Unit 5/Week 2

Title: Pioneer Girl

Suggested Time: 5 days (45 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.5.1, RL.5.4, RL 5.6, RL.5.7, RL.5.10; RF.5.3, RF.5.4; W.5.1, W.5.2; SL.5.1; L.5.1, L.5.2, L.5.4

Teacher Instructions

*Refer to the Introduction for further details.*

**Before Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

Despite harsh conditions, homesteaders, with the support of community and family, depended on a strong sense of purpose to carry them through hardships. In particular, Homestead children were expected to work very hard, experiencing the challenges of pioneer life head-on.

Synopsis

“Pioneer Girl” relates the real-life experiences of the McCance family, Nebraska homesteaders in 1885. In this story, Andrea Warren combines narrative writing with quotes from Grace McCance's memoir, *No Time on My Hands,* as she recounts the hardships that Grace's family faced while working toward owning a piece of the American dream. In “Pioneer Girl” the McCances endure prairie fires, crushing rainstorms and intense loneliness as they learn that optimism and hard work create endless opportunities for their family. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.

1. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along. (Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text Dependent Questions** | **Answers** |
| What is the purpose of the poster on page 500? What are some claims this poster is making about the farmlands? | The poster is trying to draw settlers West along the Union Pacific Railroad through Nebraska by advertising rich farming lands for $1.50 to $8.00 per acre; it also offers town lots for sale. It promises a mild and healthful climate, dark soil that is good for growing corn, wheat, oats, barley and offers to provide coal to settlers at inexpensive costs. |
| Why does the author begin the story with the poster on page 500? | The poster frames the promised greatness of becoming a Homesteader, which contrasts the experiences described by the McCance family. |
| Reread page 501. Homesteaders were those settlers who headed West to claim land and build a house. Who is Grace McCance, and how is her experience as a homesteader woven into the story? | Grace is the 5 year-old daughter of Poppie McCance. She had written a memoir when she was older, and her experience is woven into the story with the direct quotations from her memoir. (A memoir is an account or description of one’s personal life and experiences—an autobiography.) |
| What does Grace learn about the land of her new home in Nebraska? (Pg. 501) | Millions of years ago glaciers covered the land and then melted into seas/ Rocky Mountains block moisture from the Pacific Ocean/ Nebraska is one of the driest states/ Few trees/ Grass is shorter in western Nebraska and taller in eastern Nebraska |
| Reread pages 502 – 504. What threats to families and farms does the weather cause? How do homesteaders handle the challenges? | Hailstorms, lightning, prairie fires, rainstorms are all present on the prairie. With prairie fires, often caused by lightening, the settlers work together, setting backfires. Poppie plowed firebreaks around his land. After the huge rainstorm, the family worked together to clean up the pieces and rebuild the house. |
| Many settlers lived in sod houses, or houses made from the prairie grass and dirt. Re-read the last paragraph on page 503, what does Grace mean when she remembers, “Then there was a cracking, tearing sound, and the soddy seemed to quiver?” Why is it in quotation marks? | She is describing what it was like when a huge rainstorm struck, the lightening flashed and her house shook. These are Grace's exact words from her memoir. |
| In the first paragraph on page 504 it says that Poppie is “hard put to keep a cheerful expression on his face.” What does “hard put” mean? | After the huge rainstorm where he had to look for pieces of the roof to rebuild, he put on a cheerful expression and cooked breakfast for the family. He responded quickly as soon as he saw the prairie fire, and worked hard to put it out. Poppie was not easily discouraged; he was hardworking and lived on hope. |
| Reread page 507. How did the McCances celebrate their first Christmas on the prairie? | The girls wore new dresses their mother had sewn from fabric sent by their grandmother. They used a plum bush for a Christmas tree, which they decorated with paper chains and popcorn strings. They didn’t have any presents. The neighbors shared in the celebration by joining them for a turkey dinner. |
| “Poppie said, for the hundredth time, that he had never seen such a land as this, so rich, so fertile. But Mama said only that she wished we had a well in our own yard.” What does fertile mean and what is a well? (Pg. 507) | Fertile land is rich soil for growing plants. Poppie was very thankful for the rich land for growing crops. A well is where homesteaders would get water. Her mother really wanted a well so she could easily get water for the family. Because they did not have enough money for a well, Poppie would drive elsewhere to fill up water barrels. |
| How does Grace’s description, above, of Poppie and the fertile land and Mama and the well, show how her parents experienced homesteading life differently? (Pg. 507) | Poppie was optimistic, looking at the opportunities or potential that the fertile land offered. Mama saw the challenges of homesteading life, hoping to have a well to make these a little easier. |
| Reread the last sentence on page 507. What does “relent” mean? What was the fun that Grace and Florry wanted to have? | Mama would give in and let Grace and Florry go with Poppie to fill up the water barrels. They looked forward to the wagon ride when they could bounce along with the water barrels, singing and having a good time. |
| An immigrant is someone who leaves one country to settle in another. Why did immigrants come to the Midwest? (Pg. 509) | Immigrants came for the rich farmland because they either couldn’t afford it in their homeland or weren’t allowed to own it. Some came to find religious freedom or to avoid serving in the military. Some came to avoid paying unfair taxes. |
| Why did Americans want to come to the Midwest? (Pg. 510) | Some people had lost their homes in the Civil War, while others wanted to leave the east because it was too crowded. For freed slaves, it was a way to leave the South and own their own land. |
| How did children work to help their families? (Pg. 510) | Youngest children might be human scarecrows to protect crops or they gathered cowchips for fuel. Older children ran errands, took water to workers, pulled weeds or milked the cows. |

Vocabulary

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|  | **KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING** | **WORDS WORTH KNOWING**  General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction |
| **TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION**  not enough contextual clues provided in the text | Page 501 - memoir, homesteaders  Page 509 - immigrants | Page 505 - sod  Page 513 - legacy, optimism  Page 501 - glaciers  Page 502 - backfires  Page 503 - soddy  Page 513 - hardscrabble  Page 513 - steadfastness |
| **STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING**  sufficient context clues are provided in the text | Page 503 - homestead, relent  Page 504 - hard put  Page 507 - fertile  Page 507 - first table | Page 505 - discouraged  Page 511 - heifer  Page 506 - petticoats |

Culminating Task

* Re-Read, Think, Discuss, Write

1. *What role did family and community play in helping the McCance family navigate the hardships of prairie life?*

Answer: When lightening started prairie fires, settlers worked together to fight the fires. They would light backfires or dig trenches to keep the fires from spreading. When a rainstorm caused major damage to the McCance sod house, the family worked together to pick up the pieces that had blown into the fields. At Christmas, when their family was too far to celebrate with them, neighbors joined together to feast on a roast turkey dinner. From a very young age, the children always helped with work on the prairie.

1. *Select 2-3 quotes that the author included from Grace McCance’s memoir. How does weaving in Grace’s point of view influence the author’s description of Homestead life?*

Answer: While the author writes about Homestead life, Grace’s quotes add credibility to the descriptions. For example (and selected quotes may vary), after the huge rainstorm that causing extensive damage, Grace remembered, “Mama went around in a kind of a daze, picking some of her torn and broken things out of the hash on the floor and sweeping out the worst of the mud.” The author explained that the children had to wait until the adults finished eating before they could eat their Christmas dinner. Grace remembers, “Homestead children had to put up with a lot of hard things, but one of the hardest was waiting for second table.” By including Grace’s experience, through the direct quotes, the author is providing an “insiders perspective” on how Homesteaders experienced life.

Additional Tasks

* *Pioneer children endured many hardships on the prairie. Still, they found ways to have fun. Give examples of several hardships as well as some of the happy times the children had. Then, think about your own experiences. Make at least one connection between an experience you have had with an experience that the pioneer children had.*

Answers could include, but are not limited to: All of the children worked on various chores throughout the day. Small children acted as human scarecrows; four and five year olds ran errands and worked in the fields. In times of danger, the children pitched in: they prepared for the prairie fire and cleaned up after the huge storm. Children were last to eat at Christmas time (adults ate first). They found fun in many of the chores they had to do; Grace and Florry enjoyed “jouncing” in the wagon when going to get water. At Christmas time, they made paper chains and popcorn strings to decorate the tree. They played with corncob dolls. Few complained as they worked alongside their parents caring for crops and cattle.

* *Reread the poster on page 500. Pay special attention to how the soil and the climate are described. Now that you have read “Pioneer Girl”, do you think the poster was telling the truth? Use evidence from the story to support your opinion.*

Answer: The poster claimed that the climate was mild and healthful and that a large variety of crops would grow. However, the harsh weather (hailstorms, prairie fires, lightening and rainstorms), made living on the prairie very challenging. As one of the driest states, some crops were challenging to grow. According to Poppie, the land was very fertile, though there wasn’t much rain where they lived.

Supports for English Language Learners (ELLs)

to use with Basal Alignment Project Lessons

When teaching any lesson, it is important to make sure you are including supports to help all students. We have prepared some examples of different types of supports that you can use in conjunction with our Basal Alignment Project Lessons to help support your ELLs. They are grouped by when they would best fit in a lesson. While these supports reflect research in how to support ELLs, these activities can help ALL students engage more deeply with these lessons. Note that some strategies should be used at multiple points within a lesson; we’ll point these out. It is also important to understand that these scaffolds represent options for teachers to select based on students’ needs; it is not the intention that teachers should do *all* of these things at every lesson.

**Before the reading:**

* Read passages, sing songs, watch videos, view photographs, discuss topics (e.g., using the [four corners strategy](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/four-corners)), or research topics that help provide context for what your students will be reading. This is especially true if the setting (e.g., 18th Century England) or topic (e.g., boats) is one that is unfamiliar to the students.
* Provide instruction, using multiple modalities, on selected vocabulary words that are *central to understanding the text*. When looking at the lesson plan, you should note the Tier 2 words, particularly those words with high conceptual complexity (i.e., they are difficult to visualize, learn from context clues, or are abstract), and consider introducing them ahead of reading. For more information on selecting such words, go [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3167/selecting-and-using-academic-vocabulary-in-instruction). **You should plan to continue to reinforce these words, and additional vocabulary, in the context of reading and working with the text. (See additional activities in the During Reading and After Reading sections.)**

**Examples of Activities:**

* Provide students with the definition of the words and then have students work together to create [Frayer models](http://www.theteachertoolkit.com/index.php/tool/frayer-model) or other kinds of word maps for the words.
* When a word contains a prefix or suffix that has been introduced before, highlight how the word part can be used to help determine word meaning.
* Keep a word wall or word bank where these new words can be added and that students can access later.
* Have students create visual glossaries for whenever they encounter new words. Then have your students add these words to their visual glossaries.
* Create pictures using the word. These can even be added to your word wall!
* Create lists of synonyms and antonyms for the word.
* Have students practice using the words in conversation. For newcomers, consider providing them with [sentence frames](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion) to ensure they can participate in the conversation.
  + Practice spelling the words using different spelling practice strategies and decoding strategies. Students could take turns spelling with a partner.
* Use graphic organizers to help introduce content.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Have students fill in a [KWL chart](http://www.nea.org/tools/k-w-l-know-want-to-know-learned.html) about what they will be reading about.
* Have students research setting or topic using a pre-approved website and fill in a chart about it. You could even have students work in groups where each group is assigned part of the topic.
* Have students fill in a bubble map where they write down anything that they find interesting about the topic while watching a video or reading a short passage about the topic. Then students can discuss why they picked the information.

**During reading:**

* Read the text aloud first so that ELLs can hear the passage read by a fluent reader before working with the text themselves.
* Allow ELLs to collaborate in their home languages to process content before participating in whole class discussions in English. Consider giving them the discussion questions to look over in advance (perhaps during the first read) and having them work with a partner to prepare.
* Encourage students to create sketch-notes or to storyboard the passage when they are reading it individually or with a partner. This will help show if they understand what they are reading as they are reading it.
* Ask questions related to the who, what, when, why, and how of the passage. For students that may need a little more help, provide them with [sentence stems](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion).
* Continue to draw attention to and discuss the words that you introduced before the reading.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Have students include the example from the text in their glossary that they created.
* Create or find pictures that represent how the word was used in the passage.
* Practice creating sentences using the word in the way it was using in the passage.
* Have students discuss the author’s word choice.
* Use graphic organizers to help organize content and thinking.

**Examples of Activities:**

* Have students fill in a chart to keep track of their 5ws while they read to help them summarize later and figure out the central idea of a passage.
* It may again be beneficial to have somewhere for students to store new words that they encounter while reading the text. Students could use a chart to keep track of these new words and their meanings as they read.
* If you had students fill in a KWL, have them fill in the “L” section as they read the passage.
* Utilize any illustrations or text features that come with the story or passage to better understand the reading.
* Compare/contrast the passage with what the illustrations convey about the passage. Have students consider if the illustrations look the way they visualized the passage in their own minds or if the passage matches their predictions based on the illustrations.
* Identify any text features such as captions and discuss how they contribute to meaning.

**After reading:**

* Present directions for any post-reading assignments orally and visually; repeat often; and ask English Language Learners to rephrase.
* Allow ELLs to use English language that is still under development. Students should not be scored lower because of incorrect spelling or grammar (unless the goal of the assignment is to assess spelling or grammar skills specifically). When grading, be sure to focus on scoring your students only for the objective(s) that were shared with students.
* Scaffold questions for discussions so that questioning sequences include a mix of factual and inferential questions and a mix of shorter and more extended responses. Questions should build on each other and toward inferential and higher-order-thinking questions. There are not many factual questions already listed in the lesson instructions, so you will need to build some in as you see fit. More information on this strategy can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/aligned/creating-sequencing-text-dependent-questions-support-english-language-learners/).
* Reinforce new vocabulary using multiple modalities

**Examples of activities:**

* Using the words that you had students work with before reading, have students write sentences in reference to the passage that you just finished reading.
* Require students to include the words introduced before reading in the culminating writing task.
* For newcomers, print out pictures that represent the words that you focused on and have students match the words to the pictures.
* Based on different features of the words, have the students sort them into different categories and explain their choices. For example, the students could sort the words by prefixes, suffixes, connotation, etc.
* After reading the passage, continue to examine important sentences (1–2) in the text that contribute to the overall meaning of the text. Guide students to break apart these sentences, analyze different elements, and determine meaning. More information on how to do this, including models of sentence deconstruction, can be found [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3160/juicy-sentence-protocol).
* Provide differentiated scaffolds for writing assignments based on students’ English language proficiency levels.

**Examples of Activities:**

* For all students, go over the prompt in detail, making sure to break down what the prompt means before having the students get to work. Then have the students explain the directions back to you.
* Have students create an evidence tracking chart during reading, then direct them to look back over their evidence chart and work with a group to see if their evidence matches what the rest of the class wrote down. If some of the chart does not match, students should have a discussion about why.
* For students who need more support, model the proper writing format for your students and provide them with a properly formatted example for reference.
* For newcomers, you may consider creating sentence or paragraph frames to help them to write out their ideas.
* To further discussion about the passage, have students create their own who, what, when, where, why, and how questions related to the passage to ask each other and have students pair up and practice asking each other the questions. If available, pair students of the same home language to support the use of language still under development.