

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, have students explore Chopin pieces to find one they especially like and share it with the class.

— Charlene Kerwin Reyes, Teacher's Guide Editor

New President, New Direction

Page 1

STANDARD: New President, New Direction Page 1 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:

- The inauguration of Ukraine's new president.
- The new president's plans for Ukraine.
- Differences between Eastern and Western Ukraine.
- Ukraine's economic relationship with Russia and the EU.

AIM: What changes are taking place in Ukraine?

PRE-READING: Preview the map of Ukraine on page 2. Ask for student volunteers to locate on a larger map the region shown. Have students describe the geographic features of Ukraine. Discuss how Ukraine's location in the region might affect its relations with neighboring countries.

DURING READING: Have students create a T-chart in their notebooks. Above the chart, have them write the question: *How do Ukrainians view their country's relations with the EU and Russia?* Tell them to label one column "Western Ukraine" and the other "Eastern Ukraine." Tell students to use the chart to take notes while they read that will help them answer the question.

AFTER READING: Discuss the pros and cons of good relations between Ukraine and the EU versus Ukraine and Russia. *What kind of relationship with its neighbors is in Ukraine's best interest?*

Answers To Globe Gallopers

1. Look at the map key. Decide which symbol stands for:

- Warm-Water Ports
- Rich Soil
- Pipelines
- Mountains

Label the symbols on the map key.

The ships stand for warm-water ports. The plants stand for the "breadbasket," or agricultural region, the mountains represent mountainous regions, and the pipelines represent the pipes that carry Russian gas to EU countries.

2. Draw the route of a pipeline that could carry natural gas from Russia to Western Europe through Ukraine.

Students' drawings should connect Russia and any of the other labeled European countries via Ukraine.

Answers To Review Questions



Right
There

1. Name three countries with which Ukraine has friendly relations.

Accept any three of the following: Romania, Russia, Poland, and Hungary.



Put It
Together

2. How do EU countries and Russia benefit from good relations with Ukraine?

EU countries: import wheat from Ukraine, receive gas from Russia via a pipeline that crosses Ukraine; Russia: imports wheat from Ukraine, sells gas to EU countries via pipeline that crosses Ukraine, uses the warm-water ports that are on Ukraine's coastline for its trade and military needs



Author
And Me

3. Why do you think Yanukovich is visiting the EU before Russia?

Answers will vary. Possible answer: He wants to preserve ties with these countries, even

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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

though he is also going to promote good ties with Russia.



4. How would things be different in Ukraine if Russian becomes the official language?

Answers will vary. Possible answers: The new language would make close economic ties with Russia more likely. It would enhance the influence of Russian culture throughout the entire country, not just in Eastern Ukraine. Schools might be mandated to teach their lessons in Russian.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVE: FOCUS ON WRITING SKILLS — DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH

Explain to students that a descriptive paragraph paints a picture with words. It uses nouns, verbs, and adjectives to describe 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 “New President, New Direction” 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.

The World Sings, “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. Students describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this article, students will learn about:

- Why 2010 is the “Year of Chopin.”
- Chopin’s musical accomplishments.
- How and why Poland is celebrating Chopin’s birthday.

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

PRE-READING: Ask students to name some of their favorite musicians or types of music. List some examples on the board. Ask students what they like about the musicians or types of music listed. *What appeals most to them about their favorite music?* Elicit their thoughts on the music style, melody, lyrics, and beat.

DURING READING: Tell students to think about their favorite musician or kind of music as they read the article. *How does Chopin compare to their favorite musician or type of music?* As they read, have them highlight words or phrases that apply to Chopin and to

their favorite musician or music.

AFTER READING: Have students listen to some samples of Chopin’s music. Discuss how the compositions differ. *What do students like or dislike about each piece? Is any part of the music familiar to them? How do the pieces differ from what they listen to?*

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 determining 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!’*,” you encounter the word *note*, which has several different meanings.

One place to find the definitions of multiple meaning words is the dictionary. 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.”

Answers To Review Questions



1. Who is Fryderyk Chopin, and why is he in the news?

He is a Polish composer whose 200th birthday is celebrated this year.



2. How is the world celebrating Chopin’s birthday?

Astronauts on the space shuttle Endeavour brought a CD of Chopin’s music with them into space and played it; 1300 concerts are taking place worldwide, including the 16th International Chopin Competition; the Chopin Museum in Warsaw is reopening; Poland has declared 2010 “The Year of Chopin.”



3. Why do you think Chopin’s birthday is still celebrated after 200 years?

Answers will vary. Possible answer: He was so talented that people still enjoy listening to and playing his music.



4. What instrument do you play or would you like to play? Why?

Accept all reasonable answers.

California's Sugar Blues

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:** Explain the relationship between positive health behaviors and the prevention of injury, illness, disease, and premature death.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In this article, students will learn about:

- A proposed soda tax in California.
- The connection between sugar and obesity.
- First Lady Michelle Obama's plan to combat obesity.

AIM: Too many sugary drinks are harmful.

PRE-READING: Have students preview the article by examining the headline and text features: photo, caption, sidebar, chart, and "Take It Home" feature and predict what the article will be about.

DURING READING: Have students highlight the text that supports their predictions.

AFTER READING: Invite students to complete the "Off the Chart" word problem and share their answers in class. Invite students who completed the "Take It Home" feature to share their real-life findings with classmates.

Answers To Off The Chart

1. At lunch today, one student drank Coke, one student drank chocolate milk, and another student drank a Juicy Juice drink. How many teaspoons of sugar were there in all of the drinks combined?

There were 25 1/2 teaspoons of sugar in all.

2. Which of the beverages has the most sugar? Which has the least?

Mountain Dew contains the most sugar; Juicy Juice contains the least.

Answers To Review Questions



1. What is the purpose of the proposed soda tax in California?

The proposed soda tax could help Californians fight a growing health problem and it could also help raise money in California.

2. Describe how the soda tax could help fight obesity.

It would increase the price of soda and therefore possibly discourage people from buying it. Also, the money raised from the tax could be used to fund obesity prevention programs.



3. Do you think a sugar tax is a good way to fight obesity? Why or why not?

Possible answers: Yes, the tax is a good idea because if people have to pay more for sugary drinks, they may not buy as many of them. Also, the tax raises awareness of the problem, so people might change their habits just because they know more. No, the tax is not a good idea because people, not the government, should be responsible for their own decisions and behaviors.



4. What recommendations would you make for fighting obesity in the United States?

Possible answers: Exercise more, pay attention to what we eat and drink, play sports or other outdoor activities.

Answer Key to Activity Sheet

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

1. a practice followed by people of a country or region
 2. the usual behaviors of a person
 3. taxes charged on foreign goods
- My dad paid customs duties on present he brought back from Mexico.

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.

Customs

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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

Study

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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