**The Buffalo Story Project**



For our Westward Expansion unit, we are examining the impact expansion and *manifest destiny* had on those who did not have a voice in history: Native Americans, Mexicans, African Americans and other minority groups. In this project, students will create an original children’s picture book, focusing on untold stories of expansion, conquest, and *manifest destiny*.

"The real story of the hunter will be told when the lion and the buffalo get to write." —African Proverb

**Project:**

You will create an original children’s picture book, depicting the impact of Westward Expansion on Native Americans, Mexicans, African Americans, other minority groups, or the environment or species affected by expansion. You can choose to either work with a partner (split the jobs: 1) art, 2) writing); or you can produce your own independent book.

**Must Include:**

Your book should be **12-14 pages** long & should include:

* 8-14 illustrations\*
* Text on every illustrated page
* A cover with an original title & illustration
* Look neat & professional

\***Any unoriginal artwork/photos must be credited to the artist/photographer.**

**Picture Book Choices:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Picture Book: Historical Nonfiction

\_\_\_\_\_ Picture Book: Nonfiction Biography

\_\_\_\_\_ Picture Book: Rhyming/Song/Chant

\_\_\_\_\_ Picture Book: Historical Fiction

\_\_\_\_\_ Picture Book: Images w/ captions

**Topic/Theme Suggestions:**

 Trail of Tears Mexican American War

 Indian Removal Santa Anna

 Reservations Chief Joseph

 Indian Wars Irish Immigrants

 Native Americans Sacagawea

 Extinction of the buffalo Chief Little John

 Mexicanos/Californios Assimilation

 Underground Railroad Slavery

 Systematic Racism Texas & Tejanos

 Mariano Vallejo Abolitionist Movement

 Gold Rush & Chinese Immigrants Harriet Tubman

\*For more ideas & online resources, see the class website under “Westward.”

**Steps to Completing the Picture Book**

**Step One: Preparation**

* Bring a favorite’s children book from childhood
* Homework: read & complete the Children’s Book Review Guide
* Be prepared to share your book & Children’s Book Review Guide
	+ Share 3 reasons why it is your favorite book—give examples
	+ Discuss what makes a good children’s book
	+ Decide on what guidelines are required to make it a good book
* In class, we will also view video & read articles on Westward Expansion & race, to help prepare us for the themes we will be addressing in our books.

**Step Two: Preliminary Brainstorm**

* Brainstorm themes & characteristics you noticed your favorite children’s book (i.e. fear, acceptance, family, change).
* Preliminary research: decide what topic/theme you will use for your book
* Brainstorm characters, plot, topic
* Homework: Fiction—create characters & plot; Nonfiction—create an outline with events/people.

**Step Three: Research**

* A list of online & book resources can be found on the class website under “Westward”
* Research your topic; take special notice on how Native Americans & Mexicans were impacted by Westward Expansion during this time.
* Homework: Compile research notes to help you construct plot/storyboard/outline
* If creating a fictional picture book, try to imagine how your characters may be placed & react in these circumstances

**Step Four: Final Brainstorm**

* Complete & print the following graphic organizers from <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/index.html>
	+ Character Map
	+ Conflict Map
	+ Resolution Map
	+ Setting Map
* Homework: Complete graphic organizers & begin book outline/storyboard

**Step Five: Draft**

* Homework: Write your first draft
* Peer edit draft
* Divide each written section up & begin sketching illustrations to go with the story (remember 12-14 pages with 8-14 illustrations)—almost like a storyboard
* Homework: Complete final written draft
* Plan out how you are going to layout text & illustrations on each page

**Step Six: Final Product**

* Books can either be one full 8x11 page or folded in half
* Type final story
* Complete final illustrations
* Create final product
* Bind your book

**Tips for Writing a Children’s Picture Book**

**Definition**

Children’s Picture Book—A work written for children, which uses both text & illustrations to present a simple plot.

**Format**

Most picture books average 30 pages, consisting of 14 to 16 two-page spreads. A spread is the two pages of an open book.

**Text**

* The text of a children’s book should be organized into simple sentences & short paragraphs.
* The use of active verbs will keep the story vivid in the reader’s mind.
* Children’s book authors employ literary tools to help make the story more vivid in the reader’s mind. Rhythm, alliteration, repetition, refrains, onomatopoeia, simile, personification, rhyme, & imagery are commonly used devices.
* Consider ending each page with a question or other method that sparks the reader’s curiosity for what will happen next.
* Repeating a phrase throughout the story will help hold your reader’s attention.
* Use a question at the end of the page to help move your reader to the next page.

**Illustrations**

* Some picture books have an illustration on the front cover that presents the main conflict or point of the story.
* The illustrations are usually created after the text has been written.
* Illustrations serve as a partner to the text.

**Characterization**

* The main character should have one or two easily identifiable dominant traits.
* Present the traits of your characters through both the illustrations and text.
* Young children should be able to easily identify with the dominant traits.
* Avoid using text to present detailed descriptions of what the characters look like. Let the illustrations present the physical details of the character.

**Conflict**

* Limit your story to just one conflict the main character must overcome.
* The main character should be able to deal with the main conflict in concrete terms.
* The main character should resolve the conflict him or herself.
* Four of the most common types of conflict are individual vs. individual, individual vs. society, individual vs. nature, and individual vs. self.
* Some of the most common concerns of children include acceptance by others, family dynamics, physical growth (especially size and looks), and fear of the unknown (e.g., learning something new, participating in a new activity, going to a new place, getting lost).

**Plot**

* A solid, well-developed plot is essential to creating a good children’s book.
* The resolution of the conflict should teach a lesson. However, the lesson should not be told in a didactic way but instead be presented indirectly through the plot.
* Jump right into the main conflict of the story.

Westward Expansion Picture Book Project Rubric

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Scoring Criteria** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| **Cover** | Title & illustration on cover are original & clearly relate to the story & entice readers to pick up the book. | Title & illustration are original & clearly relate to the story. | Title & illustration clearly relate to the story. | Title & illustration are poorly done or do not relate to the story. |
| **Text** | The font & legibility of the text add to the story, & do not interfere with or disrupt communication of ideas to the reader in any area of the work. | The font & legibility of the text do not interfere with or disrupt communication of ideas to the reader in any area of the work. | The font & legibility of the text interfere with but do not disrupt the communication of ideas to the reader. | The font & legibility of the text interfere with & disrupt the communication of ideas to the reader. |
| **Grammar & Spelling** | There are no grammar or spelling errors anywhere in the work. | One or two grammar or spelling errors occur in the work, but do not distract from the story. | Three or four grammar or spelling errors occur in the work. | Five or more grammar or spelling errors occur in the work. |
| **Historical Accuracy** | Accurate historical facts & events, add to the setting, giving the reader a sense of authenticity. | One or two inaccurate facts or events occur in the work, but do not take away from the authentic setting. | Three or more inaccurate facts or events occur in the work, taking away some authenticity in the setting. | Five or more inaccurate facts or events occur in the work, creating an inauthentic setting. |
| **Plot Development** | All five areas of the plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, & resolution) are present and are clearly developed. | One of the five areas of plot is not present &/or is not clearly developed. | Two of the five areas of plot are not present &/or are not clearly developed. | Three or more areas of plot are not present &/or are not clearly developed. |
| **Illustrations Support Plot** | The illustrations help present the plot throughout all areas in the book. | The illustrations help present the plot in a majority of areas throughout the book. | The illustrations help present the plot in only a minority of areas throughout the book. | The illustrations do not help the plot in a majority of areas throughout the book. |
| **Execution of Illustrations** | Illustrations are neat & visually pleasing throughout the entire book. | Illustrations are neat & visually pleasing throughout a majority of the book. | Illustrations need more details & attention to visual appearance. | Illustrations lack details & visual appearance distracts the reader. |