

Expeditions in Your Classroom

Middle School English Language Arts



Henrietta List

SAMPLE PAGE

The classroom teacher may reproduce materials in this book for classroom use only.
The reproduction of any part for an entire school or school system is strictly prohibited.
No part of this publication may be transmitted, stored, or recorded in any form
without written permission from the publisher.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

ISBN 978-0-8251-6506-1

Copyright © 2009

J. Weston Walch, Publisher

40 Walch Drive • Portland, ME 04103

www.walch.com

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Project Skills Chart</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Project Assessment Rubric</i>	<i>viii</i>
Making History	1
The World Around You	32
Who, Me?	67
College Sales	82
Taking a Stand	103
Your Quest	127
Finding Your Roots	159
Class Ezine	177
You're the Playwright	200
The Great Debate	233

SAMPLE PAGE

Introduction

Students learn effectively when they have an opportunity to apply their knowledge to real-life problems. This book contains ten expeditions that engage students in real learning. Each project links students to a bigger issue in their community. They illustrate to students how their education has relevance in their lives today and in the future. Each expedition strives to give students new skills that can help them both inside and outside the English language arts classroom. Many projects reach out to other content areas within a student's grade level, allowing students to exchange knowledge between English language arts, social studies, and art.

Expeditions in Your Classroom: Middle School English Language Arts is designed for middle-school students. It provides activities and materials that scaffold student tasks; sets clear criteria for final products; and offers assessment tools and a detailed outline of project steps so that teachers can focus energy on instruction rather than on project management. Each expedition addresses national standards and provides accessible routes to understanding for a broad audience of students. Several expeditions call for you to select literature to use with the project. Use this as an opportunity to differentiate instruction, coordinate with other subject teachers on an interdisciplinary unit, or focus on subjects of interest to your class or area.

Given the scope of each expedition, advance preparation is critical to successful implementation. As you prepare materials for each expedition, consider the needs of your classroom. You may wish to print out the student pages as a packet to give in its entirety to students, rather than hand them out in the suggested order. This will streamline your preparation time, as well as allow students who complete activities ahead of time to move on to the next phase.

About Project-Based Learning

In *Real Learning, Real Work*¹, Adria Steinberg describes the qualities of powerful projects: the six A's.

Authenticity

Students solve problems and questions that are meaningful and real. People outside school walls tackle the same challenges. What students create and do has value beyond school.

Academic Rigor

Students encounter challenging material and learn critical skills, knowledge, and habits of mind essential for success in one or more disciplines.

Applied Learning

Students put their knowledge and skills to work in hands-on ways, and learn how to organize and manage themselves along the way.

Active Exploration

Students go into the field. They investigate and communicate their discoveries.

¹Steinberg, Adria. *Real Learning, Real Work (Transforming Teaching)*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1998.

Introduction

Adult Relationships

Students connect with adults with relevant expertise. They observe them, work with them, and get support and feedback.

Assessment

Students play an active role in defining their goals and assessing their progress. Adults around them give them ongoing and varied opportunities to demonstrate progress.

Project Format and Materials

Each project contains the following materials:

Teacher Pages

- **Introduction:** includes an overview of information on project learning goals, plus information on prior knowledge or experience needed by students, time and materials needed for the project, key vocabulary, suggested assessment, and team formation
- **Suggested Steps:** a day-by-day view of how to implement project activities
- **Project Management Tips and Notes:** suggestions for how to handle possible issues or information on project options and variations
- **Extension Activities:** suggested activities for extending the project or exploring related areas
- **NCTE/IRA Standards Connection:** a list of standards your students will address through the project
- **Answer Key:** answers for Skill Check questions (Some answers may vary, and therefore, have been omitted from the answer keys.)

Student Pages

- **Expedition Overview:** a description of the project challenge, learning objectives, key vocabulary terms, materials needed, and Web resources students use for project activities
- **Before You Go:** lead-in activities designed to review fundamental skills or knowledge needed for the project
- **Off You Go:** activities that support the core project, including guidelines and instructions for final products or presentations
- **Expedition Tools:** handouts and worksheets associated with project activities
- **Check Yourself:** two assessment tools that students use to check skill development (practice problems or questions) and evaluate their project performance overall

Project Skills Chart

Projects always challenge students to flex more than one mental muscle at a time and integrate skills they often see dissected and covered in discrete units of study. Each project in this book has a core skill focus, but also gives students an opportunity to practice other skills. Use this chart as a reference to help you find the best project for your needs.

C = Core skill

X = Other skills covered (sometimes optional)

Project	Grammar/mechanics	Writing skills	Creative writing	Critical reading	Communication/public speaking	Visual presentation	American literature	Literary genres/responding to literature	Research skills
Making History	X	C	X	C			C	C	
The World Around You	X	C	C			C			X
Who, Me?	X	C					C		
College Sales		C		X		C	X	X	
Taking a Stand	X	C		C	C	X			C
Your Quest	X	C		C	C	X			C
Finding Your Roots	X	C							
Class Ezine	C	C			C	C		C	
You're the Playwright			C		C		C	C	
The Great Debate		C			C			C	C

Making History

Overview

Students explore the lives of teenagers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They examine primary sources to understand how these documents provide a picture of life during that time period. Students create a journal of a day in their life in their community to be archived for historians in the future.

Time

Total time: 8 to 10 hours

- **Before You Go—Getting Acquainted with Characters, Settings, and Plot:** one class, pp. 11–13
- **Activity 1—What’s in My Reading?** one class and 30 minutes of homework, pp. 14–18
- **Activity 2—It’s in the Details:** one class and 20 minutes of homework, pp. 19–21
- **Activity 3—Recording My Life:** one class and 30 minutes of homework, pp. 22–23
- **Activity 4—For All Time:** three to four classes, pp. 24–29
- **Check Yourself! Skill Check and Self-Assessment and Reflection** worksheets: 30 minutes of class time or homework, pp. 30–31

Materials

- notebook
- reading material (historical fiction excerpt or whole book)
- computer access (optional)

Skill Focus

- character
- setting
- descriptive and narrative writing skills
- editing

Prior Knowledge

- active reading
- writing process

Team Formation

- Students work individually, in small groups, and as a whole class.

Making History

Lingo to Learn—Terms to Know

- **biography:** a written account of another person's life
- **character:** the identity of an individual figure in a story
- **characterization:** the method a writer uses to develop a character
- **historical fiction:** a story that may not be true but is based on actual facts, places, a time period, or an event
- **narrative:** the telling of fictional or real events
- **plot:** the plan of the events in a story or the actions taken by the characters in a setting
- **setting:** the time and place of an action in a story

Suggested Steps

Preparation

- Review all the materials and activities for the expedition. Note printables that you'll need to copy.
- Select historical fiction or biographies for your students to read about children's lives from the 1860s to 1920s. You can choose whole books or short excerpts. The materials can be varied in order to match reading levels of your students. The time period can fluctuate; it is just important to provide a historical perspective.
- Students must complete their reading before starting these activities. The activities enable them to apply their understanding of character development and setting in literature. While students read, direct them to take notes on the main characters, describing the relationships between the characters and personality traits. Students should also take notes on the main plots, especially noting the settings.
- This expedition is in three steps:
 1. Students read the historical fiction or biography (completed before the beginning of the project).
 2. Students build a picture of the historical context from primary sources.
 3. Students write a journal entry for a recent event, expanding upon it to create a journal entry for a significant event that can be archived.
- It might be beneficial to enlist the support of a social studies teacher in the project.
- The project is best done in partnership with the local historical society. Consider inviting a speaker from the local historical society to your class. You can find information about historical societies in your state at the U.S. State Historical Societies & State Archives Directory Web site at web.syr.edu/~jryan/infopro/hs.html.

Making History

Day 1

1. Give an overview of the project. Explain that students will be developing a booklet of journal pages that represent what present life is like. These personal accounts can then be archived, perhaps with help from the local historical society. In the future, individuals can use them as background for writing biographies or historical fiction.
2. If possible, have a representative from a local historical society speak to the class about life at the turn of the century and the role of archived records from individuals.
3. As a whole class, complete and discuss **Before You Go: Getting Acquainted with Characters, Settings, and Plot** (p. 11), along with **Expedition Tool: *Times* Excerpt** (pp. 12–13).

Day 2

1. Distribute **Activity 1: What's in My Reading?** (pp. 14–15) and **Expedition Tool: Charting Character, Setting, and Plot** (pp. 16–18).
2. Read out loud the first section of the reading material you selected for the lower-level readers in the class. Have students reading that selection follow the text in their books. The other students can listen. It is best if you stop periodically, and then go back and review each section while pointing out what might be appropriate to place in the Expedition Tool.
3. Conduct a whole-class discussion, summarizing what students have learned.
4. Pair students by those who have read the same materials. Assign pairs to complete the Expedition Tool for their reading.

Homework

Students should complete the Expedition Tool.

Day 3

1. Pair students based on common readings. Facilitate a review of the completed Expedition Tool assignment.
2. Invite pairs to share their favorite part of their reading with the whole class, describing why it was chosen.
3. Compile all responses to create a master list of characteristics of good writing. Identify how these qualities relate to character, setting, or plot development.

Making History

4. Distribute **Activity 2: It's in the Details** (p. 19) and **Expedition Tool: Part of the Story** (pp. 20–21). Once students have rated the selections, tally the votes.
5. Discuss the selections with students, having voters express why they liked a particular selection. Add to the master list of the characteristics of good writing.
6. Have students work in pairs to identify how the selections with the fewest votes could have been improved. Ask students to discuss their ideas with the whole class.

Homework

Have students revise the selection with the fewest number of votes.

Day 4

1. Review the definition of historical fiction. Invite students to reflect on their reading and cite examples of text that is historically accurate and examples of text that is fictional. (For example, the story might be about slavery, which was an historical event, but the specific characters and their actions were fictional.)
2. Define and discuss the term *primary source*. Explain that a primary source is an actual item or document from an individual's everyday life. Examples include journals, letters, bills, and so forth.
3. Read aloud a primary source journal entry to the class. Choose a document from the pertinent era and geographic region (such as New England or the Midwest). Discuss the difference between the primary source and the literature students are reading. Note how authors use primary sources as research for developing their biographies of historical figures and historical fiction.
4. Use an overhead projector and transparencies, or a computer and projector to show some historical photographs of the appropriate era.
5. Identify the differences in settings, both geographically and in the scenes.
6. As each image is shown, invite students to describe what they see. Encourage them to enrich their descriptions by describing the actions, objects, or expressions in detail.
7. Distribute **Activity 3: Recording My Life** (p. 22) and **Expedition Tool: My Journal** (p. 23).
8. Explain that journaling is a type of narrative or story-telling. It is a written account of a person's activities. Connect it with familiar forms such as diaries, blogs, hunting or exercise/training logs, letters, photo journals, or lyrics.

Making History

Homework

Have students complete the Expedition Tool. They will write a journal entry that describes an event they did over the past weekend using what they have learned about quality descriptions.

Day 5

1. Give students time to share their journal entries. Encourage them to give one another positive feedback on their work and to identify the qualities of good writing.
2. Distribute **Activity 4: For All Time** (pp. 24–25) and **Expedition Tool: A Day in the Life of . . .** (pp. 26–29).
3. Explain that students are to draft another journal entry to be archived. Use the primary source documents from the turn of the century as models. Remind students that their journal entries will be read in the future to provide an understanding of what life was like during this time period.
4. Model the planning process with the Expedition Tool.
5. Have students work in pairs, taking turns to describe their own personal idea or event they want to convey to the reader. Pairs are to provide feedback to each other, revise their ideas, and then share with the whole class.
6. Select one idea from those presented by the class. Use this as an example to show the next steps in the writing process. Have students work with their partners to identify some supporting details. Have students share these, and select a few.
7. Student pairs should then add details of both setting and characters to the supporting details, indicating where these might appear in the story. Discuss as a class.

Homework

Have students continue to follow the steps in the writing process and arrange the supporting details for the example in a logical sequence. Students can review their notes from class to check that the original idea and the supporting details still match. If necessary, they should revise their work.

Making History

Day 6 (Narrative Writing)

1. Have students share their homework with a partner.
2. Give students time to work independently on authoring their own journal narrative. If students have difficulty selecting an idea, have them brainstorm a list of events that they have participated in during the past year—birthdays, sports, class projects, and so forth.
3. Once students have created an outline, have them share it with a partner for feedback and revise as needed.
4. Provide time for students to begin writing. Students can review their notes on qualities of good writing. Remind them that their journals will be read by students 30, 50, or 100 years in the future who may not know anything about the culture that students are describing.
5. Facilitate a one-to-one writer's conference with each student to support his or her planning and writing.
6. As students finish their writing, have them use the Writing Checklist on the **Check Yourself! Self-Assessment and Reflection** worksheet (p. 31). Have them revise their work as necessary.

Homework

Students should continue with their writing.

Day 7 (Revision and completion)

1. Direct students to share their narrative with a partner. Partners should pay particular attention to the amount of detail. Have them use their notes on the qualities of good writing from earlier classes to assess the text. Have the author revise it as necessary.
2. Once a revision is completed, students should find another partner to proof the writing, checking it for grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
3. When final papers are turned in, compile them into a booklet.
4. If possible, present the booklet to the local historical society.

Final Day

1. Have students complete the **Check Yourself! Skill Check** questions (p. 30).
2. Check and review answers.
3. Have students complete the **Check Yourself! Self-Assessment and Reflection** worksheet (p. 31) and submit it (optional).

Making History

Project Management Tips and Notes

- When selecting the readings for students, choose ones that focus on history from your geographic region.
- Contact your local or regional historical society well before the start of the project. They might be able to assist you in finding readings, images, and primary source documents from their collections.
- The writing assignment can be supported by obtaining images of children during the selected time period from the Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog (www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html). A search under children playing 1860–1920 will result in a wide variety of images from around the country that can be downloaded and printed. You may also be able to search for images of your particular state or region.
- Create a word wall with the terms used throughout the project. This allows students a quick reference point for their vocabulary when discussing the materials. Students can also keep a descriptive writing journal in which they write adjectives and adverbs that are new to them, as well as notes on techniques for adding descriptions.
- Doing a quickwrite in the first 5 minutes of each class in which students respond to a prompt with a description will help students become more fluid in their writing.
- When students share their writing, the class can build a stronger understanding of quality work. It is also a good opportunity to focus on applications of recently studied rules in grammar, punctuation, or spelling.

Suggested Assessment

Use the Project Assessment Rubric or the following point system:

Team and class participation	10 points
Before You Go	10 points
Activity 1	10 points
Activity 2	10 points
Activity 3	10 points
Activity 4	45 points
Self-Assessment and Reflection	5 points

Making History

Extension Activities

- Students can illustrate their journals.
- Students can add more historical details to what they have already written.
- Students can extend their journal entry to a short story.

NCTE/IRA Standards Connection

2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

Answer Key

Check Yourself! Skill Check

1. A plot is the series of events in a book or story.
2. A character is one of the individuals described in a story.
3. Setting is the time and location in which a story takes place.
4. An author can increase the descriptions of the setting, involve the characters in conversation, or include an item or thoughts with which the reader can identify.
5. Historical fiction is a story that has elements of factual information, such as a real place, time, or person. It properly reflects what is known about that time period by historians. However, the characters and the events do not have to be true. They can be fictional.

Making History

Expedition Overview

Challenge

Have you ever wanted to be a time-traveler? Have you ever wanted to see the future or investigate the past? Would you like to leave a record of who you are for everyone in the future to read? Many individuals have written journals of their lives that allow us to see what life was like during the historic period in which they lived. Now you will create a journal entry that will be kept for future time-travelers to discover.

Objectives

- To understand how an author reveals and develops character
- To strengthen your narrative and descriptive writing skills

Project Activities

Before You Go

- Getting Acquainted with Characters, Settings, and Plot

Off You Go

- Activity 1: What's in My Reading?
- Activity 2: It's in the Details
- Activity 3: Recording My Life
- Activity 4: For All Time

Expedition Tools

- *Times* Excerpt
- Charting Character, Setting, and Plot
- Part of the Story
- My Journal
- A Day in the Life of . . .

Other Materials Needed

- notebook
- reading material (provided by your teacher)

Lingo to Learn—Terms to Know

- biography
- character
- historical fiction
- characterization
- narrative
- plot
- setting

Making History

Expedition Overview

Helpful Web Resources

- escrapbooking—E-scrap: Autobiography, Personal Accounts, & Travel Narratives
<http://escrapbooking.com/escraps/autobiography/index.htm>
- Federal Resources for Educational Excellence
<http://free.ed.gov/index.cfm>
- Google News Archive Search
<http://news.google.com/archivesearch?ned=us>
- The Library of Congress—American Memory Timeline
<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/features/timeline/index.html>
- The Library of Congress—American Memory: Voices from the Days of Slavery
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/index.html>
- The Library of Congress Prints & Photographs Online Catalog
www.loc.gov/rr/print/catalog.html

SAMPLE PAGE

Making History

Before You Go

Getting Acquainted with Characters, Settings, and Plot

Goal:	To understand characters, settings, and narratives as literary tools
Materials:	notebook, pen or computer
Tool:	<i>Times</i> Excerpt

An important part of creating a story is deciding on the setting. The setting is the time and place of an action in a story. If the story isn't true but it includes real people, places, or events, the story might be historical fiction. If a story is about an actual person who lived at an earlier time, it is a historical biography.

Characters are the individuals about whom stories are told. When writing a story, an author might describe personality traits of a character. For instance, a character could be humorous, angry, or moody. Authors will also create a physical description of the character so the reader can imagine the character's appearance. An author creates the character by showing how the individual reacts to various situations in the story.

The plan of the events in a story or the actions taken by the characters in a setting are pieced together into a plot. Sometimes a story can have more than one plot. It can move between groups of characters that are doing different things at the same time. For instance, a group of students could be studying at school—this is a plot. However, some of those students might be in an English class doing one set of things, while others could be in a math class doing another set of activities. These are the subplots to the main story.

When you read a story, imagine that you are trying to follow the clues to solve a mystery. You must first find out who is involved—the characters. Next, you find out where each character is located—the setting. Finally, you find out what they were doing—the plot.

Making History

Expedition Tool

Directions

Read the excerpt contained in the *Times Excerpt Expedition Tool*. Then answer the questions below.

1. Who are the main characters? Describe their personalities.
2. Where are the characters? Describe the setting in which the excerpt takes place.
3. What are the characters doing? Describe the major activities that occur.

SAMPLE PAGE