

## **Oh, My, the Wind is Howling**

Judy Chesley, Wasatch Writing Project

### **Summary:**

Students will learn about the causes of a hurricane like Katrina, and the impact of such a natural event on society: people, animals, and buildings in its path. They will apply this learning to other such events.

### **Objective:**

Students will be able to:

- describe how a super storm develops and unfolds.
- analyze how people respond.
- evaluate how people move toward a solution when the storm is over.

### **Context:**

A sixth-grade classroom, easily adapted for grades 4-12.

### **Materials:**

- Paper and pencil
- iPads or other research materials
- Format for presentation, newspaper front page
- Newspaper front page
- *Drowned City, Hurricane Katrina & New Orleans* by Don Brown

### **Time Span:**

Three class periods or more as needed

### **Procedures:**

1. Hand out a template for students to take “jot notes” (simple notes of two or three words) to recall information from the reading.
  - The storm begins
  - The hurricane arrives in New Orleans
  - How do residents of New Orleans react?
  - Who helps the residents of New Orleans?
  - What happens next
2. Read aloud *Drowned City Hurricane Katrina & New Orleans* by Don Brown
3. Students conduct research on other actual super storms. They may work in pairs, or a group of 3.
4. Students will record their information in jot note format to organize their data.
5. Share, show, and talk about what goes on the front page of a newspaper, including the following:
  - in a news story, the emphasis is on content rather than form.
  - a news story goes straight to the point, presenting the most important facts first
  - a news story uses simple and effective words to deliver the facts quickly. ...
6. Have each group of students prepare a front-page newspaper format to present their information.



7. Share and display their “Front Page News.”

**Extensions:**

- Scrapbook
- Power Point
- Readers Theater
- Find a school involved in a SuperStorm, and write to students of the same grade at the time of the SuperStorm.

**Rationale:**

For students to study the forces and changes in weather, they will better understand the weather where they live; when they learn the hardships and challenges of those affected by weather events, they will be able to connect their lives with other people and so grow in compassion.

**Resources:**

Brown, Don, *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina & New Orleans*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.

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## Poems About the Pond

Katy Wilson, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### Summary:

Students will be given an opportunity to read poems about a pond from a children's book, research about the various living things that inhabit a pond, and use the information to write a group poem about a specific pond organism or topic.

### Objectives:

- UT 7: ELA: RIT 1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says and any inferences drawn from the text.
- UT 7: ELA: RIT10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literary nonfiction in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- UT 7: ELA: RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
- UT 7: ELA: RL5: Analyze how form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to the meaning of a drama or poem.
- UT 7: ELA: RL10: By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 6–8 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- UT 7: ELA: W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- UT 7: ELA: W5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
- UT 7: ELA: W7: Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional questions for further research and investigation.
- UT 7: ELA: W10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**Context:** 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Class

### Materials:

- A copy of *Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems* (Sidman, 2005) or copy of group's poem
- Computers/laptops/ipads
- Encyclopedias or online encyclopedia (<https://www.britannica.com/>)
- Pen/pencil
- Notebook/paper

### Time span:

90 minutes



## Procedures:

1. The teacher reads the poem "Listen for Me" in the book *Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems* (Sidman, 2005, p.3) and "Spring Peepers" explanatory paragraph in the same book (p.4). Each of the poems is about a specific pond organism (plant or animal).
2. The teacher leads a guided mini discussion about poetry forms, poetry writing techniques and research about pond organisms/topics using an encyclopedia (print or online).
3. The teacher and the class use an encyclopedia to conduct some more research about Spring Peepers (tree frogs) and draft a short poem together as a class.
4. The teacher explains that the students will be reading a poem from the book as a group, researching about a pond organism/topic and writing a group poem using the poem and research.
5. The teacher organizes the class into 10 groups and assigns their poems/organisms as follows:
  1. Group 1: "Spring Splashdown"/Wood Duck
  2. Group 2: "Diving Beetle's Food-Sharing Rules"/Great Diving Beetle
  3. Group 3: "Fly, Dragonfly!"/Green Darner
  4. Group 4: "In the Depths of the Summer Pond"/Food Chain
  5. Group 5: "A Small Green Riddle"/Duckweed
  6. Group 6: "Aquatic Fashion"/Caddis Fly
  7. Group 7: "Song of the Water Boatman and Backswimmer's Refrain"/Water Boatman, Backswimmer
  8. Group 8: "Travel Time"/Water Bear
  9. Group 9: "The Season's Campaign"/Cattails
  10. Group 10: "Into the Mud"/Painted Turtle
6. The students read their assigned poem and the explanatory paragraph from the book aloud to their group.
7. The students also look for more information (20 minutes) about their assigned pond organism/topic in an encyclopedia and take notes in their notebooks.
7. The students write a group poem about their assigned pond organism/topic (30-40 minutes).
8. The students pair up with another group (teacher can organize this) and read their poems. Students nominate one of the poems to be read to the class.
9. The top five groups read their poems aloud to the class. Students vote for their favorite poem.
10. The teacher calls on random students to comment about what they learned about the pond organisms/topics, poems and/or the entire process of researching and writing.
11. The students are then given time to choose a poem to use for inspiration to write their own pond poem.

## Extensions:

- Students may write a play using the pond as a setting.
- This lesson can be adapted to older or younger students.

## Rationale:

Students can be inspired to write poetry by reading poems and researching about pond organisms. Students also remember scientific principles if they can relate them to a poem. Students work together at the beginning of the school year to write poems which is easier than trying to write them on their own. The cross-curricular connection between science and language arts helps students increase understanding in both subjects.



**Resources:**

Encyclopedia Britannica Online. (2019). Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. Retrieved from:  
<https://www.britannica.com/>

Sidman, J. (2005). *Song of the Water Boatman and Other Pond Poems*. New York, NY: Houghton  
Mifflin Publishing Company.

UEN. (2014). *Utah Core Standards*. Utah Education Network. Retrieved from: <http://www.uen.org/core/>

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## Shaping the Narrative: Media and Hurricane Katrina

Gwen Romero, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### Summary:

Students will study the events and media coverage of Hurricane Katrina to develop an understanding of how media shapes our opinions about events.

### Objectives:

- Develop critical thinking skills through researching, analyzing, synthesizing information.
- Analyze the effects of media coverage on our understanding of events and issues.
- Communicate understanding of a complex issue in writing.

### Context:

A seventh to twelfth-grade English/literature class, social studies, or science class.

### Materials:

- Copies of *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans*, by Don Brown, for whole class.
- Computer access.
- Pens/pencils, paper, and class copies of Guided Notes (attached).

### Time Span:

Five sessions of 45-minutes with homework; additional days if completing all work in class and for extensions.

### Procedures:

1. **Session 1.** Introduce Hurricane Katrina—what, when, where, and significance (abridged version). Have each student search an article about Katrina, source is not limited at this point, and complete Part 1 of the guided notes,\* due by start of second session.  
\*May be copied or scanned for use on digital classroom.
2. **Session 2.** Have students share articles in groups of 4 or 5; focus on the bolded points of the guided notes. As a class, discuss the **event**, key details from the various **sources**, the different **perspectives** presented, and the **biases**. Have students complete Part 2 of the notes.
3. Introduce *Drowned City*. Have students read the novel and complete Part 3 of the notes.
4. **Session 3.** Class discussion of novel, referencing student notes and addressing these central questions: What happened (events/details)? Why did it happen? What are the similarities and differences between the news articles' reporting and the details of the novel?
5. Have each student search one of the author's sources from the Bibliography at the end of the book and complete Part 4 of the notes for Session 4—source information and graphic organizer.  
**Note:** There are enough sources included to have each student select a different source, or you might have two students use the same source and compare their findings.
6. **Session 4.** Divide class into small groups to share their findings from the additional sources. Then, as a whole group, have students share additional comments/observations/details from their small group discussions before the Written Response.



7. Written Response\*\* on lined paper or as digital response: What is your opinion of this event? Whom do you think is responsible/to blame? How? Why? How have the various sources shaped your opinion and understanding? \*\*Draft during Session 4; share in Session 5.

**Note:** For most classes, this may be just a two-paragraph response that covers argument (opinion) and reflection (sources' influence). Or, you may want to expand this to a full essay response.

**Follow up:** Each student will write a letter to his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) and explain what he/she learned about this event, its coverage, and its relevance today. Use four-paragraph structure (3 areas + thank you and request for response—a note and signature on the back of the letter that the student shared it can be used for completion points). Both MS Word and Google Docs have templates for letters.

### **Extensions:**

For each of these, students are specifically trying to separate the facts from the bias to identify how representation of details informs, limits, or influences peoples' understanding of the events or topics. Discussion should center on the big questions: How does “the narrative” affect public perception and policy making? And, what is the impact on communities *and* individuals?

- For ELA or social studies class: Have students research a current event and present on the multiple perspectives involved, including the biases of each perspective. (I have my students find at least three articles either from different groups involved or different media perspectives, such as right-leaning, left-leaning, and moderate/little to no bias--like Poltifact or Fortune). Discuss each event.
- For science class: have students research, report to the class, and discuss other environmental issues, such as another natural disaster, pollution, climate change, vaccinations, etc.
- Have students write to one of our senators or representatives—State or Congress—about one of these issues.

### **Rationale:**

Having students closely study a major event and its representation in media facilitates understanding of bias in the media, politics, and opinions, and the effects of media coverage on crises management and policymaking. This helps students to become critical thinkers and more effective citizens.

### **Resources:**

Brown, Don. *Drowned City: Hurricane Katrina and New Orleans*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015.  
[Mediabiasfactcheck.com](http://mediabiasfactcheck.com)  
Media Study Guided Notes (attached)

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Media Study Guided Notes

**Part 1.** Complete the following notes and graphic organizer as you read your article.

1. Article and source information:

**Title of article** \_\_\_\_\_

Writer \_\_\_\_\_ Credentials? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of publication \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of publication** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Article details** (use note format):

What happened?	Why did it happen?
Who is responsible and how so?	What key phrases did the writer use to describe this event? List _____.

3. **Based on this article, what is your opinion of this event? Please explain.**





**Part 2.** Discuss your article with a group; help each other to complete the following notes.

1. What perspectives were represented in the articles? Victims? Bystanders? Government officials? Emergency personnel? etc. in addition to the reporter. Include some supporting details to help identify the perspectives.

2. What did each perspective add to your understanding of the event?

3. What details might you have missed if you all read the same article?

4. *Bias* is “a feeling in favor of or against a specific person, group, or idea and the emotional language or selection of specific details that evokes that bias in others”.

a. Did any of the articles seem to have a specific bias? Which one(s)? Explain with examples.

b. Did any of the articles make you feel a specific way about the event and/or the people involved? Which one(s)? Explain with examples.

c. Search the publication for one of these articles on [mediabiasfactcheck.com](http://mediabiasfactcheck.com) or [allsides.com](http://allsides.com) and note what bias that publication is known for. Do you agree with that classification? Why, or why not?



**Part 3.** Complete the following graphic organizer as you read *Drowned City*.

Any new information (details that were not discussed with the articles):	Does the author seem sympathetic toward anyone involved in this event? Whom? Explain.	Whom does the author imply is responsible for the severity of this event? Explain.
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What is your opinion of this event now? What did the novel add to your opinion?

**Part 4.** Complete the following notes and graphic organizer as you read your additional source.

1. Article and source information:

**Title of article** \_\_\_\_\_

Writer \_\_\_\_\_ Credentials? \_\_\_\_\_

Date of publication \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of publication** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Article details** (use note format):

Key details:	New information that you learned:
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Key perspectives:	Any bias or emotional appeals? Include examples.
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**Class Discussion Notes:** Your and your peers observations/thoughts during whole class discussion.

**Based on what you have studied and discussed in class:** What is your opinion of this event? Whom do you think is responsible/to blame for the number of lives affected and the overall level of loss from this event? How? Why? How have the various sources shaped your opinion and understanding? (Write on lined paper or type.)



## **Wallace Stegner Style Study**

Gwen Romero, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### **Summary:**

Students will study an “expert writer” for stylistic choices: diction, syntax, selection of detail, use of punctuation, use of figurative language, etc.

### **Objectives:**

- Read, discuss, and analyze stylistic choices in an informational text.
- Identify examples of strong writing in an informational text.
- Develop individual writing skills using models.

### **Context:**

Grades 11 and 12 English Language Arts, or advanced class grade 9 or 10.

### **Materials:**

- Class set of Wallace Stegner’s *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West*.
- Pens/pencils, copies of the Style Sheet for the whole class; lined paper or computer access for final modeled response.

### **Time Span:**

One 45-minute session plus one 25-minute session with homework.

### **Procedures:**

1. Distribute copies of Stegner Style Sheet.
2. Review style vocabulary with class; note reminders on board as needed (ie. types of figurative language).
3. Complete Example 1 as a class; this is where you should decide how many details you want your students to note (I encourage struggling students to identify at least 5 from the different areas).
4. Have students complete Examples 2 and 3 individually or with a partner, then review as a class.
5. Have students complete Example 4 individually or with a partner, then review examples with the class (I either have the class all turn to the example in the book or use a document camera).
6. Have students complete Part 2 individually and set due date for second session.
7. Session 2, have students share Part 2 in small groups (3-4 students), then select several to share with the whole class.

### **Extension:**

Have students complete additional modeling activities from other parts of the novel, articles, or in a letter.

### **Rationale:**



Using strong writers as models strengthens students' writing.

**Resources:**

Stegner, Wallace. *Beyond the Hundredth Meridian: John Wesley Powell and the Second Opening of the West*. Penguin Books, 1992.

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**Part I. Style Elements.**

diction	syntax	selection of details
commas, semicolons, colons	figurative language	imagery
parallel structure	repetition	point of view

Read each example closely and mark notes on Stegner’s use of the various key style elements. In the box to the right, comment on what is emphasized by or the overall effect of those stylistic choices.

<p><b>Example 1: Powell described.</b></p> <p>The bearded, one-armed young man who commanded the Rocky Mountain Exploring Expedition, and who had acquired the life-long title of Major in the same volunteer service that cost him his arm, was almost classically a product of that special frontier education. His character, his ideas, his very weaknesses and his peculiar strengths derived from a social and intellectual climate nearly rudimentary, nearly unformed, but of a singularly formative kind. (10)</p>	
<p><b>Example 2: Conditions on the expedition.</b></p> <p>A little cabin fever, a little rubbing on the irritated nerves. Perhaps Sam Garman had a legitimate grievance. The trappers in their independence and solidarity would be hard to command, and Powell’s maiming kept him from many tasks. There remained only Garman to fall back on, since Walter Powell, moody and difficult, was hardly a dependable helper. (41)</p>	



**Example 3: Describing the area.**

Green and Grand together drained a vast semicircle of mountains from the Wind Rivers in Wyoming through all the ranges of western Colorado and on down to the San Francisco peaks in northern Arizona. Where water ran and rock disintegrated, gold would wash down; where a river cut through thousands of feet of rock, veins would be exposed. (44)

**Example 4: Find another example on your own.**

Context \_\_\_\_\_

Direct quote (include page number in parenthesis at the end):

Discussion: What do you notice about Stegner's writing style? Is he very elaborate? Is he very concrete? What does he do with sentence structure and language? What patterns do you notice among the four examples?

**Part II.** Apply elements of Stegner's style to your own writing. On a separate paper:

1. Brainstorm a list of people and/or places that you know well and a list of descriptive details for each.
2. Select one and draft a paragraph describing that person or place.
3. Edit your draft and include several of the same stylistic elements that Stegner uses in his book.
4. Proofread and be prepared to share.



## Water Spirits

Paula Simonson, Wasatch Range Writing Project

### Summary:

Students will compare/contrast water legends and folktales both local and multi-cultural. Students will conduct research on a water-based legend/folktale from a country, state, or region of their choosing while working in pairs or individually. Students will then create a project to demonstrate understanding.

Students may also have the opportunity to write an original legend/folktale based on a personal experience they have had with water.

### Objectives:

- After reading, analyzing, and discussing a selection of short stories, cultural folktales, and mythology about water, students will be able to identify similarities/differences based on cultural values.
- Students will conduct a short research project about a water folktale/myth from a culture of their choosing.
- Students will produce a short presentation on Google Sites, or any other desired format, to demonstrate and share what they learned.
- Students will create an original short story or folktale to wrap up the lesson.

### Context:

This lesson can be used in secondary classrooms but could also be adapted to upper elementary grades by creating an age-appropriate selection of materials.

### Materials:

- Classroom copies of “Prologue: The Water Sprite” from *Water: Tales of Elemental Spirits* (short story)
- Classroom copies or online links to “The Evil Water Spirits - A Native American Legend” (legend)
- Classroom copies or online links to “Terror at the Bottom of the Lake - Utah Stories” (photograph and article)
- Optional - Classroom copies or online links to “Loch Ness Monster - Real vs Myth, Location & Lake” (article)
- Optional - Classroom copies or online links to “Legend of the Bear Lake Monsters - Yes, in the plural” (article)
- Access to computers and Google Sites or similar format

### Time Frame:





This lesson can be easily modified to take as little as a week or as long as two weeks depending upon desired objectives.

### **Procedures:**

1. Begin with a prewriting activity. Ask students to write about a strong personal memory involving water. Allow adequate time for students to produce a sharable piece of writing.
2. Have students share writing/memory with the class or in small groups or pairs.
3. Distribute copies of “Prologue: The Water Sprite” from *Water: Tales of Elemental Spirits*. Read and discuss the story together in class.
4. Next, read “The Evil Water Spirits - A Native American Legend” and have students discuss why this legend may have been created and consider how it is similar to other well-known folktales such as “Little Red Riding Hood.” What similarities do they see?
5. Have students independently read the article “Loch Ness Monster - Real vs Myth, Location & Lake.” This article is optional; however, a set of comprehension questions could be created to help struggling readers demonstrate understanding of key pieces of text.
6. Project a copy of the photograph included in the article, “Terror at the Bottom of the Lake - Utah Stories” and have students use the photograph as a prompt to write a piece of flash fiction before reading the accompanying article.
7. Assign “Legend of the Bear Lake Monsters - Yes, in the plural” as homework or complete in class. This is an optional article but it is a fun connection for students who have spent time at Bear Lake.

### **Task:**

- Now that students have a strong background and understanding of various pieces of water folklore, either assign a country, culture, or region to each student (pairs) or allow them to choose an area of personal interest. Students will then find and research a well-known piece or folklore or mythology involving water from that location/region. Provide students with a list of required information such as dates, locations, historical and cultural significance, etc.
- Give students adequate time in class or could be assigned as homework. Completed Google Sites should include appropriate images and demonstrate a strong understanding of the topic. Finished projects can be shared in small groups, pairs, or as a class.

### **Extensions:**

Have students write an original legend/folktale based on what was learned in research or a personal experience they have had with water.

### **Rationale:**

In order to obtain a deeper understanding and appreciation of various cultures, students should be able to identify underlying similarities and differences found within a wide range cultural folklore and mythology.



## Resources:

Arave, Lynn. "Legend of the Bear Lake Monsters - yes, in plural." *Deseret News*, 10, October 2017, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/865690693/Legend-of-the-Bear-Lake-Monsters-2-yes-in-the-plural.html>. Accessed 5 July 2019.

"Loch Ness Monster." *History.com*, <https://www.history.com/topics/folklore/loch-ness-monster>. Accessed 3 July 2019.

McKinley, R., Dickinson, P. *water: Tales of Elemental Spirits*. Firebird, 2002.

Stewart, Danny. "Terror at the Bottom of the Lake." *Utah Stories*, 13 October, 2017, <https://utahstories.com/2017/10/terror-at-the-bottom-of-the-lake/>. Accessed 4 July 2019.

"The Evil Water Spirits - A Native American Legend." *Whispering Books.com*, [http://whisperingbooks.com/Show\\_Page/?book=Native\\_American\\_Legends&story=The\\_Evil\\_Water\\_Spirits](http://whisperingbooks.com/Show_Page/?book=Native_American_Legends&story=The_Evil_Water_Spirits). Accessed 5 July 2019.

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