheadings and titles, or to otherwise indicate a separate section of text.
ALL CAPS	ALL CAPS can be used in advertising, to format the cover titles of books or magazines, for acronyms, or to indicate that a character is shouting.
Type of font	Types of font face can involuntarily stir up powerful emotions or instill a sense of nostalgia.



Onomatopoeia: What's That?

Pat Lowe, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Summary:

This lesson will introduce students to the early transcontinental railroad locomotive, its function in transportation, and the unification of the United States. The text is written in poetic form; it makes use of onomatopoeia on many pages. It can be used for units on United States history, the Westward Expansion, the development of technology, or in a language arts unit on literary devices.

Objectives:

- Explore the use of onomatopoeia in writing.
- Offer students an opportunity to experience a new literary device.
- Teach about early steam-powered railroad trains.
- Highlight a significant period of United States history.

Context:

This lesson could be used as part of a social studies unit on the westward expansion of the United States, an examination of various technologies and their development, or the study of unusual literary devices. It could be adapted for use with any age student.

Materials:

- Book(s) from the lesson's resources list
- Copies of selected passages: individual sheets or pages to be projected on a screen
- Large sheets of poster paper for display in the classroom (optional)
- Paper or individual student notebooks or journals

Time Span:

The material can be presented in multiple sessions of 20 minutes each, with time in between for student reflection and writing. It could be a stand-alone lesson for a longer secondary time frame.

Procedures:

1. Using chart paper or projector, the teacher will record ideas as students brainstorm ideas for a word bank on trains. Add to it after reading the book.
2. Read the text together. Teacher could show the pages on a screen with a projector.
3. Discuss the words in bold type or distinct font styles; what do they seem to have in common?
4. Talk about how those words add meaning and emphasis to the text. Have students read passages aloud to hear the effect of particular words and phrases.
5. Present the idea of the literary device, onomatopoeia. The resources site and e-reading worksheets have written examples, references to Common Core Standards, as well as links to YouTube lessons, songs, and videos.
6. Have students make a list of topics in their writing journals which would lend themselves to the use of onomatopoeia to create sound.
7. Ask students to write a text which uses onomatopoeia. The form could be a narrative, poem, rap, commercial advertisement, or short reader's theater.



8. Let students share their work aloud. Onomatopoeia is especially effective when presented orally.

Extensions:

- For younger students, make a graph showing the number of students who have seen an engine or ridden a train. This could be on paper, by students standing in a line, or with manipulatives at their tables.
- Brainstorm other things from the story which could be graphed: specific words, people, animals, buildings, telegraph poles, etc. Does the number of items reflect relative importance?
- Let small groups of students to rewrite a nursery rhyme or familiar story such as *The Three Little Pigs* or *The Little Red Hen* using onomatopoeia in their text. Allow students to present it orally.
- Challenge students to identify other familiar texts which use onomatopoeia.
- Research ways in which different languages make words for sounds such as the dog's bark or cat's meow. Create a poster to share the differences.

Rationale:

This book presents abundant factual information in a novel way. Not only is it written in a slant rhyming format, but it uses onomatopoeic words as part of the delivery of ideas. It offers more than information about the early steam powered engines, but also wraps the reader in the sounds of the experience.

Resources:

Floca, Brian. *Locomotive*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013. Print.

“5 Examples of Onomatopoeia.” *YourDictionary*, 12 May 2018, <http://examples.yourdictionary.com/5-examples-of-onomatopoeia.html>

“A Huge List of Onomatopoeia Examples.” *Literary Devices*, 9 Dec. 2018, <http://literarydevices.net/a-huge-list-of-onomatopoeia-examples>.

“Onomatopoeia - Examples and Definition of Onomatopoeia.” *Literary Devices*, 09 Jun. 2018, <https://literarydevices.net/onomatopoeia/>

“101 Onomatopoeia Examples | E-reading Worksheets.” *Figurative Language*, 09 Jun. 2018, www.ereadingworksheets.com/figurative-language/poetic-devices/onomatopoeia-examples/

“Onomatopoeia - Dictionary Definition.” *Vocabulary.com*, 12 Jun. 2018 www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/onomatopoeia

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That Book's Not a Poem!

Pat Lowe, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Summary:

This lesson will introduce students to the early transcontinental railroad locomotive and its function in transportation and the unification of the United States. The text is written in poetic form; it makes use of imperfect rhymes, rhythm and cadence to present informational content. It can be used for units on United States history, the Westward Expansion, the development of technology, or in a language arts unit about figurative language and literary devices.

Objectives:

- Offer students an opportunity to experience informational content from a poetic perspective.
- Explore differences between the typical non-fiction format, and poetic presentation.
- Learn about imperfect, half, or slant rhyme and its use in writing.
- Recognize and use rhythm and cadence in text.
- Teach about early steam-powered railroad trains.
- Highlight a significant period of United States history.

Context:

This lesson could be used as part of a social studies unit on the westward expansion of the United States, an examination of various technologies and their development, or the study of poetic devices. It could be adapted for use with any age student.

Materials:

- Book from the resources list
- Copies of selected passages: individual sheets or pages to be projected on a screen
- Large sheets of poster paper for display in the classroom (optional)
- Paper or individual student notebooks or journals

Time Span:

The material can be presented in multiple sessions of 20 minutes each, with time in between for student reflection and writing. It could be a stand-alone lesson in a longer secondary time frame.

Procedures:

1. Using chart paper or projector, the teacher will record ideas as students brainstorm characteristics of poetry. In contrast, list characteristics of non-fiction text.
2. Ask students to respond in their writing journals to the prompt, "Poetry is...."
3. Read the text together. Teacher could show the pages on a screen with a projector.
4. Discuss how the text looks on a page.
 - a. How would it usually look if it were in a text book?
 - b. What is the effect of using short lines of words rather than writing the information in paragraphs?
5. Consider the effectiveness of the author's choice of form in telling about the early railroad.



6. Have students write in their journals an opinion about whether or not the book is written in a poetic style.
7. Present the idea of the poetic use of slant or imperfect rhyme.
 - a. To teach the concept, use the *LitCharts* and e-reading sites. The latter includes references to Common Core Standards.
8. Examine the text.
 - a. Does the author use internal rhyme and perfect rhyme also?
 - b. Have the students record examples in their writing journals.
9. Show the seven minute YouTube video by [Donovon Jenson](#) which includes a discussion of rhythm and cadence in addition to slant rhyme techniques.
10. Read aloud the first page of text.
 - a. Have students count the syllables of the two parts of the sentence.
 - b. What other parts of the book show rhythm and cadence?
 - c. Are they always the same?
 - d. Why might the author have used the words he did?
11. Let students write favorite phrases and sentences in their journals.
12. Have students re-read their response about poetry, and their earlier opinion about *Locomotive*. Did their views change because of studying the book?
13. Ask students to write a text using one of the poetic forms demonstrated in the book. The format could be a narrative, poem or rap.
14. Have students share their work aloud.

Extensions:

- Let small groups of students to rewrite a part of the text in a straight, non-fiction style. Share with the class, and then discuss which format they prefer. Why do they prefer one or the other?
- Challenge students to identify other familiar texts which use imperfect rhyme, or rhythm and cadence.
- Have students debate the merits of the terms imperfect, half, or slant rhyme to describe this literary technique. Can they think of a better, more accurate term?

Rationale:

This book presents abundant factual information in a unique way. Not only is it written in an imperfect rhyming format, but it uses words which create rhythm and cadence. It offers more than facts about the early steam powered engines, but also wraps the reader in the feel of the travel experience.

Resources:

Bergman, Bennet. "Slant Rhyme." *LitCharts*, 5 May 2017, www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/slant-rhyme

Floca, Brian. *Locomotive*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2013. Print.

"Half Rhyme - Definition and Examples of Half Rhyme." *Literary Devices*, 9 Nov. 2018, <https://literarydevices.net/half-rhyme/>

"Poetic Devices Worksheets and Activities | E-reading Worksheets." *Figurative Language*, 13 Jun. 2018, www.ereadingworksheets.com/figurative.../poetic-devices/



Jenson, Donovan, director. *YouTube*, 22 June 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJw-XMnBQaQ

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“Thundering and panting and breathing black smoke, it was a fearsome thing.”

Judy Chesley, Wasatch Range Writing Project

Summary:

Students will write a personal narrative from the point of view of the Cheyenne people who were terrified by the steam locomotive, a thing they had never seen before.

Objective:

Students will show their understanding of the true story of August 7, 1867, using complete sentences and descriptive vocabulary to bring alive the courage and pride of the Cheyenne as they try to preserve their way of life.

Context:

A 6th grade classroom, easily adapted for grades 4-8

Materials:

- *Death of the Iron Horse* by Paul Goble
- Paper, journal or other preferred material
- Pencil or pen

Time Span:

1 to 2 class periods, more as needed

Procedure:

1. Explain to students that to understand this true story, they need to have an understanding of the Cheyenne point of view of the iron horse.
2. Review or teach the forms of the personal pronoun:

1st person singular	I, me, mine, myself	tell one's own story
2nd person singular	You, your, yours, yourself	give orders, instruction
3rd person singular	She/he, her/him, herself/ Himself, hers, his	tell another person's story
1st person plural	We, us, ours, ourselves	tell the story of one's own group
2nd person plural	You, your, yourselves	give orders to a group
3rd person plural	they, them, themselves	tell the story of a group
3. Practice identifying point of view.
 - a. Choose five or six books and read a paragraph from each. Have students identify the point of view used on the paragraph on a piece of paper.
4. Read the book *Death of the Iron Horse*.
5. Have students take “jot notes” (simple notes of 2 or 3 words) to recall information from the reading.

**Tasks:**

1. Discuss the varying points of view possible to take in telling this true story.
2. Discuss which ones Paul Goble use and why he chose that one.
3. Ask students to tell the story of the death of the iron horse from a first person point of view.
4. Have students read their writing to another student.
5. Ask students to listen for accuracy of view point (how would he/she know that; how could she/he see that) and then for correct use of personal pronouns.

Extension:

- Create a crossword puzzle using words from the story.
- Create a word search using words from the story.
- Write a letter from one of the participants to a relative or friend about the event.
- Write a poem using sensory images (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste) from the book.

Rationale:

By writing personal narrative, students gain a sense of ownership as they learn to use the tools of the appropriate point of view. They also gain empathy as they look at the world through the eyes of people other than themselves.

Resources:

Goble, Paul. *Death of the Iron Horse*. New York, NY: Aladdin Paperbacks, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. 1993. Print.

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