

School Librarian's Workshop

Edited by Hilda K. Weisburg, M.L.S.

APRIL/MAY 2015



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printable
PDF

INFORMATION LITERACY UNIT

The Life of Lincoln

One hundred and fifty years ago, on April 15, 1865, John Wilkes Booth, actor and Confederate sympathizer assassinated Abraham Lincoln as he attended a play. The Civil War which defined his presidency had ended six days earlier, and the chance to heal a divided nation ended with Lincoln's life.

Television and other events are commemorating the anniversary, raising it in students' awareness. Ensure that they understand the significance of the occasion with a research project exploring the life and death of a man who came to symbolize the issues dividing north and south, tearing the country apart. Among the guiding Essential Questions are: Why is Lincoln considered to be a great President? What were the challenges in his life? How did he handle them? To what extent did these challenges make him the person and President he became? What lessons can we learn from his life?

Setting the Stage

Greet students with a display of biographies and other books you have featuring Abraham Lincoln. Talk about famous presidents and see if they have any idea what makes them important. Ask what they know about Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War.

Show one of the short video on his life. What do they find interesting or special about the man? Have students come up with questions they have and list them. Tell them about the April 15th anniversary and let them know they will be doing a research project on the life of Abraham Lincoln.

Ready to Research

Hand out the Information Sheet and briefly review the topics. Give them time to form groups of three to four and select a topic. Having seen the video you selected, they have enough background to choose one or more that interest them. If another group has taken the one they wanted, help them find another appealing one.

● [click to read entire article](#)

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Smore Amazing!

by Carmaine Ternes

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Many of you recall enjoying s'mores, roasted marshmallows and a chocolate bar sandwiched between two graham crackers at a campfire, but you may appreciate this digital version of Smore even more. A web-based application for public or private newsletters, publications, flyers, and announcements, Smore (<https://www.smore.com/>) provides a direct line of communication customized for your audience. Videos, buttons, photos, and links can be embedded in your notification.

Most features are free, and subscriptions are available at reasonable rates. Insert your creative flair when designing unique digital flyers tailored for your purposes. If you desire to inform, enlighten, or entertain, Smore offers electronic distribution for your intentions. This electronic platform provides a variety of features including snapshots, statistics, charts, images, and text.

Manual

With clear and concise prompts anyone can join Smore, create an instant newsletter, bulletin board, or handouts with clear infographics and share on social networks. By following the prompts or experimenting with the templates and features, each flyer has unique characteristics. Select a background, color, and font, then insert your message, photographs, and contact information. Distribute your webflyer instantly in a mobile world.

● [click to read entire article](#)

TEACHING TOGETHER

Westward Ho!

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Talk with history teachers. Review the activity and make modifications as appropriate. You might want to time it for mid-April and the 155th anniversary of the beginning of the Pony Express on April 13, 1860, or whenever it falls within the curriculum. Discuss the Essential Questions which will focus and guide the learning. Among them might be: Who were the people who went west? Why did they go? What could the U.S. have done differently in dealing with the Native Americans? What role did the railroads play?

Once you have determined the Questions, review the Information Sheet and make any necessary adjustments. Decide on how you want groups to make their presentation so that it's meaningful and of use to others. One possibility is to work with Google Maps and have students put pins on key locations. They can embed links to visuals and accompanying research.

Open for Exploration

Students may have some knowledge of the westward movement, although much is likely to be romanticized from movies. Start by asking what they know about it. What names do they associate with the move westward? Recording their responses isn't necessary. The purpose is to focus their minds on a significant and extensive chapter in American history.

● [click to read entire article](#)

IN THIS ISSUE

Special months and days, curriculum connections, advocacy, and technology all in one issue.

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- *Primary Source Connections* (Gr. 5-12)
- *Puzzler* (Gr. 3-6)
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- *Tech Talk*

THE SCHOOL LIBRARIAN'S WORKSHOP (ISSN 0271-3667) is published online six times a year by Weisburg Associates, LLC, 38 Indigo Lane, Aberdeen, New Jersey, 07747. **April/May 2015 Issue #5.** Subscription \$50 per year. Vol. 35, No. 5 © 2015 by Hilda K. Weisburg. Volume discounts available. Materials published here may be reproduced for use in only one school not an entire district. Send changes in e-mail addresses to hilda@slworkshop.net.

FROM THE EDITOR

Covering the Library Landscape

Every issue of School Librarian's Workshop not only includes articles you can use with all grade levels, it also covers curriculum connections, the latest ideas for incorporating technology, and how to make your program and you regarded as indispensable to your school community. With April being School Library Month that continuing format is even more apparent.

Celebrate Earth Day on April 22nd with *Research to Go* on weather and climate, *Web Cites* about climate change, and *Noteworthy Nonfiction* with titles on "Caring for Our Planet." Since April is also Math Awareness Month, those articles connect with STEM as does the *Box* "On Becoming Financially Literate" and another on suggesting books for Makerspace programs. The *Bulletin Board* and *Bulletin Board Bonuses* feature displays for Poetry Month, STEM, Memorial Day, and School Library Month.

Our contributors for this issue show how technology can help put the spotlight on your program. *Tech Talk* explains how PowToon and Canva are great tools for publicizing the library. *Making Connections* gives you additional ideas with Smore as your resource, and *More for Your Program* details using blogging to develop writing and digital citizenship. Don't miss *Primary Source Connections* on westward expansion and the *Information Literacy Unit* meant to coincide with the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, 150 years ago on April 15.

Join our School Librarian's Workshop Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/57409801076>) and follow me on Twitter @hildakw or search on #slworkshop. Go to <http://www.slworkshop.net> and click on Blog for my weekly post. Scan the issue to see what meets your immediate and subsequent needs, then save the rest for another time. I think you will find many articles to help you be even more invaluable to your students and teachers. ▲

Hilda K. Weisburg

INFORMATION LITERACY UNIT

The Life of Lincoln

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Consider what you know about your students. Grades 3 and 4 might not be up to doing #6, #7, or #8. Be ready with alternate topics. Some might want to explore the beginnings and importance of photography, medicine, or the role of women in the Civil War. If any of these are chosen, help them develop a series of questions to get started.

Sharing Discoveries

Talk about the research strategy students will use. Remind them to start with an overview. While it will probably answer some of their questions, they need to go deeper to get a fuller picture. Keep track of how groups are doing. Encourage them to explore ideas they have as a result of their research.

When they have completed their exploration, ask groups to share what they learned with the rest of the class. Discuss the Essential Questions to ensure they have internalized the big ideas. Now have them combine their work into a final presentation from which others can learn. While there are many options, consider having them create a Google map with pins located on the different places in Abraham Lincoln's life. Show them how to link to the pictures and other information they gathered. Post on your website where parents and administrators can see what students have done. ▲

Websites

Abraham Lincoln for Kids - http://mrnussbaum.com/abraham_lincoln - Incredibly comprehensive website

Abraham Lincoln: Introduction: National Museum of History - <http://americanhistory.si.edu/lincoln/introduction> - From the Smithsonian, a comprehensive look at his life; see the Table of Contents on the right; includes pictures of artifacts

Abraham Lincoln Quotes - <http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/abrahamlincoln-quotes.htm> - Select ones your students will understand and find worthy of discussion

Abraham Lincoln Research Site - <http://rogerjnorton.com/Lincoln2.html> - Loads of good links including one on "The Route of Abraham Lincoln's Funeral Train," has pictures

Abraham Lincoln: The White House - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/abrahamlincoln> - Brief biography including Lincoln's own description of his background

The History Place presents Abraham Lincoln - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/abrahamlincoln> - Timeline with photos

Videos

Abraham Lincoln - http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/abraham_lincoln - Short video on his life, consider using as an introduction

TeacherTube - <http://www.teachertube.com/video/abraham-lincoln-119899> - Several available at this link

I Love My Library

While none of these three books are about school libraries, they all capture the special magic libraries — and librarians — bring to readers everywhere, making them an ideal choice for School Library Month (April). Kazuno Kohara invites listeners to the **Midnight Library** (Roaring Brook Press, 2014, unp. ill. 978—1-59643-985-6) where the little librarian aided by her three assistant owls helps all the animals to find the perfect book. She directs a band of squirrels to the activity room to find the right song for their next concert, reads to a wolf too overcome by a sad part in a story to be able to continue, and gives a library card to a tortoise so he can check out the book he wants to finish when the library closes as the sun comes up. The black, blue and orange illustrations convey the nighttime feel. (Gr. PK-1)

In **Please, Louise**, (ill. by Shadra Strickland, A Paula Wiseman Book, Simon & Schuster, 2014, unp. 978-1-4424-3310-6), a rhymed story by Toni Morrison and Slade Morrison, a little girl, dressed in a raincoat and boots, carrying an umbrella, and pulling a wagon walks somewhat nervously through the streets of a town. As the rain pours down she finds the best place for shelter in the library where "you are never alone." Book after book open wondrous worlds. She leaves in sunlight, her raincoat, umbrella, and some books in the wagon, carrying another in her arms. Just right for talking about books and what students love about libraries. (Gr. K-3)

Bonny Becker in **A Library Book for Bear** (ill. by Kady MacDonald Denton, Candlewick, 2014, unp. 978-0-7636-4924-1) features a curmudgeonly bear insisting his collection of three books on kings and queens, three on honeybees, and one about pickles is all the books he needs so there is no reason to go to the library with his mouse friend. Because he had promise, they go, but Bear complains of the extravagance of so many books and is totally uninterested in those Mouse brings him. Overhearing the librarian reading a story about a very brave bear and a treasure chest, he is entranced. The two bring home seven books including *The Very Brave Bear and the Treasure of Pickle Island*. The expressions on the faces of the two friends are worth discussing as is talking about listeners favorite stories. (Gr. PK-2)

The Life of Lincoln

Information Sheet

Topics

- Childhood and early life – (1809-1832)
 - What were some hardships and losses he faced?
 - How did he deal with them?
 - What do you think he learned from them?
- Political Career (1833 – 1860)
 - Why did he go into politics?
 - What were the issues of his day?
 - What were his opinions on them?
 - Why do you think he felt this way? (Use events in his life to help your thinking.)
- Lincoln in the Civil War (1861-1865)
 - What difficulties did he face?
 - What did he do about them?
 - Which decisions required courage?
 - How did he feel about those who died in battle? How do you know?
 - What does all this tell you about him?
- Lincoln and his family
 - How did the Civil War affect his marriage to Mary Todd?
 - What did you learn about Lincoln as a father?
 - How did he deal with the loss of his sons?
 - What does this look at Lincoln and his family tell you about him?
- Assassination and Aftermath
 - How did the North respond to the assassination?
 - How did the South respond to the assassination?
- What were some results of the assassination?
- Was this what Lincoln would have wanted? Why do you think that?
- Confederate States
 - What were the reasons for the South seceding?
 - How did the war and its aftermath affect the South?
- The Union
 - How did the North feel about the war?
 - How did the war and its aftermath affect the North?
- General Grant and General Lee
 - What were Grant's challenges as a Union general? What were his strengths?
 - What were Lee's challenges as a Confederate general? What were his strengths?
- Topic of your choice with approval

Directions

- As you research your topic, add any questions you have and search for answers.
- Gather photos and images about your topic.
- Cite all sources
- What conclusions can you draw about Abraham Lincoln based on your research?



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by *Carmaine Ternes*

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Most features are free, and subscriptions are available at reasonable rates. Insert your creative flair when designing unique digital flyers tailored for your purposes. If you desire to inform, enlighten, or entertain, Smore offers electronic distribution for your intentions. This electronic platform provides a variety of features including snapshots, statistics, charts, images, and text.

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With clear and concise prompts anyone can join Smore, create an instant newsletter, bulletin board, or handouts with clear infographics and share on social

networks. By following the prompts or experimenting with the templates and features, each flyer has unique characteristics. Select a background, color, and font, then insert your message, photographs, and contact information. Distribute your webflyer instantly in a mobile world.

Examples to View

Librarian Amy Brownlee's Sterling High School Library Connections sample is visible at <https://www.smore.com/a89gs-library-connections>. Brownlee appreciates how the graphics look polished and professional. The text, graphics, and links are versatile. Data (analytics) recording how many views the document has received and displaying a map illustrating where the views were located are unique features. She designs and disseminates her Smore webflyers to students, educators, parents, and community members. "It's also easy to share and can even be embedded in another page -- I embedded the Smore in our library blog and created a newsletter link from our library webpage."

Some of Rose Niland's Mission Valley Jr/Sr High School My Library Illuminations can be located at <https://www.smore.com/rq5gn> <https://www.smore.com/8r4w4> <https://www.smore.com/pxk5u>

She selected Smore for her publication due to its ready-made format and seasonal backgrounds. This free service is perfect for her limited budget and is appropriate for her students, faculty, staff, parents, alumni, and friends. Her newsletter inspires academic and recreational reading, student involvement, and supports learning across the curriculum.

Smore Ideas

Smore has been utilized at my high school library to welcome and inform new and returning teachers and students about programs, operations, and procedures. This newsletter replaces a Word or Publisher document and articulates curricular crosswalks, promotes events, and supports literacy. Media Matters is available at <https://www.smore.com/y02vj-media-matters-2014-welcome>.

Videos capturing students and staff expressing themselves can be embedded promoting various themes creating student connections. One sample can be enjoyed at <https://www.smore.com/bcn6s-media-matters>.

Much More

Organizations have also taken advantage of this resource. For instance, the Kansas Association of School Librarians has incorporated Smore as a monthly messenger:

<https://www.smore.com/wqey-kasl>

<https://www.smore.com/1j108-kasl?ref=email>

<https://www.smore.com/b3tau-kasl>

KASL also uses it to announce contests and awards

<https://www.smore.com/8gxpk-kasl-school-library-month-contest>

<https://www.smore.com/2rcuh-kasl-awards-and-recognitions>

Smore offers flexibility with clear and concise digital features in an easy-to-use interface. Perhaps I'll create one about s'mores for conversation around the campfire! ▲



Ask Hilda

Have question about managing your library program? Demonstrating leadership? Reaching out to teachers?

When you want answers, email hilda@slworkshop.net and I will send a reply within 48 hours. I want to be your "silent partner" keeping you informed, inspired, and invaluable.

TEACHING TOGETHER

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Open for Exploration

Students may have some knowledge of the westward movement, although much is likely to be romanticized from movies. Start by asking what they know about it. What names do they associate with the move westward? Recording their responses isn't necessary. The purpose is to focus their minds on a significant and extensive chapter in American history.

Hand out the Information Sheet. Very briefly explain any topics with which students are unfamiliar. Suggest students explore some topics before making their selection. Let them know where they can find the list of websites given here as well as those in this issue's Primary Source Connections. If you are using Google Maps for the class presentations, remind students to identify towns and geographic locations they will need in order to post their pins.

On the Research Trail

Before students start their research review the directions. Let them know each step is important. Teachers may want to give "quiz grades" for each step. By working through a similar set of directions each time they do a research project, they develop an understanding of how to construct their own research strategy, an essential skill for college readiness and lifelong learning.

Give groups time to get started. When they reach the step of creating additional questions to explore, review with them what they have developed. Are the question significant? Are there underlying issues not addressed? Mind mapping might help groups visualize the interconnectedness of the various aspects of their topic. You want them to demonstrate critical thinking and if they work too fast, they won't go deep.

Sharing the Experience

Have groups present their findings to the rest of the class. Go over the directions for bringing individual group work to the final presentation. Make sure they have completed all steps, including citing their visual as well as text sources. Decide with them or with the teacher where this will be posted for others to access.

Review the Essential Questions. Did their research alter any opinions they had before starting the project? Did they discover any misconceptions they had about the settling of the west? What are the most important ideas they will remember from this?

Final Assessment

Let students know what a good job they did, giving specific examples. Also have them self-assess their work. What caused them the most difficulty? What was the most fun and/or the most interesting? What have they learned that will help them in their next research project?

Schedule some time to discuss the project with the teacher once it's completed. What worked? What didn't? What changes should be made for the next time? Record your assessment and notes for what you and the teacher will do differently next time. And don't forget to share, as appropriate, with school administrators. ▲

Websites

Buffalo Soldiers of the American West - <http://www.buffalosoldiers-amwest.org/history.htm> - Brief account of who they were, what they did, etc.

Buffalo Soldiers – Texas Parks & Wildlife Department - <http://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/>

programs/buffalo-soldiers - Overview with video and a brief history

Go West: U.S. Westward Expansion - <https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Go-West-U.S.-Westward-Expansion> - Start here and click on the Table of Contents for much more information with many pictures

Mountain Men – The Overland Trail Links - <http://www.over-land.com/westpers3.html> - Extensive list of links to individual mountain men and what they did

The Other Pioneer: African Americans on the Frontier - <http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=4807> Good overview

Trails West - <http://unitedstateswestwardexpansion.weebly.com/trails-west.html> - Maps and brief descriptions of the different trails; also information on Mountain Men and Pioneer Women

Transcontinental Railroad: American Experience - <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/introduction/tcrr-intro> - From the TV program; includes information on Native Americans and those who built the railroad

The West - <http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/program> - Ken Burns documentary, click on People (extensive list), Places (interactive map with pictures), Events (chronological list with brief descriptive entries), and Resources (primary sources used in preparing program), also Lesson Plans

Westward Expansion - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q16OZkgSXfM> - 12:43 min. Video (part of history series) demythologizes the westward movement.

Westward Expansion: Facts Summary Timeline - <http://www.historynet.com/westward-expansion> - Extensive links on all aspects of the Westward Expansion including the Indian Removal Act, Mexican American War, and the Homestead Act.

Videos

School House Rock – Westward Expansion – Elbow Room - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfoQBTPY7gk> (3 minutes)

Westward Expansion: Crash Course US History #24 - With author John Green <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q16OZkgSXfM> (12:43 minutes)

Westward Expansion Compilation – 56 videos grouped together https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2tfAtHC_8&list=PLm_tO7xNmetpocp9I3xLofDVH_ReC-UQ

Information Sheet

Topics

- African Americans and the westward expansion
- Battle of the Little Big Horn
- Buffalo Soldiers
- California Gold Rush
- Indian Removal Act
- Mexican-American War
- Mountain Men (Select several; compare/contrast them)
- Nez Perce • Pioneers
- Railroads • Trail of Tears
- Trails (Select one) • Wagon Trains
- Women and the Westward Movement
- Topic of your choice (with approval)

Directions

1. Form a group of 3-4 and select topic.
2. Get an overview.
3. How did this issue affect or contribute to the westward expansion?
4. Is there more than one viewpoint on the subject?
5. What additional questions will you explore?
6. What is your perspective on the topic based on your research?
7. What about it is important for people to know?
8. Locate pictures, videos, and other visuals.
9. Cite all sources.
10. Organize your findings for your presentation



Where Am I?

In a cooperative activity, students explore maps, geography, and different places around the world. You can make some adaptations to limit their research to the U.S. or leave it world-wide as it is. Their freedom to choose locations of interest to them will engage them. Having someone else find additional information about those places is an opportunity to share learning.

Bring out your atlases, books on countries of the world, and some on the U.S. Use one or two queries to model what students are to do. Explain that the first step is for them to answer all the numbered statements by selecting sites that fill the criteria (sea, country, etc.). If necessary, show students the difference between political and physical maps. Once they have finished this part, they exchange their papers with someone else in the class (you can oversee that).

The second step is for them to take the information the first student presented and identify where in the world the place is. Using books and online sources, their task is to find something of interest about the spot. When the activity sheets are completed have them talk about all the locations. Which seem the most fascinating? Are there any they would like to know more about? If you sense enough interest, use this as a springboard for a research project on different areas and countries of the world.

Sample Answers

1. *Sea* – Touch Turkey; *Black Sea*; fact – Connects to the Aegean Sea through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.
2. *Desert* – Located in China and Southern Mongolia; *Gobi*; fact –The two-humped Bactrian camel lives there.
3. *Mountain range* – Located on the east coast of South America; *Andes mountains*; fact – It’s the longest mountain range in the world.
4. *Lake* – Located in Switzerland and France; *Lake Geneva*; fact - It’s the largest lake on the Rhone River.
5. *Country* – Northern boundary is Thailand and Laos, Southern boundary is Vietnam and the Gulf of Thailand; *Cambodia*; fact - Angkor Wat built between 802 and 1220 AD is the largest religious monument in the word.
6. *River* – Begins in Ethiopia and ends in the Mediterranean Sea; *Nile*; fact - It’s 4,184 miles long and is possibly the longest river in the world (not certain between it and the Amazon).

Puzzler

Directions

- Find a location which meets the description for all the numbered items.
- Fill in the information about them for the “a” clues.
- When you have completed all of them, pass this to someone else and get their Puzzler in return.
- Use their clues to answer the “bullets.”

1. I am a sea.
 - a. One country I touch is _____.
 - Where am I? _____.
 - One fact about me is _____.
2. I am a desert.
 - a. I am located in _____.
 - Where am I? _____.
 - One fact about me is _____.
3. I am a major mountain range.
 - a. One of the places where I am located is _____.
 - Where am I? _____.
 - One fact about me is _____.
4. I am a big lake.
 - a. I am located in _____.
 - Where am I? _____.
 - One fact about me is _____.
5. I am a county.
 - a. My northern boundary is _____.
 - a. My southern boundary is _____.
 - Where am I? _____.
 - One fact about me is _____.
6. I am a river.
 - a. The place I start is _____.
 - a. The place I end is _____.
 - Where am I? _____.
 - One fact about me is _____.

The Opening of the West, the Pony Express and the Transcontinental Telegraph

by Gail Petri

Primary Source Specialist

On May 25, 1805, Thomas Jefferson wrote to Lawrence Dunbar: “The work we are now doing is I trust done for posterity, in such a way that they need not repeat it. For this we are much indebted to you not only for the labour & time you have devoted to it, but for the excellent method of which you have set the example, and which I hope will be the model to be followed by others. We shall delineate with correctness the great arteries of this great country: those who come after us will extend the ramifications as they become acquainted with them, and fill up the canvas we begin. With my acknowledgements [sic] for your zealous aid in this business, accept by friendly salutations & assurances of great esteem & respect.”



[Detail] Lewis and Clark on the Columbian River

Getting Started With Lewis and Clark

- (Presentation) Fill Up the Canvas <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/lewisandclark/> What was the historical significance of the Lewis and Clark expedition? What impact did it have on the growth of the nation and on its Native American inhabitants? In this online activity, follow Lewis and Clark across the country on their historic trek. Read comments from their letters and journals. View images representative of what they might have encountered. Be sure to visit the resources pages for additional documents. http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/lewisandclark/resources_toc.html
- (Exhibition) Lewis and Clark and the Revealing of America: Rivers, Edens, Empires <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lewisandclark/index.html> On April 7, 1805, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark left Fort Mandan for points west, beginning the process of “filling in the canvas” of America. This exhibition features the Library’s rich collections of exploration material documenting the quest to connect the East and the West by means of a waterway passage.
- (Themed Resources) The Lewis and Clark Expedition <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/lewis-clark/index.html> Read about Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and their explorations in their letters and journals. Study the role of Congress in the Louisiana Purchase as well as Thomas Jefferson’s commitment to westward expansion. Examine maps created by the expedition and compare them to more recent maps.

Opening the West

- Collections
 - ▲ Meeting of Frontiers – Exploration of the American West <http://memory.loc.gov/intldl/mtfhtml/mfdiscvry/discamer.html> Galleries include Mapping the West, Spanish North America and Lewis and Clark. You will also find an excellent comparative map of various explorers’ trails.



- ▲ The First American West: The Ohio River Valley, 1750-1820, <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/ohio-valley/> A collection of books, periodicals, maps, letters, journals and other materials documenting the travels of the first Europeans to journey past the Appalachians into what

was then the American west. Also included is material documenting the lives of women and African-American slaves traveling into this unknown territory. Don’t miss the special presentation *Encountering the American West*. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/award99/icuhtml/fawsp/fawsp.html>



[Detail] Emigrants Crossing the Plains. 1869.

- ▲ “California as I Saw It”: First Person Narratives of California’s Early Years 1849-1900 <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/california-narrative/> Documents on the formative era of the state of California. Eyewitness accounts record the turbulent history of the pioneer experience and the Gold Rush. It includes complete works by Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, and William Tecumseh Sherman, as well as a rich array of journals, diaries, and letters illustrating everyday life of the period. The descriptions of the development of urban centers such as San Francisco and Los Angeles are also a highlight of this collection. Don’t miss the special presentation – *Early California History: An Overview*. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cbhtml/cbintro.html>

- ▲ Trails of Hope: Overland Diaries and Letters 1846-1869 <http://overlandtrails.lib.byu.edu> This is a collection of the original writings of 49 voyagers on the Mormon, California, Oregon, and Montana trails who wrote while traveling on the trail. Some diarists speak with uncommon eloquence and others with maddening brevity, while telling their stories of persistence and pain, birth and death, God and gold, dust and debris, bugs and buffalo, love and laughter, and trail tedium. Accompanying the original diary images and their searchable transcripts are 43 contemporary maps; seven trail guides; 82 photographs, watercolors and art sketches; four essays on the Mormon and California trails, maps and trail guides;

- ▲ Denver Public Library Digital Collections - <http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/photographs/> The Denver Public Library’s Western History/Genealogy Department collection of digitized photographs (formerly Photoswest) chronicles the people, places and events that shaped the settlement and growth of the Western United States.

Presentations

- ▲ American Memory Timeline Documents– Traveling on the Overland Trails, 1843-1860 <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/expref/oregtral/> The most remote area explored by mountain men in the 1820s and 1830s was the Oregon country, the region consisting of present-day Oregon and Washington. In the 1830s and 1840s, Americans living east of the Mississippi River began to hear about the Oregon country from missionaries. Beginning in 1843, wagon trains set out for Oregon each summer from settlements along the Missouri River. Read first-hand descriptions here. To find more sources on this topic, search the collections using such terms as *overland journeys to the Pacific*, *frontier and pioneer life* [by state], *exploration, surveys, and guidebooks* [by state], or using specific geographical or human-made features of the area (e.g., *Platte River*, *Snake River*, *Fort Laramie*).

- ▲ American Memory Timeline Documents –The American West 1865-1900 <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/riseind/west/> These documents and photograph represent a snapshot of what life was like in the early West. See the entry below.

- ▲ American Memory Timeline Documents – I Will Go West <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/riseind/west/gowest.html> The song was written in 1875. It tells of a family considering moving West. What reasons does

the song give for moving West? What does this person expect the West to be like?

- Lesson Plans and Primary Source Sets
 - ▲ (Lesson Plan) Journeys West - <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/journeys/> What motivated thousands of people to journey west during the 1800s? Students will examine primary documents and take on the role of fur trader, pioneer family, explorer, gold miner and Native American as they draw their conclusions too this question.
 - ▲ (Lesson Plan) Westward Expansion: Links to the Past <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/lessons/past/index.html> Students use documents from California As I Saw It: First Person Narratives, 1849-1900, in American Memory to create a script depicting the motivations, expectations, fears, and realizations of immigrants who settled California between 1849 and 1900. The finished product will be a script containing links to illustrative written materials, images, and sound files from the Library of Congress online collections.

- ▲ (Primary Source Set) Westward Expansion: Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/westward/> The expansion of the U.S. westward and the encounters that resulted are documented in photographs, sheet music, maps, letters, oral history, and more. This set can be used to help students explore Westward expansion of the United States and the resulting interactions among the West’s many cultural groups.

What happened to the Pony Express?

- (America’s Library) Pony Express: A Local Legacy (A story from Missouri) http://www.americaslibrary.gov/es/mo/es_mo_pony_1.html
- (Pictorial Map) Pony Express Route April 3, 1860 – October 24, 1861 <http://www.loc.gov/item/2004629238/>
- (Wise Guide) It Ended the Pony Express <http://www.loc.gov/wiseguide/oct03/express.html>



- (Lithograph) The persuit (i.e. pursuit) - Man from the Pony Express, on horseback, fleeing from Indians, on Indian burial grounds. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/93504420/>
- (2011 photograph) Mural “Pony Express,” by Frank Albert Mechau, Jr., at the Ariel Rios Federal Building, Washington, D.C. by Carol Highsmith <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2013634511/>
- (2012 Photograph) The Pony Express statue is made by sculptor Thomas Holland in Old Sacramento, California <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2013633899/>

First Transcontinental Telegraph System

- America’s Library) - The First Transcontinental Telegraph System Was Completed October 24, 1861 - http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/civil/jb_civil_telegrap_1.html Pony Express horses and their riders were out of work when the faster telegraph came along.
- (Today in History) The Transcontinental Telegraph and the End of the Pony Express <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/today/oct24.html> On October 24, 1861, the first transcontinental telegraph system was completed by Western Union, making it possible to transmit messages rapidly (by mid-nineteenth-century standards) from coast to coast. This technological advance, pioneered by inventor Samuel F. B. Morse, heralded the end of the Pony Express. Only two days later, on October 26, the horseback mail service that had previously provided the fastest means of communication between the eastern and western United States officially closed.

These resources will provide a snapshot view of what it was like as the Young American West was being settled. For an introduction to the next historic era – The Rise of Industrial America, check out the American Memory Timeline – 1876-1900. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/presentationsandactivities/presentations/timeline/riseind/>

Happy researching! ▲

POETRY

Powerful Poetry

By compacting emotion into few words, poetry adds power to strong messages. For Poetry Month this April, share with students the impact of poets writing both fiction and nonfiction as they use language to convey a lasting impression. These three titles tell widely different stories, but all will remain in students' memories.

The Early Life of a Legend

Neri, G. *Hello, I'm Johnny Cash*. Ill. by A. G. Ford, Candlewick, 2014, unp. 978-0-7636-6245-5

Known then as J.R., the man who would become Johnny Cash was born in the Depression era south to a dirt-poor family. His mother's guitar was sold for food, but his love for music thrived when his father got him a radio, and he could hear broadcasts from *Far Away Places*. "To Momma's surprise/ J.R. remembered all the songs he heard." His beloved older brother left the message *Meet Me in Heaven*, and the still young J.R. sang out his pain at the funeral.

On his senior class trip, he heard the Carter Family at the Grand Ole Opry and fell in love with June, knowing *We'll Meet Again*, although he first marries someone else. This first part of Cash's life concludes with him opening for Elvis Presley and singing "Folsom Prison Blues" and writing *I Walk the Line* shortly after. The free verse and photograph-like illustrations makes this biography of how Johnny Cash became an unforgettable legend one that will long endure in readers' minds. (Gr. 3-5)

Evolution of a Bully

Holt, K. A. *Rhyme Schemer*. Chronicle, 2014, 165 p. 978-1-4521-2700-2

Bullied at home by his older brothers, Kevin deals with the pain by harassing others, saying on *Day 5* of the new school year, "If I am stone/ I don't laugh when Robin trips on my jagged foot." He gets into trouble repeatedly, sometimes because of his oldest brother, and gets library detention where on *Tuesday* Mrs. Little is "... looking, searching, telling me something/ that I can't hear."

Mrs. Little does get through to Kevin and discovers his talent for writing poetry (much of it

mocking), quietly supporting him. But when Robin finds his secret notebook, the tables are turned and Kevin becomes his tool. Not quitting on him, Mrs. Little comes to his rescue and overrides the family who ignores or taunts bringing him to an *Open Mic* and "... buys me a Coke/ in a real glass bottle." What Robin has been doing is revealed, and by *Thursday*, the start of the next year, Kevin realizes, "I don't feel that different/ but I know I am." A good reminder that bullies are made by others and the importance of caring teachers and libraries as safe places. (Gr. 5-7)

We Shall Overcome

Lewis, J. Patrick and George Ella Lyon. *Voices from the March on Washington*. Wordsong, Highlights, 2014, 114 p. 978-1-62091-785-5

On August 28, 1963, they marched on Washington, D.C. Thousands of people, black and white, the leaders, the entertainers, and ordinary people. *Among the Marchers* are imagined characters representing the spectrum of the many who took a stand that day for Civil Rights. Six fictional people in linked poems tell their story of why they came and how they fared. In *Ioways*, Emma Wallace a white 23-year-old Midwest farm hand feels "... the invisible cinch that pinched/ and sheep-shanked me to the porch" as she longs for what "... lay beyond/ the books that motored my imagination." A college student's sister wants to know why he is going, but *The Real Question* is, "Why are you staying?"

The day progresses, the marchers gather at the Washington Monument, Annie Ross, a Spelman College student is *Up Close* discovering "... how strange it is/ for a colored girl to stand nose-to-neck with/ a freckled white boy." Mr. Ravizee, a sharecropper, has "Been treated like a dog, worked like a mule./ We're here for jobs, votes, a better day." *Joan Baez* "... led 350,000 people/ in 'We Shall Overcome.'" Looking for *Answers* an out-work 25-year-old with a degree in Business, wonders "will Americans catch the fever/ that cries, 'For All or None?'" They leave changes as was the country. Take time to look over the brief bios of the real people named in the book as well as the "Imagined Voices." For those too young to have gone or watched the March, the people and the poems bring it back to life. (Gr. 5-12) ▲

Becoming Financially Literate

Many districts are incorporating financial literacy into the curriculum. It's a unit which most students find fascinating as these three titles illustrate. What kid is not interested in money? Where did we get the idea for it? Martin Jenkins explains it all in *The History of Money: From Bartering to Banking* (ill. by Satoshi Kitamura, Candlewick, 2014, 53 p. 978-0-7636-6763-4). The title says it all as humorous illustrations carry the story from the hunter/ gatherers to bartering, then counting things, to using metal for coinage. Money leads to writing—and taxes. China is the first place to use paper money which becomes widespread, eventually resulting in banks—and bank failures. An explanation of international currency wraps the subject up. (Gr. 4-6)

Young entrepreneurs will enjoy the You're in Business series and a good place to start is Ryan Jacobson's *Get a Job: Making Stuff to Sell* (Ill. by Jon Cannell, Lerner, 2014, 40 p. 978-1-4677-3867-8). Starting with the premise that everyone has some talent, suggests with an understanding of business basics it can be turned profitable. Key questions are: Who will buy it and why? Where and when should/can you sell it? And most importantly, how will you distinguish yourself from the competition? Suggestions for business range from the classic lemonade stand to jewelry and spirit flags, each incorporating important business advice. The advice is sound and the presentation engaging. (Gr. 5-9)

Making money is important, but for teens it is equally essential to learn about spending it. Kara McGuire leads them through the process in *Smart Spending: The Teen's Guide to Cash, Credit, and Life's Costs* (Compass Point Books, Capstone, 2015, 64 p. photos 978-0-7565-4923-7). The three chapters (Spending Smart, Brilliant Borrowing and Paying for College) cover a broad range of subtopics. Spending Smart includes wants vs. needs, establishing a budget, setting priorities, credit and debit cards, and even discusses Bitcoin. If they are going to borrow, teens need to recognize what it costs and know about credit scores. The last chapter explores ways of covering college costs, loans, tips to minimize costs, and how to realistically save for it. Share with students as a resource to prevent the problems caused by unwittingly getting into debt. (Gr. 8 and up)

NOTEWORTHY NONFICTION

Caring for Our Planet

With Earth Day in April (this year on the 22nd) and many schools doing gardening projects as part of STEM learning, look to build your resources on conservation and the environment. These titles are excellent for discussion and research starters.

Conserving Wildlife

From his trunk where deer fill a clearing to branches where owls rest, beetles scratch, and woodpeckers tap to his top stretching to the clouds, a tall sequoia is connected to all parts of his natural world. The paintings by Minor show how important the tree is to animal who burrow in the late autumn and his patient waiting throughout the winter, recalling the centuries he has seen moonrises. A note from the author distinguishes between sequoias and redwoods and explains the potential damage from global warming, although they are now protected from logging. Johnston, Tony. *Sequoia*. Ill. by Wendell Minor. A Neal Porter Book, Roaring Brook Press, 2014, unp. 978-1-59643-727-2 (Gr. PK-3)

A stutterer, Alan Rabinowitz was placed in class for disturbed children causing him to feel broken. The only time he didn't stutter was when he spoke to his pets or the animals at the zoo. He promised them if he ever found his voice he would speak for them, keeping them from harm. A teacher in college taught him how to get over his stutter. Still feeling broken, he retreated to the forests where he was at home with the animals. In Belize he became the first to study jaguars, gathering vital information, even while hunters were killing them. To keep his promise he spoke to the prime minister, managing to convince a poor country to set up the first and only jaguar preserve. The autobiography shows the power of one committed person. Rabinowitz, Alan. *A Boy and a Jaguar*. Ill. by Cátia Chien. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. unp. 978-0-547-87507-1 (Gr. 2-5)

Animals and Plants

Chocolate is a world-wide favorite, but it first you need cocoa trees. Starting with the end and working to the beginning, readers discover how animals are necessary to the survival of the trees which provide the treat. Cocoa beans (the seeds of the tree) are dried and roasted before being turned into chocolate, but cocoa flowers which become cocoa pods won't form without midges and cocoa leaves, protected by maggots. Lizards contribute as do fungi. Cocoa pods never fall from the tree, but monkeys eat them and spit out the beans. The tale of how all living things interact for survival is important and commenting earthworms add to the fun. Stewart, Melissa and Allen Young. *No Monkeys, No Chocolate*. Ill. by Nicole Wong. Charlesbridge, 2013, unp. 978-1-58089-287-2 (picture book) (Gr. 3-5)

Beyond the well-known endangered status of animals such as tigers and elephants, many other animals and plants are threatened with extinction. Two-page spreads, the first with color photos and the second with information, describe the animal or plant. A notebook-like panel details how many are left, where they live, what threatens them, and actions taken. Among those covered are Przewalski's (Wild) Horse, the Greater Bamboo Lemur, Attenborough's Pitcher Plant, the Wild Yam (only 200 left), and the Northern Muriqui. The final pages have small pictures and names of the 100 most threatened species in the world. Published in conjunction with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Baillie, Marilyn, Jonathan Baillie, and Ellen Butcher. *How to Save a Species*. Owl Kids, 2014, 48 p. 978-1-77147-063-6 (Gr. 3-7)

The Waste We Make

At the city dump the garbage gang, composed of a huge refrigerator, an aluminum can robot, an old sandwich, a brick, a stuffed animal, and a small rhino, find a bee hive frightening Brick, and causing the rhino to wonder if bees poop. Rhino is sure all living things poop but none of them have ever seen bees do it. They discuss the difference between living and nonliving things as they walk among the many discarded items at the dump. While the emphasis is on how to determine whether something is a living organism—pooping being one—that is not the only waste matter as they traverse the dump. Troupe,

Thomas Kingsley. *Do Bees Poop? Learning about Living and Nonliving Things with the Garbage Gang*. Ill. by Derek Toye. Picture Window Books, Capstone, 2015, 24 p. 978-0-4795-5477-5 (Gr. K-2)

A research team sailed to the North Pacific Gyre which circles from the west coast of the U.S. to the equator, across the ocean to Japan, and northward back to the U.S. A huge garbage patch exists within this large area of the Pacific. They found plastic in 130 of 132 net tows stretching over 1,700 miles of ocean. Fish get poisoned by plastic they eat and humans then eat the fish. The Ocean Conservancy works to keep the ocean healthy so people are healthy, but it's everyone's job. The author provides ways to keep the oceans free of trash. Excellent photos and numerous side bars under the heading "Trash Talk" show scientists at work and how their research helps us all. Newman, Patricia. *Plastic, Ahoy! Investigating the Great Pacific Garbage Patch*. Photos by Anne Crawley. Millbrook, 2014, 48 p. 978-1-4677-1283-5 (Gr. 4-8)

Water – Too Little, Too Much

Thousands of people die daily from drinking unclean water. Over the centuries, civilizations have developed numerous means for bringing water to cities and farms. Sewage, mining, and other wastes pollute water. While water can be purified and sea water desalinized, these methods are not available everywhere. Non-profit organizations are using sustainable energy enabling communities in developing nations obtain clean water. Humans can live only a few days without water. Mulder offers suggestions for students to take an active role in conserving this precious resource. Photos and fact boxes provide further evidence of the reality of the problem. An *Orca Footprint*. Mulder, Michelle. *Every Last Drop: Bringing Clean Water Home*. Orca, 2014, 48 p. 978-1-4598-0223-0 (Gr. 4-6)

Unlike the South Pole, the arctic has no land mass, just ice, but it may also have large amount of oil and natural gas of interest to many nations. With the shrinking of the Arctic sea ice, ships are now using the Northeast and Northwest Passages to save time and fuel, accelerating the depletion. Is the economic advantage worth it? Eight nations belong to the Arctic Council, others want to join. Meanwhile, Alaskan communities are being destroyed by warmer weather undermining homes built on permafrost and sea ice is no longer protecting villages from coastal storms. Water from melting glaciers provide hydroelectric power for Greenland. Do risks outweigh the opportunities? Readers are left to decide—or research further. Good food for thought. McPherson, Stephanie Sammartino. *Arctic Thaw: Climate Change and the Global for Energy Resources*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2014, 64 p. 978-1-4677-2043-4 (Gr. 6-12)

Overarching Issues

How important are the stories about environmental issues covered on news programs? Urging readers to become more attuned to what really is happening, Fleischman identifies five essentials from population growth to climate. He discusses the impact of vested interests, the cost to politicians for bringing unpleasant truths, and our inherent belief that all progress is good. Concluding with a discussion of what works and what doesn't, he addresses issues to watch for, and guides students in evaluating environmental information. Photos, sidebars, and glossary information on the side speed understanding. A broad overview of the issue, it's an ideal start for any research on the topic. Fleischman, Paul. *Eyes Wide Open: Going Behind the Environmental Headlines*. Candlewick, 2014, 203 p. 0-7636-7102-0 (Gr. 6-12)

On October 31, 2011, earth's population passed seven million people. While the rate of increase varies from continent to continent, the impact on our environment is considerable. In Africa gorillas and chimpanzees are disappearing and desertification is reducing arable land. Deforestation is destroying the Amazon rain forest. Population control is the obvious solution, but people don't necessarily do it voluntarily and instituting a required limit as was done in China is not feasible in most places. Andregg proposes education and access to birth control as policies which can make a difference. Good photos, charts, and sidebar information. A tough subject, but interested students might try the suggested activities. Andregg, Michael M. *Seven Billion and Counting: The Crisis in Global Population Growth*. Twenty-First Century Books, 2014, 87 p. 978-0-7613-6715-4 (Gr. 7-12) ▲

BOOKS IN FOCUS

Animals with Grit

Determination, persevering despite setbacks, is an ability students need to develop if they are to be able to take on difficult subjects, situations, and people as they go through school and life. The habit needs to begin early, and these three engaging stories will get them recognizing the value of staying with a tough task. C. Roger Mader's almost photographic-like illustrations follow a daring cat with Paris as a backdrop. The puppy in Mike Wohnoutka's simple story is more than rewarded for his persistence as is the monkey in the tale based on an Indian myth by Kabir and Surishtha Sehgal.

Mader, Roger C. *Tiptop Cat*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014, unp. ill. 978-0-544-14799-7

A cat likes everything about his new home in a Paris apartment high above the city, especially the balcony giving him access to the roof from where he sits "on top of the world." A pigeon lands on *his* balcony, and the predator in him gives chase. He falls off, crashes through an awning into the hands of a store owner. Only his spirit is broken. He hides under blankets and towels, staying in the shadows until a crow appears on the balcony. Once again, the cat follows the bird until they are both perched "on top of the world." (Gr. PK-3)

Activities

1. Cats

- ❑ Read about big cats (tigers, lions, leopards) and make a chart comparing then with house cats. Show what is the same and what is different.
- ❑ Would you rather have a cat or a dog as a pet? Draw a few pictures showing why you think this way or write a story about it.

2. Reading the Pictures

- ❑ Based on the pictures, describe what the cat sees in his new apartment.
- ❑ Choose one of the people who see the cat falling as they look at their window or the man who catches him. Write a letter to a friend explaining what they saw and what they were thinking. Use the illustrations to help you.

Wohnoutka, Mike. *Little Puppy and the Big Green Monster*. Holiday House, 2014, unp. ill. 978-0-8234-3064-2

A little puppy with a red ball keeps looking for someone to play with him. A bus, a cat, a man, and some big mean dogs won't join him. He spots a monster sitting on a bench reading a book and approaches him eagerly asking him to play ball. The monsters roars at him. Undaunted the puppy

proposes a game of catch. Returning the ball after the monster purposely threw it very far, he suggests hide-and-seek. Despite the monster's best effort to keep the puppy away, he remains, joining the monster in his bath and then snuggling up with him in bed. Both now have a friend. (Gr. PK-1)

3. Play

- ❑ How do you feel when you can't find someone to play with you? What do you do?
- ❑ The puppy likes playing catch and hide-and-seek. Make a graph showing to see which ones are the favorites of the students in your class.

4. Persistence

- ❑ How does the puppy deal with the Big Green Monster's refusal to play?
- ❑ When something is difficult for you to do, do you keep trying or do you give up? Share examples with the other students of what happened when you kept trying until you succeeded.

Seghal, Kabir and Surishtha Sehgal. *A Bucket of Blessings*. Ill. by Ting Ting Tsong. Beach Lane Books, unp. 978-1-4424-5870-3

Without rain, the pond and village well are now dry. Monkey and his friends have searched for water but found none. Remembering a story about how a peacock's dance can bring rain, he journeys up a mountain to visit the bird. Peacock tells him he must have water to cause the rain. Stopping in a cave on his way down the mountain he finds a spring. Grabbing and filling a bucket he carries it back up the mountain, not noticing the pail is leaking. Many animals catch the drips and ask where he has found the water and where he is taking the water. He tells them, but doesn't stop. When he reaches the top, the bucket is almost empty. He is shattered, but Peacock tells him to look back. Along his trail, the land has bloomed. Peacock says if a few drops of water could do that, perhaps what's left is enough for him to bring the rain with his dance. The beautiful feather unfurl, the sky fills with clouds ant rumbles of thunder, and it rains. (Gr. PK-3)

5. India

- ❑ Locate pictures of what India looks like. What are some special places to see there?
- ❑ Find out about the different animals living in India. Choose one and make a fact sheet about it.

6. Compare and Contrast

- ❑ In what ways are these three stories alike?
- ❑ Which of the three most shows the importance of persistence? Explain you answer.
- ❑ The illustrations in the three stories are very different. How did each make the story better? Which did you like best and why? ▲

Makers

An increasing number of school librarians at all levels are introducing their students to makerspaces. In addition to supplies and helpers, give students inspiration by adding books to your collection on making things. Aaron Meshon shows young listeners why *Tools Rule* (Atheneum, 2014, unp. ill. 978-14424-9601-9). The tools assemble and call role. Wrench, hammer, workbench, drill, nails, tape, and more are needed to clean up a messy yard and build a toolshed. T-Square and pencil draft plans, wheelbarrow brings the wood. Soon the frame is up. Step-by-step the tools complete the job. The text in cartoon balloons subtly bring the message that making things is fun. (Gr. PK-2)

Robin Nelson shows sneaker fans the whole process *From Leather to Basketball Shoes* (Lerner, 2014, 24 p. 978-1-4677-3893-4) Full color photos show each step from cutting the leather, stitching the pieces, to gluing it together, adding insole and laces, and finally the finished product is checked. Glossary words are in red throughout the text. This title in the "Start to Finish" series will be popular with budding sneakerheads. (Gr. K-3)

Although the title will generate laughs and grins, the content is fascinating in Francesca Davis DiPizza's *Remaking the John: The Invention and Reinvention of the Toilet* (Twenty-First Century Books, 2014, 64 p. 978-1-4677-2645-0). The problem of dealing with human waste has been important from earliest time. Latrines are mentioned in the Bible, and Scotland may have had the first indoor plumbing. Typhoid and cholera are spread through water contaminated by fecal matter and only improved sanitation ends the problem. DiPizza traces the evolution of toilets and sewage treatment plants in developed countries and the ongoing issue in many parts of the world. Color photos and fact boxes add more information. (Gr. 5-9)

MORE FOR YOUR LIBRARY PROGRAM

Blogging with Students: A Vehicle for Writing, Digital Citizenship, and More

by Jane Lofton

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In the fall of 2013, Anita Rossell, a Spanish Teacher at my high school, and I collaborated regularly, in particular with her Spanish for Native Speakers class. They visited the library frequently, and I helped them do research and for a project in which they selected a famous Hispanic person and created a digital timeline for this individual. They also created a personal timeline, which they compared with the famous person timeline. I introduced them to dipity.com and Prezi as tools they could use for their timelines. You can see these timelines on this library website link. In other activities, they learned how to use Google Drive to share documents with classmates and their teacher.

With this pattern of collaboration established Sra. Rossell came to me in January 2014. She wanted the students to start creating digital portfolios. I suggested she consider blogging as an alternative. Any documents that would go in a portfolio can be attached to a blog site or individual blog postings, and the chronological nature of a blog has the added advantage of showing student progress over time. We decided together to have them use Google's blogger, to complete a variety of writing assignments.

Connecting and Sharing

The students were engaged because the blogs offered them a platform in which to share their thoughts in a public arena and to receive comments from classmates and members of the public, they had much leeway in what they chose to write about for many of the assignments, and they were able to design and enhance the blogs in a way that reflected their own personalities. This project called upon many of the Model School Library Standards for California Schools and Common Core standards.*

Students had the opportunity to practice writing in both Spanish and English, to comment on classmates' work appropriately, to find their personal voices, reflect on their own learning and experience, and to showcase their work and make it accessible for comments and input from the outside world. They also acquired technology skills, including setting up a blog site and personalizing it with design elements and widgets; finding, embedding, and properly crediting Creative Commons images; making videos using tools like VoiceThread and Voki; using HTML to embed video and other elements; and creating hyperlinks. They learned digital citizenship skills, including respecting intellectual property and giving credit, online etiquette, protecting privacy, and building a positive digital footprint. In fact, blogging serves as an ideal vehicle for providing instruction in all aspects of digital citizenship. The knowledge gained of appropriate behavior as an online publisher will serve them as a life skill.

Building a Collaborative Relationship

This project was an opportunity for me to collaborate on a regular basis with Sra. Rossell. For each assignment, we met in person or communicated on the phone or online. She let me know what her goal was in terms of content, and I wrote the blogging assignments and added aspects of digital citizenship and new technology skills to each. Next, we compared notes to make sure the assignments worked for her content needs. For the early assignments, I incorporated short lessons on digital citizenship topics. We jointly walked the students through what was expected, and I demonstrated the technology skills needed to complete the posting. As the students progressed, we moved to more written instructions students could

follow themselves, while we were available as coaches. The students also coached each other when they needed help with technology skills. Sra. Rossell graded the assignments and I offered input for the technology and digital citizenship aspects.

We are both very enthusiastic about what students gained from their experience, and we are continuing to have her students blog this year. A number of students from last year's class are continuing with her in an AP Spanish Literature Class. Last year, we maintained the instructions for each posting assignment in a Google Doc we shared with the class. This year, we have established a class blog where students can view the assignments, as well as links to the student blogs. Links for last year's blogs are posted here. The students would welcome comments – in Spanish or English – in their blogs.

*Standards addressed:

Model School Library Standards for California Schools

This project called upon many of the Model School Library Standards for California Schools. Some standards addressed most closely included:

The student will organize, synthesize, create, and communicate information.

3.1 Demonstrate ethical, legal, and safe use of

information in print, media, and online resources:
a. Demonstrate respect for intellectual property, copyright restrictions, fair use, and public-performance rights when downloading or duplicating media.

d. Recognize and protect the private information of oneself and others.

Through the project, students got significant instruction and practice in how to respect intellectual property. They also learned what personal information is and isn't appropriate to share online.

3.3 Use information and technology creatively to answer a question, solve a problem, or enrich understanding:

c. Identify capabilities and limitations of tools for organizing and using information.

d. Produce media efficiently and appropriately to communicate a message to an audience.

Through the project, student learned how to use blogging software, as well as other tools like VoiceThread, Flickr, Voki, and more, to add content to their blogs and communicate a message.

4.2 Seek, produce, and share information:

b. Contribute actively to the learning community, and participate in groups to pursue and generate information.

d. Use technology to communicate, share information, and collaborate with others with the same interests.

The blogs helped them share their thoughts with classmates through postings and comments. They also allowed them to communicate to a broader world online.

Common Core Standards addressed:

Blogging offers students an opportunity to practice and experiment with a wide variety of types of writing, so many writing standards are met with it, and these students did so in both Spanish and English. In particular, these 9-12 Common Core Writing anchor standards were addressed:

Production and Distribution of Writing

4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Students gained experience writing for all their classmates, as well as a potential global audience, in a variety of different ways due to different types of assignments. Some were reflective, others more informational, other analytical. They were also encouraged to carefully plan and revise their work. They used the Internet to produce and publish their work and to interact with others through the blogging comment feature. ▲

Weather and Climate

Mark Twain said, “Everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it.” This Earth Science project has students talking about it knowledgeably and considering whether anything can or should be done about it. By looking at the many forces controlling and affecting weather and climate, they ultimately deal with the issue of climate change.

One important role of school librarians is to teach students *how* to think, not *what* to think. By having them evaluate relevant, credible information and sharing and discussing their findings, they are able to wrestle with the issue of climate change. Not everyone in the class will come to the same conclusion. What is important is that their positions are based on critically thinking through what they have learned and using that to arrive at their assessment of the issue.

Laying the Groundwork

The activity acquaints students with the major air and water forces and their role in weather and climate. By getting an overview of their interconnectedness and how one piece affects another, they are prepared to deal with the Essential Questions of the project. Among the ones for them to focus on are: How do air and water currents affect our weather? What causes extreme weather conditions such as disastrous storms and droughts? What causes climate change? Which is the biggest contributing factor – human or natural interactions? How often does Earth’s climate change? Can it be reversed once it starts? Is climate change mostly a natural phenomenon?

To speed the process have pairs of students identify two or three terms. Suggest helpful databases you have and the ones suggested here and in *Web Cites*. Caution students (or tell them when they encounter the problem themselves) to include “weather,” “climate,” or “meteorology” when using a search engine to obtain relevant results. When they have completed the activity, have groups share their findings. They can now respond to the first and possibly the second Essential Question.

Grappling with Big Issues

Hand out the Information Sheet and give students a few minutes to review the topics. Ask if they can think of any others. For example, someone might know that the “great extinctions” were connected to climate change and be interested in exploring that aspect. Let them know you will be discussing with them the format for their presentation.

Briefly discuss what their research strategy will be. Once they are underway, check in every so often to be sure they are on track. If you have *Standards for the 21st-Century Learner in Action* (AASL, 2009)—and you should – give them the self-assessment questions for Standard 2 on page 61. Have students begin their research using InstaGrok, a free education-based search engine with a visual interface available via an app

or website. InstaGrok, allows users to narrow searches with visual aids and also provides opportunities for note taking via journals. Alternatively, use a resource you like to share student work with other groups, using each other’s findings to get a broader understanding of how their topic fits into the larger picture and benefit from websites classmates have located which will help them as well. Get them started on learning the benefits of using the collective knowledge of a personal learning network (PLN).

Sharing and Creating

For their culminating presentation have groups combine their work to create a useful resource on weather and climate. You can either get their suggestions at the end or offer one of your own. One possibility is for them to create a pro/con view of the issue using Blendspace. Blendspace is a free digital presentation tool available as an app or via the Internet that allows users to create online lessons integrating websites, documents, videos, images, educreations, and so much more. It is easy to use and also provides opportunities for student assessment.

Wrap up the project with a discussion on what worked and what didn’t, and what they found surprising. Did they find sharing with other groups helpful? Review the Essential Questions to determine the depth of students’ understanding. Finally, ask them what they will most remember. ▲

Websites

Atmospheric Pressure Makes the Wind Blow - <http://www.kidsgeo.com/geography-for-kids/0081-atmospheric-pressure.php> - Covers major wind patterns with diagrams

Causes of Climate Change: Canada’s Action on Climate Change - <http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en&n=65CD73F4-1> - Overview along with links for more detailed information

Causes of Climate Change: Climate Change: US EPA - <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/causes.html>

Causes of Climate Change: NSW Department of Primary Industries - <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/research/topics/climate-change/causes> - Solid information from Overview to dealing with climate change to its impact on industry

Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet: Causes - <http://climate.nasa.gov/causes> - Discussion of the greenhouse effect with all contributing causes

Understanding Climate: WMO - http://www.wmo.int/pages/themes/climate/understanding_climate.php - Excellent detailed overview; check other links on the right

Understanding Monsoon Season - <http://weather.about.com/od/monsoons/f/monsoons.htm> - Extensive explanation with links

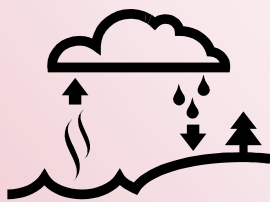
What Causes the Earth’s Climate to Change? British Geologic Survey - <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/climateChange/general/causes.html?src=topNav> - Great diagrams

The Water Cycle Summary - <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/watercyclesummary.html> - Excellent diagram with links explaining each step in the cycle.

Information Sheet

Topics

- Changes in weather patterns over the past decades
- Causes of previous climate change
- Effect of the sun and its variations on weather
- El Niño and La Niña causes and effects
- Extreme weather and its causes (overview and/or choose one such as superstorm Sandy)
- Greenhouse effect
- Interrelationship of air and sea currents on earth’s weather and climate
- Human’s impact on climate
- Nature’s impact on climate
- Topic of your choice with approval



Directions

1. Form a group of three to four.
2. Choose your topic.
3. Find an overview and develop a preliminary list of questions.
4. Use databases for your core research.
5. Validate websites you select and identify which if any have biases.
6. In addition to locating factual information, determine implications.
7. Incorporate your assessment of the topic based on your findings.
8. Locate charts, diagrams, and other visuals.
9. Cite all sources.
10. Determine to what extent your subject is a major contributor to weather and/or climate change.
11. Cite all sources including graphics, audio, and video.

Weather Wise

Explain these terms and their connection to weather

1. Doldrums
2. Ferrell Cell
3. Gulf Stream
4. Humboldt Current
5. Hydrologic cycle
6. Kuroshio Current
7. Labrador Current
8. Monsoon
9. Ocean Gyre
10. Ozone Layer
11. Polar Easterlies
12. Trade Winds



Weather Wise

1. *Doldrums* – Also known as the intertropical convergence zone; located between the two belts of trade winds 5° north and 5° south of the equator; solar heating in this region produces both severe storms – it’s where hurricanes originate—and periods of extreme calm without any wind, capable of trapping a sailing ship for weeks.
2. *Ferrell Cell* – Three cells describe the general vertical circulation of the atmosphere; the Ferrell cell describes the average motion of the prevailing winds from 30° to 60° north latitude and from 30° to 60° south latitude; the Hadley cell is the average motion of winds from the equator to 30° north latitude and from 30° south latitude; the Polar cell describes the motion of winds from 60° north latitude to the north pole and 60° south latitude to the south pole. Each of these patterns bring different weather conditions.
3. *Gulf Stream* – Powerful warm water current traveling from the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic off southern Florida, going north along the eastern U.S. coast to Newfoundland; part of the North Atlantic Subtropical Gyre, one of the five major oceanic gyres.
4. *Humboldt Current* – Also called the Peru Current, it’s a cold water current coming from Antarctic waters flowing from northern Peru to southern Chile; a large marine ecosystem (LME), it brings up nutrients from deep waters sustaining a number of species of fish and birds.
5. *Hydrologic cycle* – Continuous movement of earth’s water from gas to liquid, vapor and ice and back; sunlight evaporates water from the ocean, rising air currents take it into the atmosphere where the cooler temperature condenses it into clouds which eventually precipitate as rain or snow, most falls back to the ocean but also lands on ground where runoff flows into rivers or it sinks into the ground replenishing aquifers, some groundwater finds its way into streams or is absorbed by plant roots where evaporation and transpiration (evapotranspiration) from the leaves return it to the atmosphere.
6. *Kuroshio Current* – A northeasterly warm current, it’s one of the largest; located off the coast of Japan and continuing past the Philippines to the southern coast of Alaska; can travel up to 75 miles in a day; like the Humboldt Current it’s a LME; variations in it can have a disastrous effect on Japanese fisheries; plays a vital role in the circulation of the North Pacific Ocean; influences cloud cover and rainfall.
7. *Labrador Current* – Cold surface current flowing along the continental shelf current coming from the Arctic Ocean; carries icebergs in spring and summer; meeting the Gulf Stream off the coast of Labrador and Newfoundland it produces dense fog; keeps Labrador icebound and cools New England.
8. *Monsoon* – Large sea wind blowing from cool ocean waters to a warm land mass; associated with heavy rain but can also bring dry weather; India has the most intense monsoons because of its high altitude; when monsoons don’t arrive at the usual time or bring the expected rain, famine can occur.
9. *Ocean Gyre* – A large system of circular ocean currents which drive the ocean conveyor belt; winds and the earth’s rotation power it; wind currents are deflected by the earth’s rotation, part of the Coriolis effect which shift currents by about a 45° angle to the right in the northern hemisphere and to the left in the southern hemisphere; as currents move along the coastlines they link up forming gyres; tropical, subtropical and subpolar are the three major types of ocean gyres; each has a powerful western current and a weak eastern current boundary.
10. *Ozone Layer* – Located in the stratosphere, about 6-30 miles (10-50 km) above earth’s surface, it absorbs a portion of the sun’s radiation including ultraviolet light linked to skin cancer and cataracts and affecting some crops and marine life; constantly being created and destroyed, the number of ozone molecules need to remain relatively stable; after being seriously depleted, causing an ozone hole, preventative measures seem to be working toward reversing the process.
11. *Polar Easterlies* – Dry prevailing winds coming from low pressure north and solar polar regions above the 60° latitudes moving toward the high pressure Westerlies; causes many of the storms the Westerlies carry to the continents;
12. *Trade Winds* – Warm air moving north and south from the equator descending at roughly 30° north and south; the Coriolis effect deflects it toward the right in the northern hemisphere and to the left in the southern hemisphere; these two prevailing winds meet at the intertropical convergence zone; named for the use made of them by ships traveling between Europe and the Americas.

A Taste for Unreality

Collectively, fantasy, science fiction, and magic are probably the most popular genre at libraries and book stores. Whether based on science, set in the past or an unspecified time, or just bringing a touch of magic into everyday life there is a book in this broad range to intrigue almost every student.

Picture Books and First Chapter Books (Gr. PK-3)

Con, Ariel. *The Zoo Box*. Ill. by Aron Nels Steinke. :01 First Second, 2014, unpaginated. 978-1-62672-052-7

Their parents leave Erika in charge of her brother Patrick, promising a trip to the zoo if they are good. Erika suggests playing dress-up in the attic. After putting on a tiger and a wolf suit, Patrick finds and opens a box reading “Do Not Open.” An ostrich leaps out. They cover the box, but hearing a roar reopen it. More animals emerge. The children pull on the hoods of their costumes and follow the animals out of the house to the zoo. But things are backward. The animals are the ones walking around seeing humans on display. When their disguise is uncovered, the children run back to their house, trapping the following animals back in the box. Good fun. (Gr. K-3)

Hatke, Ben. *Julia's House for Lost Creatures*. :01 First Second, 2014, unpaginated. 978-1-59643-866-8

Julia has a lovely house on the back of a tortoise, but it's too quiet. She hangs a sign saying the house is for lost creatures. A scratch at the door brings the first, a kitten who's a bit different. Then a troll arrives followed an assortment of odd creatures who fill the house and make a mess. She makes a chart assigning everyone chores, and all is put in order. The house is quiet again, except for the drip of a faucet, wind whistling through some broken boards, and creaks from a beam. Once more she makes sign for the front of the house, getting exactly what she needs. A gentle reminder about being a good guest. (Gr. K-2)

Nolen, Jerdine. *Irene's Wish*. Ill. by AG Ford. A Paula Wiseman Book, Simon & Schuster, 2014, unpaginated. 9780-689-86300-4

Irene saves seeds lying around since her hard working gardener Papa says they are full of possibilities. Her parents warned her never to swallow them because they would grow inside her, but she and her brother gather a secret stash of big ones for spitting contests. One day she brings Papa iced tea, not realizing the cup held their seed supply. He drains the tea and slowly turns into a tree which then grows in their yard. The family is with him through the seasons, but when winter comes, Irene wishes, hopes, and dreams one night that her father will return. In the morning they find him lying in the snow. “Prepare to live with what you wish for.” (Gr. 1-3)

Sheldon, Dyan. *The Moon Dragons*. Ill. by Gary Blythe. Andersen Press, 2015, unpaginated. 978-1-4677-6314-1

A traveler tells a king about moon dragons who flew in the night when trees had dreams. He says a few still live, hiding in a distant mountain. The king sends his huntsmen, trappers, adventurers, and mountaineers to find the dragons. All return empty-handed. Alina who lives at the foot of the mountain hears of the quest and decides to seek them. All laugh at her, but she is determined to go, not for the gold being offered but for a time when trees had dreams. She finds the dragons but returns without them, knowing the king would cage or kill them. The people laugh at her, but she has a silver scale and knows the truth and what really matters. The misty illustrations are perfect. (Gr. PK-3)

Tegen, Katherine. *Pink Cupcake Magic*. Ill. by Kristin Varner. Henry Holt, 2014, unpaginated. 978-0-8050-9611-8

Whenever Zoe makes cupcakes, her brother Ralph and his friends eat most of them. Besides loving to bake cupcakes, she also like to play princess in her plastic playhouse, but pretending isn't much fun.

She puts a very strong wish into her next batch of cupcakes and becomes a real princess. Her playhouse is transformed into a castle with a magic kingdom outside. When her brother raids her playhouse, taking the remaining cupcakes, she bakes more, making another wish. Ralph and his friends gobble them up and turn into frogs—but just for a day. That's as long as the magic lasts. Perfect for would-be princesses, and those with annoying brothers. (Gr. K-3)

Lower Middle Readers (Gr. 2-6)

Losure, Mary. *Backwards Moon*. Holiday House, 2014, 134 p. 978-0-8234-3160-1

The Veil shielding the valley where Nettie and Bracken live with the remaining elderly witches has broken and humans can now enter. Their way of destroying pastoral environments means the end of the witches and others living there. A deceitful witch offers the witchlings a way to find the Door, sought by their mothers and fathers who disappeared but the girls are separated. Each finds another way to the location. A Witchfriend and an engaging raccoon, a magic necklace, and a seeking stone all play a role. Now the witches must be willing to risk leaving the known for a possible better future. Not an easy choice. Maybe more to come. (Gr. 3-5)

Richards, C. J. *Robots Rule! The Junkyard Bot*. Ill. by Gara Fujita. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014, 194 p. 978-0-544-33936-1

Like everyone in the town built by TinkerTech, George has a personal robot. Jackbot is his sole friend, although like most of the robots in the house he lives in with uncle, he is put together through George's skills, hampered by a lack of tools and parts. When the daughter of TinkerTech's CEO runs over Jackbot, she secrets George into the factory. With a wealth of resources, his abilities go into overdrive and he gives Jackbot artificial intelligence. A series of dangerous accidents, leads George to discover who is behind it all and the extent of his evil scheme. The villain is defeated for now but will return. Great for all tinkering geeks and young makers. (Gr. 4-6)

Scieszka, Jon. *Frank Einstein and the Antimatter Motor*. Ill. by Brian Biggs. Amulet, 2014, 179 p. 978-1-4197-1218-0

Boy genius, Frank Einstein loves staying with Grampa Al whose Fix-It shop holds all he needs to convert into new inventions. A power failure forestalls his self-teaching robot from coming to life, but a stray spark later allows the robot to reassemble itself. Klink becomes an asset as Frank and his friend Watson work on the newest project creating enormous energy through an antimatter motor, sure to win the Midville Science Prize and pay off Grampa's debts. But his arch nemesis Edison, steals both the idea and Klink, and plans to exploit the invention. Combining real science with science fiction, it's a great start to a new series. The next one is already out. (Gr. 3-5)

Sherry, Kevin. *The Yeti Files: Meet the Bigfeet*. Scholastic, 2014, 122 p. 978-545-55617-0

The first in this new series introduces the yeti Blizz along with other cryptids—animals whose existence has never been proved. All of whom have taken an oath not to let the outside world see them. For the first time in years there is going to be a family reunion of cryptids. Blizz is excited but is missing his cousin Brian. He's been in hiding since Vanquist, a cryptozoologist, took his picture. Blizz intends to find Brian and bring him to the reunion. He tracks him down, but Vanquist shows up at the gathering. Vanquist's dog who has had it with his overbearing owner, gives camera to the cryptids, ending the problem. Heavily illustrated and fun. (Gr. 2-4)

Smith, Clete Barrett. *Magic Delivery*. Ill. by Michal Dziekan. Disney Hyperion, 2014, 280p. 978-1-4231-6597-2

A talented hustler, Nick artfully makes the money he and his mother need to survive by providing services to the wealthy kids in his town. With Halloween coming, he thinks he struck it rich when he and his friend see a delivery truck go off the cliff. The driver, who looked like a bear, is missing but the cargo of

realistic costumes are there. Only problem is once you put the costume on you are transformed into it. To save lives, he deals with the bewitched rich bully and his cohorts, and helps the driver out of a 300-year old contract with a witch by using his negotiating skills, and makes a fortune doing it. The witch is not happy. Great start to a new series. (Gr. 4-6)

Upper Middle Readers (Gr. 5-8)

Glewwe, Eleanor. *Sparkers*. Viking, Penguin, 2014, 323 p. 978-0-451-46876-5

The kasari rule with their magic. Although Marah and the other halani, also known as sparkers can't do any magic, they have “intuition.” Marah's causes her to save a kasir child, and leads to her meeting the rest of the family including Azariah, who is her age and shares her love of ancient languages. Secretly reading a text in a banned language, they find a cure for the plague killing people throughout the country and learn how to cure it. Marah's intuition warns her to keep the information quiet, but the Council finds out and moves quickly to eliminate both of them. A powerful stand-alone giving readers much to ponder. (Gr. 5-8)

Jinks, Catherine. *A Plague of Boggles*. Ill. by Sarah Watts. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015, 330 p. 978-0-544-08747-7

London in 1870 is not a good place for poor children, but Jem Barbary, thief and street sweeper, is a survivor. He want to be become a bogler's apprentice and manages to wangle Alfred Bounce out of retirement for one more job which quickly becomes several. For an unknown reason there are an extraordinary number of bogles in one neighborhood. The rapid industrialization seems to be one cause, but there is a far more sinister one as Jem's past horrific experience with the nefarious Sarah Pickles puts him in more danger than being bogle bait. A touch of steampunk and the Victorian underworld will engage readers with this sequel. (Gr. 5-7)

Pratchett, Terry. *Dragons at Crumbling Castle and Other Tales*. Ill. by Mark Beech. Clarion, Houghton Mifflin, 2015, 336 p. 978-0-544-46659-3

Fourteen tales written by a teenage Pratchett show he was talented from the first. In the title story, King Arthur has no one but Ralph to deal with the reported dragons. Riding his donkey, Ralph defeats the Friday Knight, takes him and the wizard they meet to the castle where he efficiently solves the problem. “Tales of the Carpet People” follow these exceedingly small people as they bravely travel inches, fight off snarls and armies, and reach a safer land on the other side of the Carpet. Another Carpet People story follows the explorer Christopher Pilgarlic on his quest to prove the Floor is flat. Fun and bound to stir young imaginations. (Gr. 4-7)

Yaccarino, Dan. *Zaragoochi Intergalactic Pizza: Delivery of Doom*. Feiwel and Friends, 2014, 219 p. 978-1-250-00844-2

Luno, the latest in the long line of Zargoochi's, takes his new job of delivering pizzas all over the galaxy seriously. The family business is in trouble, being beaten to deliveries by Vlacron, their evil arch rival, who want the Golden Anchovy, hidden years ago by the first Zargoochi. Joined by his friends, a talking garlic head and a robot, Luno faces challenges in getting paid, having his ship attacked by Vlacron's minions, and other terrors. He survives despite setbacks, always helping others. When all seems lost, those he helped come to the rescue but his last good deed might not work out well. Hilarious with a sequel to come. This is for the boys. (Gr. 4-7)

Yolen, Jane. *Centaur Rising*. Christy Ottaviano Books, Henry Holt, 2014, 258 p. 978-0-8050-9664-4

Watching the Perseid meteor shower in August 1962, Ari is sure she sees something white come from the sky and sail over a large fence onto her mom's struggling horse farm. July 1965, their aging pony gives birth to a centaur. Ari's brother, wheelchair-bound with “flippers” for hands as a result of thalidomide, bonds instantly to his new brother. They try to keep the birth of Kai a secret, but their horse-riding students soon find out, and despite their willingness

to keep silent, word gets out. Kai matures rapidly, but a clever solution saves the day—until Kai's father returns. Magic, family, and horses make a winning combination from a master storyteller. (Gr. 4-7)

Older Readers (Gr. 7-12)

Gaither, Stephanie. *Falls the Shadow*. Simon & Schuster, 2014, 341 p. 978-1-4424-9753-5

Cate's family has always been in the spotlight. Her clone is ready to go if something happens to her. Her sister is already a clone and now may have murdered the most popular girl in the school. Rescued by Jaxon, a boy she has a had a crush on, from paparazzi and anti-clone groups hounding her Cate starts trusting him only to learn his mother is president of CCA (Clone Control Advocacy) and she has been captured. She is told that the clone creators have a secret agenda and is more confused than ever. Jaxon helps her escape but stays with her as she tries to learn the truth. Who can she trust? The action is continuous and readers will want a sequel. (Gr. 7-12)

Hosie, Donna. *The Devil's Intern*. Holiday House, 2014, 229 p. 978-0-8234-3195-3

What if you could go back in time and undo your death? Mitchell has been in Hell, working under the Devil's top assistant for four years. Learning about a machine to travel back in time, he is determined to change his past. His three close friends, Medusa, Elinor, and Alfarin go with him since it's dangerous going alone. Going back to Alfarin's death, he learns his Viking friend only wanted to see what came after. Nothing goes according to Mitchell's plan. Paradoxes ensue, he nearly loses Medusa who means more to him than he knew, and he learns why the four are meant to be friends. The most hilarious romp through hell since the Screwtape Letters. (Gr. 9-12)

Lewis, R. C. *Stitching Snow*. Hyperion, 2014, 328 p. 978-1-4231-8507-9

After eight years of hiding on Thanda, a frozen mining planet, where she repaired and made robots and drones, seventeen-year-old Essie's is found by Dane. Knowing she is the missing princess whose “kidnapping” resulted in the imprisonment of the Exiles including his father, he is determined to return her in exchange for their release. Unknown to him, Essie fled because her evil stepmother was trying to kill her. Neither of them realize the full story until they are back on Windsong with a plan to end her father's regime. A techie princess, an intriguing “prince” and a clever twist on Snow White combine in an action-packed tale. (Gr. 7-12)

Richmond, Caroline Tung. *The Only Thing to Fear*. Scholastic, 2014, 280 p. 978-0-545-62988-1

It's been eighty years since the Axis Powers defeated the Allies. The eastern half of the U.S. is ruled by the Nazis. Zara, a mischling, is committed to defeating the Nazis, but her uncle, a leader in the underground, prevents her joining. He cautions her to hide her ability to control the wind. Unlike the Nazi Anomalies (genetically enhanced soldiers), she would be killed. Learning of the imminent death of the Führer, Hitler's descendent, the underground launches a daring plan, needing Zara's ability. Zara and her unlikely helper are a gut-wrenching look at what might have happened if the Allies had not won. (Gr. 7-12)

Walters, Eric. *The Rule of Three*. Farrar Straus Giroux, 2014, 405 p. 978-0-374-35502-9

A world-wide virus infects everything computer-based. Phones, electricity, and cars (except old ones) cease functioning. Alex's police captain mother and Herb, an aging government spy become key to the neighborhood's survival. Herb knows how to manipulate people and plan for the worst. His mother uses her forces to begin safeguarding everyone from predators. Alex's aging car and his ultralight plane become part of the stratagem. While Herb is prepared to make harsh choices, Alex's innate morality provides a counterbalance, but more is needed to defend against soldiers bent on taking it all. The sequel will be eagerly awaited. (Gr. 7-12) ▲

The Issue of Climate Change

by Dawn Ganss

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Are we facing Climate Change? Is it the same as Global Warming? The two terms are often used interchangeably. One focuses on the natural ways of nature, the other on the ways of humanity and its cultures, making this a good follow-up to last issue's column on environmental disasters. Climate refers to weather viewed over time. Because all the natural systems on which we depend are tied to climate, any sustained change in climate can affect many related aspects of where and how people, plants and animals live, such as food production, food availability and use of water, and the amount of energy used.

WHAT ARE GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE?

Global Warming refers to the recent and ongoing rise in global average temperature near Earth's surface. It is caused mostly by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. This is causing climate patterns to change. However, global warming itself represents only one aspect of climate change. Climate change refers to any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an extended period of time. In other words, it includes major changes in temperature, precipitation, and wind patterns among other effects occurring over several decades or longer.

<http://epa.gov/climatechange/basics>

GLOBALWARMING FOR BEGINNERS IN NINE POINTS

Read the following 9 clearly stated points of global warming using the highlighted links for clarity and depth in understanding. (1) Earth's climate had warmed and cooled many times, but recent changes have occurred rapidly and been significant, causing warmer temperatures on land and sea. (2) Most of the world's glaciers are melting as a result. (3) Molecules creating greenhouse gases have been released into the atmosphere because of many human activities. (4) Instead of the sun's energy being reflected back by the earth's surface, they are kept back by these greenhouse gases. (5) Solar cycles affect surface temperatures, but these are known and are different from the greenhouse gases issue. (6) Global warming results in more coastal flooding, greater storms, and heat waves. (7) Although it results in greater agricultural production global warming also leads to increases in pest problems. (8) There are steps we can take to mitigate the problem. (9) With some adaptations, we can learn to adjust to the consequences of global warming. Select and click on the links under the article for additional materials. Continue down the page, past the ads for more under [Environmental Issue Essentials](#) leading to more information. [Environmental Issue Essentials](#)
<http://environment.about.com/od/globalwarming/fl/Global-Warming-for-Beginners-in-9-Points.htm>

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE

This site is activity-packed, eye-appealing invites exploration. An opening video gives an overview of the issue. Links on the home page guide students to [Learn the Basics](#), [See the Impacts](#), [Think Like a Scientist](#), and [Be Part of the Solution](#). They can also [Take a Climate Change Expedition](#) and [Calculate Your Emissions](#). When clicked on, each has subtopics to explore. At the bottom of the home page is a link to an extensive [Glossary](#). Also on the bottom is [Educator Resources](#) with [Lesson Plans](#) with seven plans, one that has an outdoor component and others a blend of classroom and computer work *these are all tied to National Science Standards), [Tools and Tips for Educators](#) on how to use the site in the classroom, and [Additional Web Resources](#). [References](#) has links to high-quality publications such as peer-reviewed scientific journals, international scientific assessments, and government research reports. [Frequently Asked Questions](#) is a good starting place.

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/kids>

CLIMATE CHANGE: BASIC INFORMATION

The four major divisions, some with sub headings, of this EPA website are: Climate change is happening and you can find out about the [signs of climate change](#), Humans are largely responsible for recent climate change giving the [causes of climate change](#), Climate change affects everyone with [impacts of climate change and adapting to climate change](#), and We can make a difference and [what you can do](#). Sidebars on the right side give further information. Check the [Common Questions](#) link on the left.

<http://epa.gov/climatechange/basics>

CLIMATE CHANGE HAS MONTANA TROUT SWIMMING TO SAFETY

Montana's mountain streams have become too hot for the bull trout and the westslope cutthroat trout and they are finding new habitats. Wilderness Society scientists are working with public land managers to address these challenges with adaptation techniques and, where possible, working to eliminate major climate threats. The post on the websites discusses the risk factors and the climate adaptation solution. Continue down to related content. See [Why protect the Crown of the Continent? Find adventure in the Crown of the Continent](#) and [Discover the Crown of the Continent](#).

<http://wilderness.org/blog/climate-change-has-montana-trout-swimming-safety>

CLIMATE MATTERS: CLIMATE HAPPENINGS AND WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

Two blog posts among the several from The State of the Planet, a three-part environmental documentary series, made by the BBC Natural History Unit, transmitted in November 2000, written and presented by David Attenborough, are of particular note.

SCIENTISTS SPEAK OUT ON CLIMATE: IS ANYONE LISTENING?

A recent Gallup Poll shows only about one-third of Americans are greatly worried about global warming, but scientists studying the issue are very worried about the future risks we will face. The Earth Institute's climate scientists were asked what they want the public to understand and how they see their own role. One big message is that climate change is here and what is needed now is to slow its progress and incorporate needed adaptations. Much more information is included.

DIMINISHING ICE INTENSIFIES SPOTLIGHT ON ARCTIC

This blog post focuses on how the loss of ice is affecting the region economically, socially, and environmentally. Waters once inaccessible are now available for oil drilling as well as opening up new trade routes shortening time to cross the Pacific and reducing fuel costs, but the depletion of ice has affected feeding, breeding, and migration patterns of wildlife which in turn impacts the local economy. Balancing these competing interests will continue to charge the debate on if something should be done if possible. Follow this blog with the one on the 'Ice Tracker' tool for assessing the origin and melt locations of sea ice giving scientists much needed information.

<http://blogs.ci.columbia.edu/tag/climate-matters>

Moyers & Company: THE 14-YEAR-OLD VOICE OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE GENERATION

Since he was a first grader Xiuhtezcatl Martinez worried about threats to the world's ecosystem. When he was 12 he spoke at the Rio+20 United Nations Summit. Now 14, he is the youth director of Earth Guardians, a nonprofit environmental organization. He attributes his interest and concern to the Aztec teachings of his father and his mother, an environmental activist. Believing all life is sacred and connected, he sees our responsibility to be caretakers of the world. When he recognized how we are overusing our resources, he felt he had to do something, and was wanted to inspire a revolution. The site uses a question and answer format to capture the voice of Martinez, a leader of the "climate change generation."

<http://billmoyers.com/2014/12/05/14-year-old-voice-climate-change-generation>

EARTH LAB: DEGREES OF CHANGE

This colorful, well designed site from the site from the National Academy of Science explores global warming and how it affects our future on Earth, including the latest scientific information, teaching activities and more. This exhibit from the Koshland Science Museum has videos, well-done diagrams a wealth of information on [Changes in the Climate \(Temperature, Ice, Weather, Oceans & Sea Level\)](#), [Climate Modeling & Trends](#), [Climate Processes](#), [Impact of Climate Change \(Ecosystems, Food & Agriculture, Oceans, Coasts & Wetlands, People & Society, Weather\)](#), and [Responses to Climate Change](#). Check out the [Teacher Resources](#) for information on a Virtual Field Trip to the Koshland Science Museum and a webquest on [GLOBAL WARMING: Facts and Our Future](#). There is a download for students and another for teachers.

<https://www.koshland-science-museum.org/explore-the-science/earth-lab>

CLIMATE CHANGE: VITAL SIGNS OF THE PLANET

A changing banner screen shows different aspects of climate change such as [Rainforest Revelation](#) all with a button to click to "Read More." Along the bottom, current data is posted showing Carbon Dioxide levels, Global Temperature, Arctic Ice Minimum, Land Ice, Sea Level, and Forest Cover, each with an arrow indicting whether it has gone up or down. Clicking on any of these leads to more information. Among the tabs along the top are: [Facts \(Evidence, Causes, Effects, Consensus, Vital Signs, Questions \[FAQs\]\)](#), [Solutions \(Mitigation and Adaptation, Government Resources, Energy Innovations\)](#), [Explore \(Interactives, Eyes on the Earth, Images of Change, Beautiful Earth, NASA's Earth Minute\)](#), and [Resources \(Graphics and Multimedia, For Meteorologists, For Teachers, Climate Kids\)](#). Under each of the subheadings has even more well-illustrated information The site is easy to navigate and has a wealth of material.

<http://climate.nasa.gov>

WHO: Climate Change and Health

This fact sheet from the World Health Organization presents the effect climate change has on the health of humans. It considers factors such as high temperatures leading to death particularly in the elderly from cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and raising allergens in the atmosphere. Weather related disasters also lead to deaths, and extreme weather destroys medical facilities and impacts essential services. Climate changes are likely to increase the transmission of water-borne and other diseases. This site adds another dimension to the discussion on climate change.

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs266/en>

GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE: RESEARCH EXPLORER

Tabs on the top lead to fairly sophisticated charts, diagrams, and photos on the [atmosphere](#), [hydrosphere](#), [cryosphere](#) (snow and ice cover), [biosphere](#), and [global effects](#). On the left of each heading there is a glossary to the terms used on the page. At the bottom of the sections find [questions about this section](#). Clicking on the question opens a box with a video or more information on the topic. On the home page see [Overview of Climate Change Research](#) which briefly explains "What do we know about global climate change?" Note that the site doesn't appear to have been updated since 2002 and the opening sound effects are somewhat annoying.

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/climate>

NEW YORK TIMES LEARNING NETWORK

This is a "go-to" site for current information on any subject in the curriculum. Searching under "climate change" yields articles on "West Virginia Withdraws Altered Climate Curriculum," "The Senate Rejects Climate Measures," and "Freezing out the Bigger Picture."

<http://query.nytimes.com/search/sitesearch/#/climate+changes>

NOTE:

Sites are in Bold Caps

Underlined Italicized Words refer to Pages/Links within the Web Site

Underlined words are Titles/heading

Sites were last visited January 2015

Before using with students, always check! ▲

Future, Present, Past

April brings Math Awareness Month which is a natural tie to the STEM programs proliferating in schools and also School Library Month, either or both can be promoted in displays. Memorial Day in May should be more than a three-day weekend, and with more focus on our soldiers, you can remind students of the resources you have on the history of how our nation has dealt with war and, more specifically, those who served.

From STEM to Flower

By their very nature STEM subjects tend to be challenging, and many students, particularly in the upper grades, focus more on grades than on learning. Fearing to affect their grade point average, they take as few math, science, and tech courses as possible. Remind them of the varied future career possibilities which will be open to them if they develop the perseverance needed to excel in these subjects. If you excite the interest of younger students, their positive attitude will enhance their chance of success.

In addition to the obvious careers, geographers, historians, zoologists and wildlife biologists have STEM backgrounds. So do video game creators, food scientists, graphic designers, sports statisticians, and Lego designers. Show students the "flower" or career waiting for them. Cut out stems, writing the name of STEM courses on the leaves. On colorful flowers attached to the stalks, print one of the careers. Set up a display of books on people involved in STEM professions.

In My Library I

For School Library Month focus on the library as the place "where learning never ends" (the theme for this year – as it was 30 years ago when Dr. Lucille Tomas inaugurated School Library Media Month.) Start with the four ideas from Learning4Life--think, create, share, grow. Posters of them are available at the ALA store <http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=3248>. Also check out the AASL School Library Month website for more information and resources <http://www.ala.org/aasl/slm>.

Cover the bulletin board in a bright yellow background. Use dark green construction paper for the title. Encourage students to post examples of how they "think, create, share, and grow" by using the library. Take pictures of them involved in their learning whether with their class, at a Makerspace, or just on their own and add them to the display. Post your bulletin board on the library website.

We Remember

Use red, white, and blue as the color scheme for this bulletin board honoring those who gave their lives to preserve our freedoms. If you have graduates who have fallen during the fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, you might want to place their names and pictures in the middle to salute their courage. Put the name, Dewey number (or subject if you genre-fy) of each war you feature on a sheet of construction paper along with a cover of a book on the subject. Since it's the 100th anniversary of World War I, you might showcase the major conflicts from the 20th as well as the 21st century.

For illustrations, use pictures of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the various war memorials in Washington, D.C. Display fiction and nonfiction about the wars. If students are willing, have them write thank you notes and post them (anonymously if they wish) on the bulletin board. Find places to send these letters after the bulletin board comes down. ▲



Using Canva and PowToon to Promote your Library Program

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Whenever I have to communicate something new to my stakeholders, I try to think of the best way to generate a consistent message with the most visual and memorable appeal. For me, Canva and PowToon are my go to resources for creating professional looking graphics and video messages that can be shared with all stakeholder groups.

In my most recent ad campaign for the library, I introduced administrators, teachers, students and families to the idea of our very first “1 Book, 1 School” program using a variety of digital and print communication modes, and Canva and PowToon were instrumental in helping me to create a consistent message.

Canva Basics

What is it? An online graphic design program that can be used to create anything from blog graphics, Facebook headers, to posters to flyers.

Cost: Creating an account is free and includes many design elements that are free to use, including your own photo uploads. You can choose to include more advanced elements and photography in your designs for a cost. You can download a PDF or JPEG of your creation to share widely.

Resources:

- iOS app
- Short, Canva video to get you started
- “Design School” where you can explore tutorials that will help you create memorable and visually appealing graphics

PowToon Basics

What is it? PowToon is an online tool that allows you to create animated videos and presentations. It is set up similar to the way PowerPoint is and you edit slides that can run as long as 20 seconds.

Cost: PowToon has a variety of subscriptions, including a free version that allows you create a video up to 5 minutes long including PowToon marketing info at the end of each of your videos and allows you to export to YouTube or share directly from PowToon, although you are not able to download your creations to save on your computer. The PowToon for Education packages available are all fairly reasonable in price, and you can choose from a less expensive single educator account, to a teacher and class account, to a student account.

Resources:

Free 10 part video course to get you started on PowToon

They have a series of webinars on YouTube [\[here\]](#) that will help you with a variety of topics from creating your PowToon, setting up educator accounts, and using their sound editor

Creating my “1 Book, 1 School” Ad Campaign

Because the stakeholders at my school were completely unfamiliar with something like a “1 Book, 1 School” program, a program where every student in the school hears the same book read aloud, it was essential that I create a recognizable and consistent message to share with everyone from the Board of Education to students.

I began by using Canva to create graphics that would help me “brand” the programming and that I could use on social media, our website, to create book marks, and for thank you notes. I created a social media icon that mimicked the one I typically use on Twitter and Facebook. This icon included our school mascot and also shared the idea of “1 Book, 1 School” with the title of the book we were reading. I will be able to update this icon quickly next year to include our new book choice.



Graphic with a Message

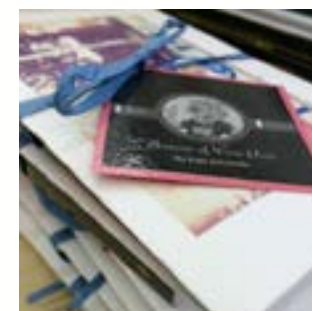
I also created a larger graphic featuring a picture of our school with our school mascot. I made sure it carried over basic design elements including shape and color from the social media icon and could be shared on Social Media, as well as be the cover of thank you cards. I featured it in a PowToon and on our website. I kept this graphic a little more generic so that I can easily use it year after year. It can be modified for new programming in the future by just changing the words.

I used the two graphics to create a small marketing package that included a copy of the book we were reading, a book mark made with the social media icon and a thank you note. I gave these packages to our Board of Education members, and the district level administrators who work with our school as a thank you for their efforts on our behalf and also to share with them what we are doing in the library to promote literacy and a love of reading. The same graphics were also used on our “1 Book, 1 School” webpage, which I will update each year to include information about the new book and new activities.

Sharing my Message with PowToon Video

In addition to creating a visually recognizable brand through graphics, I really wanted to share the details of the program in a way that would be appealing to both students and adult stakeholder groups. For me the best way to do that was with PowToon.

This simple graphic was used to make book marks to give away for prizes and with books and as a profile picture on Facebook and Twitter.



My students love the PowToons I make. In fact, these are so professional looking, it takes them a really long time to figure out it's me doing the voiceovers. You can make your PowToon as involved as you want. It has a variety of templates you can use to quickly modify and produce a high quality animated video, or you can start from scratch, which is what I usually do, and create an original work. While it is not necessary to include voice overs, I like to do that because my students are younger, and not all of them can read. This obviously increases the amount of time it takes for me to produce a video, but I think the investment is worth it for my audience. To create the voice over, I use Audacity, a free sound editing software.

The PowToon I developed included an explanation of what the “1 Book, 1 School” program was and revealed information about the book we would be reading. I will be able to use what I created as a sort of template and edit it next year to include the updated information for our new book. I posted the PowToon on our website to share with all stakeholders and post to social media to communicate the information directly to parents. Overall, it was an extremely effective way to communicate the information.

Other Uses for Canva and PowToon

The more you use Canva and PowToon the more uses you will find for them. I have used Canva to create genre posters, and posters for regional professional development events, as well as graphic invitations for PD sessions, blog post graphics, and cover designs for Facebook and Twitter. I often use PowToon to educate students about difficult concepts like the nonfiction section and Big 6 research and to introduce our theme for the year.

While getting started with these programs can be a bit time consuming, you'll find that the more you work with them and practice the tutorials and figure out what works for you, the easier it will get. The investment is worth it to help you create a consistent image and message with your stakeholders, and the designs and videos you create can often be modified and edited from program to program so that you don't have to reinvent the wheel each time you begin something new. ▲

Grow a PoeTREE

For Poetry Month in April grow a tree of student's favorite poems. The design adapts to vertical, super-size or standard size bulletin boards. After you mount the tree, attach a few leaves to the sides, and get the tree started with several of your own favorites.

There isn't enough room on a leaf for a full poem and you don't want full-page poems unless you have a lot of space. Instead use the back of 4x6 index cards (preferably green) or cut neon green paper into fourths. Have students put the poem's title and author at the top along with a verse from the poem, putting the source (anthology title and call # or website) at the bottom. They can also print out the information and staple it to the card or paper. Paste a pre-cut leaf on their selection, attach it to the bulletin board. Including the name of the poem's fan is optional.

Materials

- Yellow, green, and brown construction or bulletin board paper
- Black marker
- Clip art of leaves (or ones you make from green construction paper)
- Index cards or green paper
- Scissors
- Glue stick or paper cement
- Stapler/staples

Directions

- Cover the bulletin board with yellow construction paper.
- Cut out the letters for "Grow a PoeTREE" from green construction paper.
- Make a tree trunk from brown construction paper, adding details such as knot with black marker and staple to the bulletin board.
- Cut out green leaves and put several around the tree.
- Post two or three of your favorite poems using index cards or the quartered sheets of paper.
- Make a sign explaining the project and have cards or paper available nearby.
- Display your poetry books including the ones you used as well as those with poems selected by students. ▲

Grow a PoeTREE

