

A Lesson on Pigeon Express

by Joe Scibilia

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour 30 minutes

Lesson Keywords: reading, writing, vocabulary

Lesson Description: This lesson is for students to show their abilities in critical reading, writing and vocabulary. Students are to read the story and reflect on different aspects of it. These aspects will be emphasized in the three different sections of work they have to do. The writing is a mix between formal and creative so the students can have some fun with it as well while really applying their writing skills.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

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.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.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1b: Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2c: Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2d: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2e: Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3b: Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

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.

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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.

Pigeon Express

by

Content: My uncle told me that long ago people used carrier pigeons to take messages to other people. He actually has some carrier pigeons. They live in a coop on the roof of his apartment building. They aren't everyday pigeons they have been trained.

My uncle had carrier pigeons when he was a child. He grew up and went into the army, but now he works at a store. He has always loved those carrier pigeons. So when he got enough money, he bought some and trained them himself.

Every day, my uncle writes a note to his sister. His sister lives on the south side and my uncle lives on the west side. He tells his sister about his day in his notes. He says it's not urgent to tell her the news. He just likes using the carrier pigeons.

His sister thinks this is silly. When the pigeon comes, she takes the note and reads it but does not send anything back. Afterwards, the bird comes back to my uncle's coop.

One day there was a sudden rainstorm after the pigeon left my uncle's coop. It rained so hard and so long that everything was flooded. The pigeon did not come back immediately, so my uncle started to worry about the pigeon. He worried about his sister, too. But then the pigeon came back. It was very wet. It had a note in a plastic bag. The note said, I am ok.

Later that summer, there was another problem. The power was out. We did not have any telephone service. My uncle said, See, pigeons can work all the time. They don't need electricity. He wrote that in a note, too. He tied that note to the pigeon. Then he sent that note to his sister.

About an hour later, the pigeon came back. It had another note on it. You're right, it said. I have learned that you can count on pigeons. But I still want my telephone back.

The phone lines were back the next day. We were not worried, though. We knew we could always count on our pigeon express.

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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: coop **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: "They (the pigeons) live in a coop on the roof of his apartment building." What does the word "coop" mean in this sentence?

- A: A cage or pen
- B: A park
- C: A condo
- D: Uncle's bedroom

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

- A: My aunt moved into a coop last summer.
- B: I love to play with my dog in a coop.
- C: Pigeons are not the only birds that live in a coop.
- D: My brother likes to play with his coop on the weekend.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: urgent **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "He says it's not urgent to tell her the news." What does the word "urgent" mean in this sentence?

- A: happy
- B: fearful
- C: highly-important
- D: poisonous

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

- A: I was urgent when I watched the scary movie.
- B: When I saw the lady was having a baby, I knew it was urgent that we get her to the hospital.
- C: The guide book told me that these plants were urgent.
- D: I was urgent when I received the news of my new baby brother.

Q: 3 WordPhrase: Express **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: "We knew we could count on our pigeon express." What does the word "express" mean in this sentence?

- A: company
- B: airplane
- C: building
- D: traveling at high speed with few stops

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

- A: I enjoy taking the express train because it moves so fast.
- B: My family has a very tall express.
- C: I try to make sure my express ends up being clean.
- D: I sometimes like to watch my express on tv.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: flooded **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "It rained so hard and so long that everything was flooded." What does the word "flooded" mean in this sentence?

- A: to build a bridge
- B: to cover an area with water
- C: to damage
- D: to fear

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

- A: My entire street was flooded after the hurricane.
- B: My mom's vase was flooded when I hit it with my baseball.
- C: The bank was flooded when the thief stole the money.
- D: The football player flooded his teammate when he caught a touchdown pass.

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 - Write a note.

If you were to write a note and send it using a carrier pigeon, who would you send it to? What would you write? Use the space below to write a letter that you would send to someone using a carrier pigeon.
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2 - Visiting uncle.

If you stayed with uncle for a weekend, describe how it would be like to help take care of and train the carrier pigeons.? How would you go about doing this?

3 - What do you think?

See, pigeons can work all the time. They dont need?electricity. In the story, uncle believes that pigeons can be more successful than using electricity. What do you think? Do you agree that pigeons can be better to use? Or would you prefer to use electricity even when it goes out? Make sure to give examples.

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: You are to write and post here 500 words essay on Make sure to provide specific examples.? Use your imagination to describe what it would be like to actually be a carrier pidgeon.? Who would be your trainer? What is he or she like? Where do you take your letters? What kind of places do you get to see while flying? Be creative.

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