

Teacher's Guide

Curriculum Comments

This week's writing skill focuses on descriptive paragraphs. The Web site www.suite101.com has a fun activity to introduce students to descriptive writing. In the search field, type "Descriptive Paragraph Lesson."

The article on Chopin's 200th birthday offers a great opportunity to switch gears a bit by playing some of Chopin's most famous compositions for students. If time allows, explore Chopin pieces and maybe those of other composers.

– Charlene Kerwin Reyes, Teacher's Guide Editor

A New President For Ukraine

Page 1

STANDARD: National Geography Standards (National Geographic Society) Element 4: Human Systems. Standard 10: Understand the patterns and networks of economic interdependence on the Earth's surface. **Standard 12:** Understand how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the Earth's surface.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this article, students will learn about:

- Ukraine's new president.
- Differences between Eastern and Western Ukraine.
- Ukraine's economic ties to Russia and the EU.

AIM: What plans does Ukraine's new president have?

PRE-READING: Preview the map of Ukraine on page 2. Ask students to identify the natural features shown on the map. Ask: *Which river divides Ukraine in half?* Discuss how Ukraine's natural features might affect its relationships with neighboring countries.

DURING READING: Create a T-chart on the board. Title it: "Comparing Eastern Ukraine to Western Ukraine." Label one column "Eastern Ukraine" and the other "Western Ukraine." Have students take turns reading aloud. Stop after the paragraphs describing Eastern and Western Ukraine. Have students provide information comparing the two regions. Record their responses in the chart.

AFTER READING: Show students a map of the United States. Compare the natural features of the United States to those of Ukraine. Ask students to identify the countries that border the United States. Discuss the common interests the United States shares with its neighbors.

Answers To Globe Gallopers

1. What country borders Ukraine to the north?

Belarus is on the northern border of Ukraine.

2. Which mountains separate Ukraine from Hungary and Romania?

The Carpathian Mountains separate Ukraine from Hungary and Romania.

Answers To Review Questions



1. Who is Ukraine's new president?

Viktor Yanukovich is the new president of Ukraine.

2. Why do people in Eastern Ukraine like Russia?

Most people in Eastern Ukraine like Russia because they live close to Russia and speak the language of the Russian people. Also, they want to be able to keep buying oil and gas from Russia to run their coal and steel factories.

3. Why do people in Western Ukraine like the EU?

People in Western Ukraine are more like people in the EU. They share the same ideas about government.



4. Why is it good for countries to get along?

Possible answer: Countries that get along can help each other during difficult times. They can also trade with each other.

Next Issue:

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Note to Teachers:

Your students would love to be published in *The Current Events*. Send us their letters or some of their fine writing. We

may publish their submissions in a future issue. Please be sure that students include their names, the name of their school, and their grade level. Send to:

The Current Events

1973 60th Street, Room 105

Brooklyn, NY 11204

Or email: features@thecurrentevents.com

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVE: FOCUS ON WRITING SKILLS — DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH

Explain to students that a descriptive paragraph paints a picture with words. It describes a person, place, or thing. Students should consider the five senses — sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch — when writing a descriptive paragraph. Have students brainstorm a list of words that would help them describe their favorite food, place, or activity. Record their ideas on the board.

In the article “A New President for Ukraine” and related map, students learned about Ukraine and the role that geography plays in relationships among Ukrainians and with neighboring countries. What descriptive words help illustrate the differences between Eastern and Western Ukraine? What words describe Ukraine’s relationships with its neighbors? Tell students that they will use what they learned from the article and map to write a descriptive paragraph about a trip across Ukraine.

“Happy Birthday, Dear Chopin” Page 4

STANDARD: National Standards for Arts Education (Consortium of National Arts Education Associations)
Standard 9: *Understanding music in relation to history and culture. Standard 9b:* *Students describe in simple terms how elements of music are used in music examples from various cultures of the world. Standard 9c:* *Students identify various uses of music in their daily experiences and describe characteristics that make certain music suitable for each use.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this article, students will learn about:

- Why 2010 is the “Year of Chopin.”
- Chopin’s musical accomplishments.
- Plans for celebrating Chopin’s 200th birthday.

AIM: “The Year of Chopin” is under way!

PRE-READING: Have the class brainstorm a list of musical instruments. Ask if any students play an instrument. If any students play an instrument, have them tell the class a little bit about what they play and why. Ask students what instrument they might like to play and why.

DURING READING: Tell students to underline what influenced Chopin to play the piano. Discuss Chopin’s accomplishments at ages 6, 7, 8, and 11.

AFTER READING: Have students listen to some samples of Chopin’s music. Ask: *What do you like or dislike about each piece? How do they make you feel?*

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVE: FOCUS ON TEXT COMPREHENSION SKILLS — DICTIONARY SKILLS— MULTIPLE-MEANING WORDS

There are many words in the English language that have more than one meaning. This can interfere with students’ comprehension if they have a preconceived notion of what a word means. The dictionary is a great resource for clearing up which definition of a multiple-meaning word applies in a given context.

Say to students, *In the article “The World Sings ‘Happy Birthday, Dear Chopin!,” the word note appears. It has several different meanings.*

A dictionary provides meanings, called “definitions,” for words. Today, you are going to use the dictionary to locate words and their definitions. Then you are going to choose one of those definitions to create your own sentence. Together, look up the meanings of the word note. Call attention to the numbered definitions, as well as to the parts of speech that apply to the different definitions. Point out that note means “musical tone,” “symbol that stands for a musical tone,” “letter,” “piece of paper money,” and “observe,” among other meanings. Elicit that in this case the best meaning of note is the second one, “symbol that stands for a musical tone.”

Give students the activity sheet and a children’s dictionary, and have them complete the sheet independently or with a partner.

Answers To Review Questions



1. What instrument did Chopin play?

Chopin played the piano.

2. How is Chopin’s birthday being celebrated?

The Chopin Museum is reopening on March 1st. It will show letters and music Chopin wrote. His music will also be played there. Space shuttle astronauts also celebrated by playing his music while they orbited Earth.



3. What instrument do you want to learn to play? Why?

Accept all reasonable answers.

California Fights Sugar

Page 6

STANDARD: National Health Education Standards (American Cancer Society) Standard 1: *Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance health. Standard 1a: Describe relationships between personal health behaviors and individual well-being. Standard 1f: Identify common health problems of children. Standard 1h: Explain how childhood injuries and illnesses can be prevented or treated.*

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this article, students will learn about:

- California's proposed soda tax.
- The connection between soda and obesity.
- How obesity affects the health of adults and children.
- Michelle Obama's efforts to fight obesity.

AIM: California's war on soda.

PRE-READING: Preview the chart on page 6. Discuss what the chart shows. Ask the class why they think the chart is included in this issue. Which drinks do the students drink? How often do they drink these? Assess what they know about the nutritional value of the drinks shown on the chart.

DURING READING: Have students identify other states and cities that are fighting sugar. Discuss why a national sugar tax failed.

AFTER READING: Have a discussion about healthful eating. If time allows, show the class a video about the first lady's efforts to fight obesity. Several videos are available at the White House Web site (<http://www.whitehouse.gov>). Click on the "Photos and Videos" link and then browse through "The First Lady" category. Check out the videos on the kitchen garden at the White House, and on healthy diet and exercise.

Answers To Off The Chart

1. Which drink has the most sugar? How much sugar does it have?

Mountain Dew has the most sugar. It has 11 1/2 teaspoons of sugar.

2. Which drink has the least sugar?

Juicy Juice has the least sugar. It has 3 teaspoons of sugar.

Answers To Review Questions



1. What are California lawmakers fighting?
They are fighting sugary drinks.

2. Why is drinking too much soda harmful?
Soda has a lot of sugar, and too much sugar can lead to obesity and other health problems.



3. Do you think a soda tax is a good idea? Why or why not?

Possible answers: Yes, because people might drink less soda if it costs more. No, because soda companies will lose money.

Answer Key for Activity Sheet

1. a tool used in weaving or sewing
 2. back and forth travel
 3. a vehicle for space travel
- Every Wednesday, my mom shuttles me to soccer practice.

1. a journey
 2. a stumble or fall
 3. to set something off or cause something to begin
- Diana tripped over the shoe on the floor.

1. to try to understand
 2. a room used for reading or learning activities
 3. to examine closely
- Megan has many books in her study.

Activity Sheet

Name _____

Using a Dictionary — Multiple-Meaning Words

Locate the word at the top of each box in the dictionary. Then write different definitions for each word.

Shuttle

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Choose one definition. Write a sentence that uses "shuttle" in that way.

Trip

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Choose one definition. Write a sentence that uses "trip" in that way.

Study

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Choose one definition. Write a sentence that uses "study" in that way.
