

Voices from the Wilderness

Lesson Abstract

Summary:	Authors, including some from Missouri, have been inspired by streams, rivers, and lakes, and have written of feelings, findings, and adventures related to water. This lesson introduces students to classic literature that conveys an author's personal relationship with a body of water.
GLE:	See Social studies and Communication Arts GLE on the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (D.E.S.E.) Website: http://www.dese.state.mo.us
Subject Areas:	Communication Arts, Social Studies
Show-Me Standards:	Goals – 1.5, 1.6, 1.9, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3 Strands – CA 2, 3, 4; SS 6
Skills:	Reading, evaluating, analyzing
Duration:	1 class period (50 minutes)
Setting:	Classroom
Key Vocabulary:	Wilderness, vista, voyageur, angler

Rationale:

- The extent to which we perceive natural beauty is affected by our relationship with the natural world.

Student relevance:

- A personal relationship to water and the natural world has inspired many authors to write about their experiences. Reading their works can inspire students to examine their own relationship with a stream, river, or other body of water.
- Being personally involved with the natural world is more likely to help students relate to conservation concerns and practices.

Learning Objectives:

Upon completion, students will be able to . . .

- Examine literary work and explain how the author related to water.

- Discuss their own relationship to water.
- Write a short essay describing that relationship or create a story to express the type of relationship or experience they would like to have.

Students Need to Know:

- People are capable of developing a relationship with something natural that can result in a variety of emotions and experiences—tranquility, reflection, inspiration, adventure, and excitement, to name a few.
- The natural world and its ecosystems can be a learning laboratory where people make discoveries and acquire knowledge firsthand.
- Literature sometimes reflects the author’s feelings for and experiences with special places in nature such as rivers, streams, and lakes.

Teachers Need to Know:

- Several authors wrote of their experiences with water and their sense of kinship with the natural world.
- By reading the works of some of these authors, students can begin to analyze their own relationship to a stream or river or other body of water they may have played in, fished, or floated with family or friends.

Resources:

Leopold, Luna B., ed. *Round River: From the Journals of Aldo Leopold*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. (See “Current River, 1926.”)

Hall, Leonard. *Stars Upstream: Life Along an Ozark River*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1983.

Olson, Sigurd F. *The Singing Wilderness*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956. (See Module 4, “Farewell to Saganaga.”)

Murphy, Robert. *The Stream*. New York: Lyons & Burford, 1971. (See “Module One.”)

Macleon, Norman. *A River Runs Through It and Other Stories*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

Materials Needed for Lesson:

One or more of the suggested readings

List of questions

Procedure:

- Start lesson by asking students if they remember ever reading a story about a person who wrote about their experiences on a river, stream, lake, or somewhere else in nature. Have them relate any examples.
- Discuss how nature can evoke all types of emotions and that many people have written about their experiences in the outdoors.

- Divide class into several groups depending on the number of readings or divide them into groups for the same reading.
- Have students read a module from one of the literary work referenced or from others of your choice.
- Working in their groups, have students answer the questions below:
 1. What significance did water play to each author?
 2. What aesthetic qualities did the writers find in the river, lake, stream, or surrounding wilderness?
 3. Did the person relate how they first became interested in what they wrote about?
 4. Did the author write about wildlife? How?
 5. Did the author express an emotional connection or tie to the water? What did that mean?
 6. How did the author's feelings relate to his or her actions?
 7. Was there any humor in what was written? Describe?
 8. Did reading this piece make you want to be there or do what the author was describing? Why?
 9. Why do you think the author wrote this piece?
- Ask each group to report on their answers to the questions.

Evaluation Strategies:

- Have students write a short essay describing any personal relationship or experience they have had relating to nature and specifically to water, if possible. If they can't think of anything, ask them to write about something they might like to do and why.

Extension Activities:

- For those students interested in reading and who enjoy literature, encourage them to read one or more of the books and make a book report.
- Have students imagine that they are early explorers on the Missouri or Mississippi Rivers and write about a day's activities in their journal. For reference, read from the journals of Lewis and Clark.
- Have students make a list of vocabulary words they do not understand in their reading. Have them define the terms and use them in another example.

Scoring Guide:

Voices From The Wilderness

Teacher Name: _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Respects Others	Student listens quietly, does not interrupt, and stays in assigned place without distracting movements.	Student listens quietly and does not interrupt. Moves a couple of times, but does not distract others.	Student interrupts once or twice, but comments are relevant. Stays in assigned place without distracting movements.	Student interrupts often by whispering, making comments, or noises that distract others OR moves around in ways that distract others.
Comprehension	Student seems to understand entire story and accurately answers 3 questions related to the story.	Student seems to understand most of the story and accurately answers 2 questions related to the story.	Student understands some parts of the story and accurately answers 1 question related to the story.	Student has trouble understanding or remembering most parts of the story.
Participates Willingly	Student routinely volunteers answers to questions and willingly tries to answer questions s/he is asked.	Student volunteers once or twice and willingly tries to answer all questions s/he is asked.	Student does not volunteer answers, but willing tries to answer questions s/he is asked.	Student does not willingly participate.
Thinks about Characters	Student describes how a character might have felt about water at some point in the story and points out some pictures or words to support his/her interpretation without being asked.	Student describes how a character might have felt about water at some point in the story and points out some pictures or words to support his/her interpretation when asked.	Student describes how a character might have felt about water at some point in the story, but does NOT provide good support for the interpretation, even when asked.	Student cannot describe how a character might have felt about water at a certain point in the story.

Rubric Made Using: **RubiStar** (<http://rubistar.4teachers.org>)