



Surfmen of Shipwreck Coast



Melinda Green

LESSON SIX



Subject/Grade:

Grade 4, English Language Arts and Social Studies

Duration:

One class period (plus a class period to watch DVD)

Materials needed:

Per class:

- 1 DVD – Storm Warriors: Heroes of the Shipwreck Coast.
- DVD player
- 1 roll masking tape to mark out shape of surf boat on floor.
- *Lake Rhymes* by Lee Murdock CD and book
- CD player
- Map of the Great Lakes

Per student:

- 3 sheets paper and 1 pencil
- graphic organizer for five senses
- Poem “Foul Shot” by Edwin A. Hoey
- Poetry pattern for student’s ballad poetry pattern folk song rubric.
- Dictionary and/or thesaurus (up to one per student)

Melinda Green NikesRit@aol.com

Lesson Overview

Students will gain an appreciation for the early settlers of Upper Michigan who lived near Lake Superior by creating powerful descriptions of a storm on Lake Superior---full of sensory images for the reader. They will use their descriptions to compose a Great Lakes ballad using a poetic model that is an example of how folk music was typically used to record history and current events.

Learning Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to

1. Identify where Whitefish Point is located on a map of the Great Lakes.
2. Describe the hardships of shipping on the Great Lakes in the late 1800s and early 1900s.
3. Describe the qualifications, responsibilities, and characteristics of the men who worked for the U.S. Life-Saving Service (1875-1915).
4. Explain why people use folk music to record important events in their lives.
5. Compose a Great Lakes poem that contains descriptive words and creates strong sensory images.
6. Spark an interest in the heritage of Great Lakes maritime transportation and the people who contributed.

STANDARDS



Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) Addressed

Grade 4 Language Arts

R.MT.04.02

plan, monitor, regulate, and evaluate skills, strategies, and processes to construct and convey meaning (e.g., decoding unknown words) and use graphic organizers to deepen their understanding of compare/contrast, and sequential organizational patterns.

R.CS.04.01

develop, discuss, and apply individual and shared standards using student/class created rubrics and begin to assess the quality, accuracy, and relevance of their own writing and the writing of others.

W.GN.04.01

write a cohesive narrative piece such as a myth, legend, fantasy, or adventure creating relationships among setting, characters, theme, and plot.

W.GN.04.04

use the writing process to produce and present a research project using a teacher-approved topic; find and narrow research questions; use a variety of resources; take notes; and organize relevant information to draw conclusions.

W.PR.04.02

apply a variety of pre-writing strategies for both narrative and informational writing (e.g., graphic organizers such as maps, webs, Venn diagrams) in order to generate, sequence, and structure ideas (e.g., plot, setting, conflicts/resolutions, definition/description, or chronological sequence).

W.PR.04.04

revise drafts based on constructive and specific oral and written responses to writing by identifying sections of the piece to improve sequence and flow of ideas (e.g., arranging paragraphs, connecting main and supporting ideas, transitions).

Background

The first sailing vessels on the Great Lakes were skiffs and birch canoes. The Europeans constructed small crafts along the shore of Lake Ontario in the 1600s. Merchant shipbuilding on the Great Lakes began in 1679, with the introduction of the 70-foot Griffon by the French. Over the years, Great Lakes commerce steadily grew. The number of boats increased, and their designs changed over time. Early vessels had no charts (maps) to identify shoals, obstructions, or barriers to navigation, nor were their buoys to guide ships safely into harbors. Ship captains learned this by trial and error out of necessity. If sailors or passengers experienced shipwreck, there was little hope for survival since there were few settlements and their inhabitants could offer little aid.

In 1789, the US Government created the Lighthouse Service and by 1819, it had established the first lighthouse on Lake Erie; other would quickly follow. As the number of shipwrecks continued to increase, other solutions were needed. In 1841, the US started a survey of the Great Lakes to produce accurate navigation charts showing all the hidden reefs and shoals, as well as the water levels of the Great Lakes. In 1854, the US government provided communities with surfboats to be used in rescues, led by volunteers.

In 1875, the U. S. government recognized that the volunteer rescue system was not working, so it created the U.S. Lifesaving Service. Crews were selected upon stringent examination and certification. Each “surf man” was required to: i) have experience in handling boats, ii) have a physical exam by a doctor, iii) be between the ages of 18 and 45, iv) live within 5 miles of the Great Lakes, v) read/write English, and vi) be a good swimmer. There were no pensions for the injured men and no compensation for those who were killed in the line of duty. Canada established a Life-Saving Service in 1889.

In 1915, the US formed the US Coast Guard to lead rescues. As modern navigation equipment has



dramatically reduced the number of accidents of commercial vessels, the Coast Guard has turned its focus to ensuring the safety of smaller personal watercraft and homeland security. (Adapted from *Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes* by Paul Hancock, 2004).

This lesson is designed to appeal to students in at least one of Howard Gardener's eight areas of intelligence: Verbal-Linguistic, Musical-Rhythmic, Logical Mathematical, Interpersonal, Visual-Spatial, Intrapersonal, Bodily Kinesthetic, Naturalist.

Advance Preparation

Make copies of handouts: rubric, poem, and poetic model.

Use masking tape to mark out the outline of a surfboat (approximately 26' x 6'8" as defined by the schematics for the Beebe-McLellan surf boats) on the classroom floor.

Procedure

Focus Questions:

- *What happened to people aboard shipwrecked vessels in the early days of shipping on the Great Lakes?*
 - *Why do you think people write songs about important events in their lives?*
1. Watch the *Storm Warriors: Heroes of the Shipwreck Coast* (DVD). What were common causes of shipwrecks? (*fog, wind, storms, shoals, navigational/human errors*) What happened to the people aboard a damaged or sinking ship? What would it have been like to be one of the 'surf men' depicted in the film? What kind of qualities did people need to have in order to be surf men?
 2. Locate Whitefish Point and the shoreline west of Whitefish Point. This shoreline has a reputation for being the deadliest stretch of shoreline along Lake Superior—which is why its called "Shipwreck Coast."

STANDARDS



Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs) Addressed

Grade 4 Language Arts

W.PR.04.05

proofread and edit writing using appropriate resources (e.g., dictionary, spell check, grammar check, grammar references, writing references) and grade-level checklists both individually and in groups.

W.PS.04.01

exhibit personal style and voice to enhance the written message in both narrative (e.g., strong verbs, figurative language, sensory images) and informational writing (e.g., precision, established importance, transitions).

S.DS.04.03

respond to multiple text types by reflecting, making connections, taking a position, and/or showing deep understanding.

Grade 4 Social Studies

G1.0.1

Identify questions geographers ask in examining the United States (e.g., Where is it? What is it like there? How is it connected to other places?).

G1.0.4

Use geographic tools and technologies, stories, pictures to answer geographic questions about the United States.



3. Read aloud the information about folk songs on p. 10 - 11 of *Lake Rhymes Folk Songs of the Great Lakes Region* by Lee and Joann Murdock.
4. Play “The Great Lakes Song” from the *Lake Rhymes* CD. What feeling or mood do you get when you listen to this song?
5. Play “Yankee Brown” from *Lake Rhymes* CD. How does this song create a different feeling or mood from the first one? How could you write a song/poem to make it seem full of excitement and danger?
6. Show students the area on the floor that you have taped to represent the actual size of a surf boat. Have eight students sit in the space to show how the surf men sat on their way to a rescue. Ask students to visualize ice-cold waves hitting the boat every two minutes that were as high as the classroom walls or even twice as high. In the film, the people interviewed described waves from eight to thirty feet high. Ask the following questions: How high are the classroom walls? An actual wave would have been up to four times as high! Can you imagine what that would have felt like? Have fifteen additional students join the original eight in the surf boat to get an idea of the crowding on the return trip.
7. Have students fill in a graphic organizer (attached) with three or four words or phrases under each of the five senses, explaining what they would have been experiencing on a rescue mission (they could do this while watching the movie).
8. Explain to students that a poem that expresses strong feeling about one situation can be used

as a model for writing poetry that expresses strong feelings about a different situation. Read aloud the poem “Foul Shot” by Edwin A. Hoey. Discuss how the first lines set up the situation and tell the story of what’s happening. The middle lines build the feeling of excitement with very short lines and dramatic words. The final lines tell the outcome of the story

9. Tell students that they are going to use the poem as a model to create a poem or folk ballad of their own to tell a story of what it might have been like to take part in a rescue mission on the Great Lakes during a storm. Give each student the poetry pattern titled “Surfmen of Shipwreck Coast.” Have students use words from their graphic organizer to fill in the blanks to create their own poem. Encourage students to use the dictionary or thesaurus to select the strongest words possible to express themselves.
10. Ask several students to read their poems aloud to share with the class.

Assessment of Student Learning

Use the rubric to evaluate student poems. Grade generously, remembering that the goal is to create a sense of appreciation for Great Lakes maritime transportation and the heritage of early settlers along the Great Lakes.

Extensions

Create a Power Point that explains the historic and present-day importance of Great Lakes shipping using photos, maps, etc. (search under “U.S. Life Saving Service” on the web).



Create a Power Point that shows surf men at work. (Check with local archives, historical societies, lighthouses, maritime museums, and historic life-saving stations for information.)

Find out which Great Lake has had the most shipwrecks, which month has the most shipwrecks, and the most common causes of shipwrecks? (See Lesson 12 Wrecks & Rescues)

On a map of the Great Lakes, show major shipping and receiving ports in Michigan, cargoes shipped and received, and shipping routes between Great Lakes ports (see Lake Carriers Association brochures and website www.lcaships.com)

WEBSITES FOR STUDENT USE

U.S. Coast Guard History

<http://www.uscg.mil/d1/units/gruwh/stachatham/Lifeboat%20History.htm>

Sault Ste. Marie, MI – Mystery of Shipwrecks

<http://www.saultstemarie.com/great-lakes-shipwreck-museum-55/>

Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum

<http://www.shipwreckmuseum.com/museum.phtml>

Great Lakes Under Water

<http://www.greatlakesunderwater.com/shipwreckmap.html>

Night Beacon

<http://www.nightbeacon.com/zlighthouses/lakesuperiorlighthouses1.htm>

Lake Carriers Association for information on ships, routes, cargoes, and volume shipped.
www.lcaships.com



References

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Gardner, Howard. **Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences**. Basic Books, Inc. Publishers, New York. 1985.

Great Lakes Maritime History Project <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/WI/subcollections/GreatLakesAbout.shtml>

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Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society. <http://www.glsps.org/>

Hancock, Paul. (2004). *Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes*. Thunder Bay Press. Holt, MI.

Hoey, Edwin A. "Foul Shot". Read Magazine Weekly Reader Corporation (1962). http://mdk12.org/mspp/high_school/look_like/2006/english/resources/foulshot.html. 11/03/07.

Lake Carriers Association for information on ships, routes, cargoes, and volume shipped. www.lcaships.com

Michigan Tech Archives (digital library of historic photos) <http://digarch.lib.mtu.edu/>

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Noble, Dennis. (1999). *History of the U.S. Coast Guard*. http://www.uscg.mil/history/h_greatlakes.html Retrieved 12/05/07.



Five Senses Graphic Organizer

Name _____



SEE

SMELL

TASTE

TOUCH

HEAR

	SEE	SMELL	TASTE	TOUCH	HEAR

Poetry Pattern Folk Song Rubric

Points	COMPONENTS OF POEM	
5	FOLLOWING POETRY PATTERN	
2	USE OF SIGHT IMAGES	
2	USE OF HEARING IMAGES	
2	USE OF TOUCH IMAGES	
2	USE OF TASTE IMAGES	
2	USE OF SMELL IMAGES	
	TOTAL	



Foul Shot

by Edwin A. Hoey

With two 60s stuck on the scoreboard
And two seconds hanging on the clock,
The solemn boy in the center of eyes,
Squeezed by silence,
Seeks out the line with his feet,⁵
Soothes his hands along his uniform,
Gently drums the ball against the floor,
Then measures the waiting net,
Raises the ball on his right hand,
Balances it with his left,¹⁰
Calms it with fingertips,
Breathes,
Crouches,
Waits,
And then through a stretching of stillness,¹⁵
Nudges it upward.
The ball
Slides up and out,
Lands,
Leans,²⁰
Wobbles,
Wavers,
Hesitates,
Exasperates,
Plays it coy²⁵
Until every face begs with unsounding screams—
And then
And then
And then,
Right before ROAR-UP,³⁰
Dives down and through.



Surfmen of Shipwreck Coast

(Poetry pattern for student's ballad)



by _____

With two weeks left for shipping,
And two hours left before dark,
The surfmen of Whitefish Point,
Catch sight of a sign of distress.

They jump in the surfboat to rescue,
Grab hold of their oars and row,
say, "You always have to go out."
But what about coming back?

The surfboat thrashes through freezing waves,
Balances on a crest,

The sailors endure the worst,

Until they think they can't make it.
And then
And then
And then,
Right before sinking,



