

Writing Newspaper Articles From Research Notes

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Background

Nicole's fifth-graders have been researching Lewis and Clark's Western expedition for a multigenre project, and each student has chosen a single, narrow focus for his or her research. The multigenre project includes a map, an expedition application, journal entries written from the perspective of a member of the expedition, a poem, a newspaper article detailing an aspect of the journey, a bibliography, a presentation, and two other genres chosen by the students.

The lessons featured in the videos focus on writing newspaper articles using notes the students have gathered in their research. Prior to the two days featured in the videos, the students looked at several newspaper articles to understand their purpose and structure. Together, Nicole and the students developed a basic template for newspaper articles that the students will follow as they write.

Instruction and Activities

Nicole begins her writing workshop with a mini-lesson on organizing research notes to fit into the structure of a newspaper article. On the overhead projector, she shows her students a list of facts she has gathered for her article on Lewis and Clark. After cutting her notes into strips, she briefly demonstrates how to organize notes by grouping them into categories. Then she distributes copies of her notes to the class. In pairs and small groups, students cut the notes into strips, organize them into categories, and place them in separate envelopes.

Nicole allows the students to work on this task for about 10 minutes and then gathers the class to discuss the process and share their organizational approaches. The students spend the rest of writing workshop organizing their own research notes using the strategies they have just discovered.

The next day, Nicole teaches a mini-lesson on writing informational text with "voice." On a large piece of chart paper, Nicole has written a bland introduction to her newspaper article. She asks students what they think of the introduction. After a few responses ("boring," "doesn't grab the reader," etc.), Nicole rewrites the introduction with the students' help, adding voice and interest.

Following the mini-lesson, students finish organizing their notes and begin to write their articles. Nicole moves around the room for informal check-ins. At the end of individual writing time, Nicole has the whole class talk about their problems and successes.

Name: _____

Multi-Genre Research Project

For the next five weeks, we will investigate Lewis and Clark's Westward Expedition *and* we will explore and celebrate the multitude of genres in literature.

Here are the basic requirements for this project:

- Map, including:
 - Line showing Lewis and Clark's westward path
 - Important bodies of water used on their journey
 - Labels of states that existed in 1804
 - Four important locations along the journey
 - Inset map with a picture (drawn) and caption for each important location
- Expedition application
- Journal entries (written from the perspective of one of the members of the expedition)
- Poem
- Newspaper article (detailing some aspect of the journey)
- Choice piece #1
- Choice piece #2
- Bibliography written in the following format:
 - Book:
Author's last name, first initial. *Title of book*. Date of publication.
Example: Isaacs, S. *America in the Time of Lewis and Clark*. 1988.
 - Internet:
Web address
Example: www.lewisandclark.org/bio/yor
 - Textbook or encyclopedia:
Title of textbook, pages used
Example: *World Book Encyclopedia*, 37-40
- Presentation

Possible Pieces for Multi-Genre Project

Advertisements	Interviews
Announcements	Letters to the Editor
Articles	Lottery Results
Biographies	Manuals
Birth Announcements	Marriage/Engagement
Bonus Offers	Announcements
Book Reviews	Movie Reviews
Cheat Sheets	News Summaries/News in Brief
Classifieds	Obituaries
Animals	Opinions
Boats/cars	Pamphlets/Brochures
Deals/offers	Plays
Job listings	Poems
Lost/found	Police Logs
Personals	Posters
Real estate	Previews
Commercials	Sports
Concert Listings	Stock Market/Money
Coupons	TV Listings
Directories	Upcoming Events
Games	Volunteer Opportunities
Acrostics	Weather
Art	Forecast
Brain teasers	Graphs of averages/records
Comics	Maps
Crosswords	
Horoscopes	
Jumbles	
Tongue twisters	
Insert Magazines (<i>Parade</i> , etc.)	
Inserts	

Newspapers

Purpose: To share information about what's currently going on in the town, state, and country and in other countries. Answers the question, Why is this event important?

As readers, what do we expect to find in a newspaper article?

Headline: What's the article about?

Who wrote it?

Pictures with captions

Who are the important people?

Who was affected by the event?

What happened?

Where, specifically, did the event take place?

When did the event take place?

Why did the event take place?

Facts, not opinions

Opinions can be shared if quoted or attributed to the people who said them.

Interesting statistics

As writers of newspaper articles, how do we meet the expectations of our readers?

Include a headline.

Include one or more subheadings.

First paragraph should include:

- Where
- Lead that makes you want to read on
- Brief summary of what the article will be about

Answer "Who," "What," "When," "Where," and "Why" towards the beginning.

Give reactions and opinions towards the end.

Pictures sometimes have captions.

Article doesn't always say who wrote it.