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Pittsburgh Voyager Teacher Training Workshop
Environmental Science Sessions: February 26 and March 5, 2005
Lesson Plans

SUBJECTS: Language Arts

GRADE LEVEL: 7

LENGTH: Five 44 minute periods

TOPIC: *(SpongeBob Squarepants spin-off)* Create characters based on the types of aquatic life, birds and land animals found in and along the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers and then write a cartoon episode about these characters working together to save the river from an ecological catastrophe

OBJECTIVES:

- *The students will write a short story (cartoon episode) demonstrating their understanding of characterization, plot, setting, theme and dialogue
- *The students will write a creative solution for an environmental problem that could greatly affect or destroy aquatic life living in local rivers and the livelihood of birds and land animals living along that same river
- *The students will utilize the five steps of the writing process (pre-write, draft, revise, edit, publish)
- *The students will work co-operatively in small groups
- *The students will create and draw characters for their short story using information about freshwater aquatic life living in or along the local rivers
- *Students will write a song to accompany the short story (cartoon episode)
- *The students will present their drawings, read their cartoon episode and sing their song

STANDARDS: Refer to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards Categories for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (Grade 8) for the Language Arts standards reflected in this lesson

MATERIALS:

- *Television
- *VCR
- *Videotape of any "SpongeBob Squarepants" cartoon episode

- ***Information previously received in science class on "River Unit"
 - *Pictures, scientific names and background information about the different types of aquatic life living in the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers
 - *Pictures, scientific names and background information about the different types of birds and land animals living along the banks of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers
 - *List of environmental concerns that could affect the health or cleanliness of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers (flood waters, sewage overflow, chemical spill...)
- *Plain white drawing paper
- *Lined writing paper
- *Colored pencils, crayons, markers
- *Handouts review the correct way to write and punctuate dialogue
- *Rubrics for drawing and writing assignments
- *Cassette recorder
- *Blank cassettes

PROCEDURE:

- *Introduce students to the lesson by distributing handouts and rubrics for the activities and discussing each
- *Watch any 15 minute episode of a "SpongeBob Squarepants" cartoon
- *After watching the cartoon, write on the board the different types of salt water life presented in the cartoon (sponge, squid, crab, dolphin, starfish, plankton, jelly fish, and squirrel...)
- *Discuss the habitats of each creature
- *Ask why Bikini Bottom might be a clever name for the setting of the "SpongeBob Squarepants" episodes
- *Ask students to discuss some ecological problems that might destroy Bikini Bottom and its life forms
- *Ask how the characters might work together to creatively solve an ecological problem such as an oil spill or tsunami that would affect their habitat
- *Break students into groups of 5
- *Students will select a group leader
- *Within their groups students are to use the teacher provided lists identifying life forms living in or along the banks of the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio Rivers to select four water organisms (catfish, leech, may fly, paddle fish?) and one bird (kingfisher, heron, gull?) or land animal (beaver, rat?) upon which to base their characters
- *Each student in the group of five will select a creature (all must be different) to develop into a cartoon character

- *Students must agree on the different personalities for each character - none may be the same (strong, smart, cowardly, brave...)
- *Each student must then draw a cartoon picture of the creature and give it a name (Morris - catfish, King -kingfisher, Larry - leech...)
- *Once each character is developed, students must name their characters' habitat/town (Allegheny Alley, The Mon Wharf, Below the O, The Highland Park Bridge Hideout...)
- *As a group students will select an ecological problem that could greatly damage or completely destroy the characters' freshwater habitat (oil spill, flood waters, acid rain, sewage overflow...)
- *As a group, students must think of a creative solution the characters in their cartoon episode could use to solve the problem
- *As a group students will write the cartoon episode - using dialogue- which identifies the threat or problem and offers a solution through the creative and co-operative actions of the characters
- *As a group students will write a short two or three stanza song for their cartoon
- *As a group students will present their drawings, story/cartoon and song to the class

EVALUATION:

- *Self-evaluation
- *Peer evaluation from group members for effort and co-operation
- *Teacher observation for co-operation and participation
- *Score earned on group written cartoon episode (rubric)
- *Score earned on individual drawing (rubric)
- *Score earned on group composed song (rubric)
- *Score earned on group presentation (rubric)
- *Quiz on correct use and punctuation of dialogue

HOMEWORK:

Each night of the 5 day, 4 night project, complete the assignment given by the student group leader for that particular night

1.4.8. Types of Writing – Grade 8

- 1.4.8A **Write short stories, poems and plays.**
- Apply varying organizational methods.
 - Use relevant illustrations.
 - Utilize dialogue.
 - Apply literary conflict.
 - Include literary elements (Standard 1.3.8.B.).
 - Use literary devices (Standard 1.3.8.C.).
- 1.4.8B **Write multi-paragraph informational pieces (e.g., letters, descriptions, reports, instructions, essays, articles, interviews).**
- Include cause and effect.
 - Develop a problem and solution when appropriate to the topic.
 - Use relevant graphics (e.g., maps, charts, graphs, tables, illustrations, photographs).
 - Use primary and secondary sources.
- 1.4.8C **Write persuasive pieces.**
- Include a clearly stated position or opinion.
 - Include convincing, elaborated and properly cited evidence.
 - Develop reader interest.
 - Anticipate and counter reader concerns and arguments.
- 1.4.8D **Maintain a written record of activities, course work, experience, honors and interests.**

1.5.3. Quality of Writing – Grade 8

- 1.5.8A **Write with a sharp, distinct focus.**
- Identify topic, task and audience.
 - Establish a single point of view.
- 1.5.8B **Write using well-developed content appropriate for the topic.**
- Gather, determine validity and reliability of and organize information.
 - Employ the most effective format for purpose and audience.
 - Write paragraphs that have details and information specific to the topic and relevant to the focus.
- 1.5.8C **Write with controlled and/or subtle organization.**
- Sustain a logical order within sentences and between paragraphs using meaningful transitions.
 - Establish topic and purpose in the introduction.
 - Reiterate the topic and purpose in the conclusion.
- 1.5.8D **Write with an understanding of the stylistic aspects of composition.**
- Use different types and lengths of sentences.
 - Use tone and voice through the use of precise language.
- 1.5.8E **Revise writing** after rethinking logic of organization and rechecking central idea, content, paragraph development, level of detail, style, tone and word choice.
- 1.5.8F **Edit writing using the conventions of language.**
- Spell common, frequently used words correctly.
 - Use capital letters correctly.
 - Punctuate correctly (periods, exclamation points, question marks, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes, colons, semicolons, parentheses).
 - Use nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections properly.
 - Use complete sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative).
- 1.5.8G **Present and/or defend written work for publication** when appropriate.

1.6.8. Speaking and Listening - Grade 8

1.6.8A

Listen to others.

- Ask probing questions.
- Analyze information, ideas and opinions to determine relevancy.
- Take notes when needed.

1.6.8B

Listen to selections of literature (fiction and/or nonfiction)

- Relate them to previous knowledge.
- Predict content/events.
- Summarize events and identify the significant points.
- Identify and define new words and concepts.
- Analyze the selections.

1.6.8C

Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.

- Use complete sentences.
- Pronounce words correctly.
- Adjust volume to purpose and audience.
- Adjust pace to convey meaning.
- Add stress (emphasis) and inflection to enhance meaning.

1.6.8D

Contribute to discussions.

- Ask relevant, probing questions.
- Respond with relevant information, ideas or reasons in support of opinions expressed.
- Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of others.
- Adjust tone and involvement to encourage equitable participation.
- Clarify, illustrate or expand on a response when asked.
- Present support for opinions.
- Paraphrase and summarize, when prompted.

1.6.8E

Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.

- Initiate everyday conversation.
- Select a topic and present an oral reading.
- Conduct interviews as part of the research process.
- Organize and participate in informal debates.

1.6.8F

Use media for learning purposes.

- Describe how the media provides information that is sometimes accurate, sometimes biased based on a point of view or by the opinion or beliefs of the presenter.
- Analyze the role of advertising in the media.
- Create a multimedia (e.g. film, music, computer-graphic) presentation for display or transmission.