

English Language Arts

Grade 11

Days 1 & 2

Genre: Historical Fiction

Task: Read and annotate three historical fiction short stories.

Directions:

Historical fiction is a genre of stories that take place in the past (generally more than fifty years before the time when the author wrote the story). Authors write these stories based upon research of the time period; they are not based on the author's personal experience.

Not all fiction that takes place in the past is historical fiction. For example, John Steinbeck was not a historical fiction writer. Although *Grapes of Wrath* takes place in the late 1930's, it was also written in the late 1930's. As far as Steinbeck was concerned, *Grapes of Wrath* was a contemporary novel. However, if Steinbeck had written a novel about the War of 1812 then that would be considered a historical novel; it would be based on events more than 50 years before the time it was written.

Read three historical fiction stories set in the same time period. You might read any historical fiction story set of your choosing, or you might select a set of related stories from:

- http://www.teenink.com/fiction/historical_fiction/ -- stories written by teens
- <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/teachers/readings.html>
- <http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/indexframe.html> -- Search by the time period you want to read about.

*These web sites are not controlled or approved by the NYC Department of Education

While you read and annotate:

- Readers of historical fiction read to gather meaning about the larger historical period or social significance. Take explicit notes about what you are learning about the time period (you will use these notes on Day 2).
- Consider whether the historical fiction pieces that you read offer a different perspective than what you previously thought or knew about the time period.
- Consider what the themes of the historical fiction story mean for our modern world.

Days 3 & 4

Genre: Historical Fiction

Task: Write a historical fiction story set in the time period that you read about on Days 1 and 2.

Day 3 Directions:

Try your hand at writing a short historical fiction piece. Today, brainstorm and draft your piece.

Day 4 Directions:

Revise and finalize your historical fiction story.

While you write:

Invent a story line –

- A story about a real person in the time he/she lived
- Invent a story about a real historical event
- Create a character and event in the past

(Regardless of which story line option you choose, New York City in the 1960's is New York City in the 1960's, and Paris in the 1940's is Paris in the 1940's; nothing in your story can contradict the facts known about it. Your characters can't use a cell phone or write something on a home computer. However, they can stop at a pay phone to make a call or write something on a typewriter.)

Create a plan for your story – You might make a timeline or story map to plan out the scenes. As you plan each scene, incorporate both the events of your story as well as events of the time period that may affect your character. Use the notes that you made about the time period from the stories that you read on Day 1.

Do additional research as needed – You may need to look back to the historical fiction stories that you read or do some quick internet research to find accurate historical details. If you're writing about the Underground Railroad and need to know how long it would take to walk from Nashville, TN to New York City, you might try using the walking feature on MapQuest.com. If you need to see the inside of the Taj Mahal to be able to describe it, check out the tourist videos on National Geographic: <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/>.

Draft your story – As you draft, use your story plan to tell each scene – working in both the actions of the story and the events and customs of the time period.

Revise your story – You might revise the story by:

- Writing authentic dialogue that reflects the turns of phrase used at the time
- Checking the details you have included for historical accuracy
- Writing context clues for any historically accurate words that might be unfamiliar to a modern reader

Day 5 & 6

Genre: Judicial Decisions

Task: Read and annotate one or two decisions from the Supreme Court.

Directions:

Read about a few key Supreme Court opinions (decisions) that have influenced everyday life in America.

- Landmark case background, learning materials, and actual opinion (decision) text:
<http://www.streetlaw.org/en/Landmark/Cases> -- click on a case, then click on the “Decision” tab

*These web sites are not controlled or approved by the NYC Department of Education

While you read and annotate:

- Supreme Court decisions are written in formal legal language and can be challenging to read.
 - You might read a summary of the case to get an understanding of it before reading the full text.
 - Or you might begin by reading the syllabus, which is a summary of the decision provided by the Supreme Court to assist in understanding the case and the opinion.
 - You might also begin by listening to one of the podcasts before reading the full text.
- As you read the opinion (including the majority opinion and minority dissent) annotate the text to record what you are learning about both sides of the issue.
- Supreme Court cases end in an action of:
 1. **Affirm**—allow the lower court’s ruling to stand;
 2. **Reverse, Void, or Vacate**--over-turn the lower court's ruling; or
 3. **Remand**--send the case back to a lower court for retrial.
- Think about the significance of the opinion. How will it affect the average American? What other issues might this opinion influence?

Adapted from American Bar Association:
http://www.americanbar.org/publications/insights_on_law_and_society/13/fall_2012/how_to_read_a_us_supreme_court_opinion.html

Days 7 & 8

Genre: Informational Essay

Task: Write an informational essay about a Supreme Court decision.

Day 7 Directions:

Using your notes from Days 5 and 6, write an informational essay to teach a reader about one of the Supreme Court decisions that you studied. Today, brainstorm and draft your essay.

Day 8 Directions:

Revise and finalize your essay.

While you write:

- Your essay should include:
 - An overview of the circumstances of the case
 - A summary of the majority opinion – explaining how these judges interpreted the U.S. Constitution
 - A summary of the dissenting opinion – explaining how these judges interpreted the U.S. Constitution
- If you are able to do additional internet research, you might research the impact of this decision and explain how it has affected contemporary society and whether or not the decision was later overturned by another Supreme Court decision.



Days 9 & 10

Independent Reading

Directions:

Read a book of your choosing. Write the title and author below.

** A note to parents and guardians: Talk with your children about the books they are reading.*

If you would like an e-book, go to <https://www.nypl.org/books-music-movies/ebookcentral>

Title: _____

Author: _____

While Reading:

Jot down your ideas about what you're reading.

After Reading:

After reading several of the next chapters in your book...

For Fiction: write a one page response analyzing the characters, and their motivations. Consider the conflict, setting, relationships of characters and any other significant details that you find important.

For Non-Fiction: write a one page explaining what you learned and how it confirmed, challenged or changed your thinking today. Tell your reader how you became smarter about that topic.