



Great Lakes Great Lives



Jean Dunstan

LESSON ELEVEN

Subject/Grade:

Grade 7, English Language Arts and Social Studies

Duration:

One field trip to the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum or to another lighthouse museum.

One class period for lesson

Materials needed:

For Teacher:

- Bio-poem format (overhead)
- Bio-poem sample (overhead)
- Bio-poem worksheet
- Overhead projector

Per Student:

- Bio-poem worksheet
- Pencils
- Paper
- Clipboards
- Computers (Optional: for typing the final draft of the bio-poem and/or conducting research).

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Lesson Overview

Students tour the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point (or another lighthouse or life-saving station) and select a person who was engaged in protecting the lives of ship captains and crews on the Great Lakes during the past 150 years. The student then focuses on learning more about this person during their visit. Some possible individuals include: lighthouse keepers, their families, life-saving station keepers, or their crews. Students write a narrative or bio-poem about the person they select in order to focus on the characteristics of a person, animal, or object. The lesson encourages teachers and students to appreciate the pioneering spirit embraced by the early settlers of the U.P. during the mid-to-late 1800's and first half of the 1900's.

Learning Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to

1. Describe the lifestyle of lighthouse keepers and their families before lighthouses were automated in the late 1950s.
2. List the types of ships that plied the waters off Whitefish Point in the early 1900s.
3. Create a bio-poem of a person or ship that is displayed at the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum (or found online)

STANDARDS



Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) Addressed

Grade 7 Language Arts

R.NT.07.02

analyze the structure, elements, style, and purpose of narrative genre including mystery, poetry, memoir, drama, myths, and legends.

R.CS.07.01

analyze the appropriateness of shared, individual and expert standards based on purpose, context, and audience in order to assess their own writing and the writing of others.

R.MT.07.01

self-monitor comprehension when reading or listening to text by automatically applying and discussing the strategies used by mature readers to increase comprehension including: predicting, constructing mental images, visually representing ideas in text, questioning, rereading or listening again if uncertain about meaning, inferring, summarizing, and engaging in interpretive discussions.

W.GN.07.01

write a cohesive narrative piece such as a memoir, drama, legend, mystery, poetry, or myth that includes appropriate conventions to the genre employing literary and plot devices (e.g., internal and/or external conflicts, antagonists/protagonists, personification).

W.PR.07.02

apply a variety of pre-writing strategies for both narrative (e.g., graphically depict roles of antagonist/protagonist, internal/external conflict) and informational writing (e.g., position statement/supporting evidence, problem statement/solution, or compare/contrast).

Background

The Upper Peninsula of Michigan is home to many lighthouses constructed between the mid-1800's and early 1900's. It was during this time that the Upper Peninsula copper and iron ore boom was occurring, necessitating heavy ship traffic on Lake Superior to transport both people and the copper and iron ore to and from the more populated areas and ports along Lakes Michigan, Huron, Erie, and Ontario. The Copper Harbor Lighthouse and the Whitefish Point lighthouse both began operation in 1849 and were the first two land-based navigational aids established on treacherous Lake Superior.

Life-Saving Stations (many of which are now Maritime Museums) were built in the late 1800s to house the crews and equipment which would be called upon to save the lives of passengers and crews of ships in distress. In 1915, the U.S. Life-Saving Service was merged with the Revenue Cutter Service to create the U.S. Coast Guard. Approximately 60 stations were located along the Great Lakes shoreline.

Advance Preparation

Make overheads of sample bio-poem, bio-poem format, and copies of bio-poem outline for students. If a field trip to a lighthouse is not possible, students may research Great Lakes lighthouses or life-saving station keepers online.

Procedure

A Bio-poem can be used to teach students to focus on the characteristics or traits of a person, place, object or animal. It requires the student to put themselves in the subject's shoes. Teachers will familiarize students with the structure of a bio-poem prior to the field trip to the lighthouse museum by reviewing the worksheet.



1. Explain that a bio-poem can be used to teach students to focus on the characteristics or traits of a person, place, object or animal. It requires the student to put themselves in the subject's shoes.

Introduce students to the structure of a bio-poem, showing an overhead transparency of the sample bio-poem and the bio-poem format. Have students complete a bio-poem about themselves. Have students volunteer to share their autobiographical bio-poems aloud.

2. If you are able to visit the Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum (or another lighthouse or maritime museum), have students take a tour looking for informational text about past lighthouse keepers, life-saving station crew members, or ship captains and crews. Students should choose one person or ship about whom they can fill out the bio-poem worksheet. Alternatively, students may look online to find information about lighthouse keepers or life-saving station crew members.
3. Students should read and take notes on the informational text they obtain, and if possible, interview docents at the museum for additional information.

Students should have the interview skills necessary by the 7th grade. If not, here are a few sample questions they could ask about children who may have lived at a lighthouse:

- a. *Have any children lived at this lighthouse? If so, what were their ages?*
 - b. *What kinds of activities did the children do for fun?*
 - c. *What kinds of chores did the children have to do?*
 - d. *What would a typical day be like for a child living at a lighthouse in the late 1800's?*
4. Students are encouraged to use words that are concise and descriptive in their bio-poems. *The Student Handbook from Power Writing Plus: Teach the Traits of Effective*

STANDARDS



Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) Addressed

Grade 7 Language Arts

W.PR.07.03

revise drafts to reflect different perspectives for multiple purposes and to ensure that content, structure, elements of style and voice, literary devices, and text features are consistent.

W.PR.07.05

proofread and edit writing using grade-level checklists and other appropriate resources both individually and in groups.

W.PS.07.01

exhibit personal style and voice to enhance the written message in both narrative (e.g., personification, humor, element of surprise) and informational writing (e.g., emotional appeal, strong opinion, credible support).

Grade 7 Social Studies

7-G4.2.1

List and describe the advantages and disadvantages of different technologies used to move people, products, and ideas throughout the world.

7-G4.3.2

Describe patterns, processes, and functions of human settlement using historical and modern maps.



Writing by Shirley Poulton has many examples of descriptive “power” words.

Happy Adjectives – amazing, beautiful, cheery, enchanting, incredible, joyful

Adjectives that describe size – colossal, gigantic, miniature, teeny

Adjectives that describe how old – ancient, antique, decaying

Adjectives that describe speed – fast, poky, quick, rapid

Assessment of Student Learning

Bio-poem Worksheet – 25 points for completed poem. Student work is graded according to accurate word choice and fluency.

Teachers may use the following rubric to grade the completeness of students’ background research notes for creating their bio-poem.

Rubric for Note-Taking						
Student	0	1	2	3	4	5
NAME	Notes are missing	An attempt has been made to write notes	Notes on two ships are present	Notes on three ships are present	Notes are present for three ships and the shipping industry	Excellent: Notes are complete on three or more ships, people who lived at the lighthouses and the shipping industry



Extensions

Have students write a 'compare and contrast essay' on their life versus the life of a person who lived at a Great Lakes lighthouse prior to 1950.

Save Our History – American Lighthouses. A&E Television Network. 01/14/2008. <http://www.history.com/classroom/lighthouses/>
This website includes a teacher guide with activities designed to bring awareness to the plight of America's Lighthouses.

WEBSITES FOR STUDENT USE

Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers at Mackinaw City, MI
<http://www.gllka.com/>

Great Lakes Lights
<http://www.usalights.com/lakes.htm>
This website has a list of books available on lighthouses located along the Great Lakes.

Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum at Whitefish Point.
<http://www.shipwreckmuseum.org/>

Legendary Lighthouses
<http://www.pbs.org/legendarylighthouses/html/glakepg.html>
This website is a photo gallery of lighthouses located along the Western Great Lakes.

Lighthouses
<http://www.michigan.org/travel/attractions/?m=2;6&city=exploringthenorth.com/lights/lights.html>
This site offers a list of accessible lighthouses in Michigan along with a map. <http://www.exploringthenorth.com/lights/lights.html>



References

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Poulton, Shirley. *Power Writing Plus: Teach the Traits of Effective Writing*. Adrian, MI
C & C Graphics Publishing Co. 2004.

Wood, Vivian. "Upper Peninsula Lighthouses Open to the Public on Lake Michigan and Lake Superior" Exploring the North, Inc.
<http://www.exploringthenorth.com/lights/lights.html>

Wood, Vivian. "Whitefish Point Lighthouse Overlooking Whitefish Bay on Lake Superior" Exploring the North, Inc.
<http://www.exploringthenorth.com/whitefish/whitefish.html>.



Bio-Poem Format



1. First name
2. Four traits that describe character
3. Relative (example-brother, sister, mother of)
4. Lover of (three things or people)
5. Who feels (three items)
6. Who needs (three items)
7. Who fears (three items)
8. Who gives (three items)
9. Who would like to see (three items)
10. Resident of
11. Last name



Bio-poem Worksheet – 25 points for the completed poem

1. First name of person or ship (1 point together with last name)
2. Traits of the person or ship - list at least four (4 points)
3. Relative of (for people) – one or more people (1 point)
Peer of (for ships) – one or more ships (1 point)
Students may use the names of other ships that operated at the same time as “their” ship.
4. Lover of (three things or people) (3 points)
5. Who feels (three items) (3 points)
6. Who needs (three items) (3 points)
7. Who fears (three items) (3 points)
8. Who gives (three items) (3 points)
9. Who would like to see (three items) (3 points)
10. Resident of (1 point)
11. Last Name (1 point together with first name)



Sample Bio-poem



“Edmund”

Stalwart, reliable, dependable, super-sized

Peer of Arthur Anderson

Lover of wide open spaces, sunny days, calm seas

Who feels sturdy, important, steady

Who needs a crew, fuel, water

Who fears shallow water, reefs, storms

Who gives time, energy, strength

Who would like to see loaded docks, clear skies, light breezes

Resident of the Great Lakes

Fitzgerald



