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## A Lesson on Settlement by Jessica Woods

**Grade Level:** Grade 4

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 3 hours

**Lesson Keywords:** Settlers, Homesteaders, Vocabulary,

**Lesson Description:** The goal of this lesson is to allow students to practice reading and writing skills while gaining insight into the life of a settler and providing them with the perspective of individuals who inhabited this country prior to them. The students are to work in pairs reading the story first silently and then to one another. The pairs are then to work together to answer the vocabulary, discussion, and essay questions that follow the reading. Students should be encouraged to refer back to the story multiple times when answering the questions. Students should have access to dictionaries to help with words they may not already know. After instructor assessment, as a follow up activity answers to the discussion and essay questions should be shared with the class so that students can see the different point of views of their peers.

### 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.

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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).

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

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

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

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

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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.)

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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.

### Settlement

by

**Content:** Settlers came to this area to build farms. They found the land difficult to plant in. It was difficult to dig in because of the thick root system. Trees were not a problem because the area was mostly open grassland. When settlers came, they traded goods with the Potawatomi tribe to get food and animal skins. After a while, the Potawatomi were forced to move when homesteaders started taking over the land.

Here is what one woman wrote about her trip to live in Illinois.

I have walked for such a long time. I just hope that everything will be good when I get there. On Friday evening, after we got to Paris, Illinois, we kept going into the prairie. We drove for 14 miles. The sun was setting, but it was still hot. It was good for most of the way. Though, we slipped a couple of times. The doctor got stuck and the oxen had to draw his wagon out twice. The prairies are so beautiful. There are so many different kinds of flowers that grow on them, and I love the prairie hens. One of the men in our group shot a hen for us to eat yesterday. Eliza looks sick still but she says she feels like helping me prepare dinner. Oh, dear, I think it will be a hard time still. On Saturday, the 15th, we traveled in both prairie and forest. We got lost. We took the wrong road and were lost in the prairie grass for a long time. Sometimes the grass comes up as high as the horses' backs. When night came, we cut some of the grass. Then, we pitched our tents. We tried to make ourselves as comfortable as possible, even though there were many mosquitoes.

Here is what one woman's life was like after settling.

The woman told me that she makes all of the thread and then sews all of the clothes for her family from the cotton and wool that they make. She also knits all the socks. Her husband makes the shoes. He was not a shoemaker originally, but he learned. She makes the soap and the candles that they use. She also makes sugar from the sugar-trees on their farm. All that she wants to buy is coffee and tea. They make money when she sells her butter and her chickens in the market. They don't use any wheat, or sell any of their corn. It seemed like they had a lot of corn. But, she said it was not more than they needed to make some bread and cakes. They also use it to feed their animals in the winter.

Here are some of the problems these settlers faced each season.

**Fall** There was a constant threat of fire. When the prairie grass became very dry, a spark could start a fire that would burn the prairie and sometimes their cabins.

**Winter** The freezing cold and deep snow were problems. People got lost in the drifts or out on the prairie when the trails were covered.

**Spring** The rains and the melted snow were problems. The prairie became swampy when the snow melted and the rains started and people would get stuck on the muddy tracks.

**Summer** The heat was a problem. Some days were very hot and there was no shady forest to sit and cool down in; there were also so many insects that sometimes horses died from so many stings.

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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:** pitched **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author in our story says, "Then we pitched our tents." What does the word "pitched" mean in this sentence?

- A: threw
- B: erected, or set up
- C: grabbed
- D: pulled

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

- A: We pitched our new tent in the back yard.
- B: He pitched the garbage up from off the ground.
- C: She pitched herself in her new dress.
- D: The doctor pitched the boys arm.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** drifts **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** The author in our story says "People got lost in the "drifts" or out on the prairie when the trails were covered." What does the word "drifts" mean in this sentence?

- A: something piled up by the wind such as snow
- B: houses
- C: wagons
- D: lakes

**Question:** Which one of the sentences below uses the word "drifts" properly?

- A: The water drifts from the roof?
- B: He drifts a red car.
- C: The snow drifts made it very hard to walk on the sidewalk.
- D: I don't think she got my drifts.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** settlers **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author in our story says "Settlers came to this area to build farms." What does the word "settlers" mean in this sentence?

- A: a person who loves snow
- B: a person who grows vegetables
- C: a person who raises cows
- D: a person who relocates to a new place

**Question:** Which one of the following sentences uses the word "settlers" correctly?

- A: I settlers the shirt on the dresser.
- B: The doctor said the rash was caused by settlers.
- C: Those flowers are called settlers.
- D: The settlers were happy in their new country.

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** homesteaders **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** The author in our story says "After a while, the Potawatomi were forced to move when "homesteaders" started taking over the land." What does the word "homesteaders" mean in this sentence?

- A: a person who takes possession of land
- B: homerun
- C: lumberjacks
- D: fishermen

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

- A: The homesteaders took over Oregon.
- B: These homesteaders taste great with eggs.
- C: Mom uses homesteaders to see while driving.
- D: Homesteaders are used to cut down trees.

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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 and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - Why settle in Illinois?

Why would the settlers in our story come to Illionois? Wouldn't it have been easier not to move at all? Provide clues from the story to support your answer.

### 2 - Life as a Settler

Do you think that you would liked to have lived the life of a settler? Why or why not? Provide details from the story to explain your answer.

### 3 - Don't Sell Wheat and Corn

The author writes in our story that the settlers don't use any wheat or sell any corn. Why do you think that is?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** For your essay, please write two paragraphs. Pretend that you are a settler. Explain how you would overcome some of the problems the settlers in our story had to face living in a new place. Please use details from the story to support your answer.

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