



A Lesson on The History Mystery by Lillian Shaffer

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour 15 minutes

Lesson Keywords: Poetry, Egypt, History, Reading, English, Mystery

Lesson Description: Students will read and reread the passage thoroughly either in their heads or aloud if necessary. They will answer the three questions given individually. They will then discuss Task 2 with their partners. Lastly, they will write their essay individually.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.5: Explain major differences between poems, drama, and prose, and refer to the structural elements of poems (e.g., verse, rhythm, meter) and drama (e.g., casts of characters, settings, descriptions, dialogue, stage directions) when writing or speaking about a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2a: Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1d: Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

The History Mystery

by

Content: I remember when I learned to like history. It was last year. My teacher, Mr. Brown, said, Take out your world history books and turn to page 3.

We did, and I was ready to be bored. But on that page was this poem. I was surprised, because I thought it would be a page full of lots of facts.

The ancient Egyptians were very clever.
They figured out how to use the lever.
They built pyramids with stones that weighed a lot.
Many workers dragged them to the right spot.
Why not use wheels? Were not certain.
History sometimes holds mysteries behind a time curtain.

Mr. Brown asked us, What do you think the poem means?

Darren raised his hand. He said, Maybe what the poem means is that it is hard to know exactly what happened a long time ago.

Great answer, Mr. Brown replied. Yes, the poet is saying history is a mystery. How many of you like mysteries?

Everyone said they did except Jerome. He doesn't like anything. He never even pays attention.

Let's read this book like a mystery book. It will tell you about some of the things that happened. Some of these things we don't know. For example, how do you think Abraham Lincoln felt when he was elected President?

He was happy, I replied. He won the election.

He was worried, Marcia said.

Why would he be worried? Mr. Brown asked.

Well, there were a lot of problems then, Marcia replied. I think he probably was worried about how to solve them.

That could be, Mr. Brown said. We might be able to find out if we read what Lincoln wrote in his letters and speeches, but we won't know what he said to people. Let's think about another mystery. The poet talks about pyramids. How do you think those workers felt?

Jerome said, I think they were very tired from doing all that hard work. He hadn't listened.

I said, I think they were very proud of what they did.

Mr. Brown said, Both of those answers are possible. We will never know for sure. When you read the history of any event, we never have all the information. So reading history is like reading a mystery. You need to think about what happened, why, and how people probably felt. That is called reading between the lines thinking about what the book didn't tell us.

From then on I liked history a lot. I like mysteries.

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Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: The ancient Egyptians were very clever. They figured out how to use the lever. **WordPhraseTier:** 2
Question: "The ancient Egyptians were very clever. They figured out how to use the lever." What does the word "clever" mean in this sentence?

- A: Clean
- B: Dumb
- C: Smart
- D: Fast

Question: Which one of the sentences uses the word "clever" correctly?

- A: John was clever in that he always did the dishes after he ate.
 - B: Jane was clever and didn't study for her test on Friday.
 - C: Joe was clever and was able to use his background knowledge and figure out the answer
 - D: Janice won the foot race, she was clever like that.
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Q: 2 WordPhrase: Pyramid **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author says, "Let's think about another mystery. The poet talks about pyramids." What are pyramids?

- A: Long winding rivers
- B: A huge spaceship that beams aliens down from outer space
- C: A collection of books
- D: Tall stone structures with four sides and a square bottom

Question: Which of these sentences uses the word, "pyramid" correctly?

- A: Billy and his family went water skiing on a pyramid.
 - B: Barbra's teacher instructed them to build a pyramid with building blocks.
 - C: Bob looked through the pyramid to find his favorite book.
 - D: Blorg of the planet Bloosh flew his pyramid to the local gas station for a soda pop.
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Q: 3 WordPhrase: Poem **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: At the beginning of the passage, there is a poem. What makes it a poem?

- A: The words at the end of the sentence rhymed.
- B: The story said it was.
- C: The sentences were typed out differently than the rest of the story.
- D: The ancient Egyptians only wrote in poetry.

Question: Which of the following pairs of words do not rhyme?

- A: Clever and lever
 - B: Cool and school
 - C: Hat and ham
 - D: History and mystery
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Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - What was the main idea of this story?

What was the main idea of this story? Explain in your own words what you thought the main idea was.

2 - What does "reading-between-the-lines" mean?

In the passage, the teacher, Mr. Brown used the phrase, reading-between-the-lines. What did he say that meant? Use the text to support your answer.

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: You are to write and post here 500 words essay on your favorite history mysteries and give your theory on what might have happened. Make sure to provide specific examples.

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