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## “Children at Sea?”

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**Subject:** Social Studies and English Language Arts

**Grade Level:** Grade 4

**Timeframe:** 5 + sessions

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**Introduction:** This lesson provides students with the opportunity to consider the compelling question, *Do you think children should have been allowed to travel on whaling expeditions? Why or why not?* During the first two sessions students will explore primary source documents to further develop their background knowledge about life at sea. This new learning will support them as they develop a point of view regarding children at sea. For the culminating task, students will compose an opinion piece that answers this question and integrates textual evidence gathered from documents explored.

**Standards:**

**Common Core State Standards:**

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.7 Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.
- 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.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

**Connecticut Social Studies Standards**

- GEO 4.6 Explain how cultural and environmental characteristics affect the distribution and movement of people, goods, and ideas (Dimension 2)
- INQ 3–5.8 Use evidence to develop claims in response to compelling questions. (Dimension 3)
- INQ 3–5.9 Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources. (Dimension 4)

**Vocabulary:** blubber, expedition, harpoon, scrimshaw, shanty

**Placement of Lesson within Broader Curriculum/Context:** This lesson occurs towards the end of a unit of study focused on opinion writing and reinforces the skill of synthesizing information drawn from multiple sources. Students will have the opportunity to apply these key skills to the new learning developed in social studies. It also provides students an opportunity to integrate speaking and listening skills.

**Objective for Lesson:** Students will learn how to synthesize information gathered from discussions and primary and secondary sources. Students will think critically as they use evidence from these sources to develop a point of view. Students will have opportunities to communicate their point of view orally and in writing.

**Learner Background:** The students engaged in this lesson will be a diverse group of learners with varying abilities and needs. The teacher will scaffold aspects of the lesson to provide support and access for all students.

**Compelling Question:** *Do you think children should have been allowed to travel on whaling expeditions? Why or why not?*

**Integration of 21st century skills:** This lesson provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate critical thinking, written and oral communication and collaboration. These are essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and align to the P21 Framework. Students will also have the option to utilize technology to document their collaborative work with others and to enhance the communication of their own thoughts and ideas.

**Assessment:**

**Formative Assessment** (*Dimension 3*): Students will have a collection of graphic organizers, notes, audio & video recordings of discussions and/or exit slips. Along with observations, these documents are authentic student work samples that provide evidence of the identified learning targets.

**Summative Assessment** (*Dimension 4*): Students will compose an opinion piece that uses textual evidence to support their point of view. The Teacher’s College Rubric for Grade 4 Opinion Writing can be used to evaluate the qualities of good writing.

**Materials/Resources:**

Resource Set, *Life at Sea*:

[http://educators.mysticseaport.org/sets/life\\_at\\_sea/](http://educators.mysticseaport.org/sets/life_at_sea/)

Websites:

<http://www.whalingmuseum.org/learn/research-topics/overview-of-north-american-whaling/life-aboard>

<http://www.girlonawhaleship.org/jernapp/journal.do>

Video and Song Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVGlutnOsuM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIHhV8lmdNg>

Informational Picture Books:

*A Whaling Captain’s Daughter, The Diary of Laura Jernegan* edited by Megan O’Hara

*New England Whaler* by Robert F. Baldwin

*The Story of the New England Whalers* by R. Conrad Stein

*Whaling Days* by Carol Carrick

**Lesson Development/Instructional Strategies**

**Session 1**

- **Initiation:** Remind students of the new learning they have developed in social studies around whaling in New England. Tell them that sailors often used music for entertainment, to keep them working in unison and to tell stories of the sea. Have them watch the following video segment on Mystic Seaport Shanties:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cVGlutnOsuM>

- Have students turn and talk with a partner about what they learned and what questions they have after watching the video. Ask students to record one piece of new learning and one question on a sticky note to be placed on a two-column chart. Highlight the interesting facts learned and the questions that students develop. Work collaboratively to identify the questions

as open or closed. Tell students the questions will be revisited as they learn more about shanties and life at sea.

- Students will then have the opportunity to listen to and view the lyrics of a popular shanty, *Greenland Whale Fisheries*. Show the following video segment:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIHhV8lmdNg>

- Have students listen to the shanty a second time. Tell students to think about what the song tells them about life at sea. Remind them to use the skill of inferring when reading the song lyrics.
- Following the second listen, provide students with 5-10 minutes to independently reread the lyrics. Have them highlight, underline, circle or take notes on what they learned about life at sea.
- **Whole group discussion:** Record the information gleaned on chart paper.
- **Assessment:** Students will complete an exit slip answering the questions: What were two things you learned about life at sea? How was music important to the daily life of sailors?

### Sessions 2 & 3

- **Initiation:** Revisit the lesson from the previous day by highlighting the information on the two-column chart and the sticky notes from the whole group discussion. If time allows play, *Greenland Whale Fisheries* (see lyrics at end of lesson plan / [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenland\\_Whale\\_Fisheries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greenland_Whale_Fisheries) ). Tell students that today they will learn more about life at sea as they have the opportunity to explore primary source documents.
- Introduce the text, *A Whaling Captain's Daughter, The Diary of Laura Jernegan*. Tell students that a captain's family often accompanied him on whaling expeditions. Read her diary entries and highlight some of the additional information available that describes life at sea for children.
- Share photographs and excerpts from the website that features Laura's original diary.

<http://www.girlonawhaleship.org/jernapp/journal.do>

*This could be the start of Session 4 depending on the time available.*

- Students will work in small groups to explore primary source documents and artifacts that can be drawn from the Resource Set, Life at Sea. This is available on the Mystic Seaport Educators website. Select artifacts for students to explore that may provide evidence as they develop a point of view related to the compelling question. Below are some of the artifacts available.

[http://educators.mysticseaport.org/sets/life\\_at\\_sea/](http://educators.mysticseaport.org/sets/life_at_sea/)



- Students will work in groups to investigate 2 or more primary source documents. Photographs of the primary sources can be viewed electronically through the website or printed out for students. As students collaborate in their groups have them make observations and develop questions about the sources they are exploring. The goal is for students to construct knowledge and think critically about what life would have been like for children living on the whaling ship. Select documents/artifacts that support this objective. If time allows, have students identify their questions as closed or open. They may choose an open question to further investigate at another time. It is also possible an open question developed may serve as a spring board as they consider their own response to the compelling question.
- **Assessment:** Evaluate the information and questions recorded as groups examine the documents.

#### Sessions 4 & 5

- **Initiation:** Remind students of the new learning and questions they've developed over the past few days around life at sea. Ask them to record two words on a sticky note that best describe the conditions on the ship.
- Remind students that families and children often accompanied their father on whaling expeditions. Reread a few relevant passages from *The Diary of Laura Jernegan*.
- Based on what students know about life at sea, ask them to consider the question *Do you think children should have been allowed to travel on whaling expeditions? Why or why not?*
- Have them turn and talk with a partner about their initial thinking. Direct them to use the textual evidence gathered over the past two sessions to support their point of view. Encourage them to be active listeners as their partners communicate their ideas. Remind them that active listeners often ask clarifying questions when engaged in a discussion about a topic.
- Following partner/small group discussions have students work independently to record their point of view and relevant textual evidence in their Writer's Notebook.
- **Culminating Task/Assessment:** Students will compose an opinion piece that answers the compelling question, *Do you think children should have been allowed to travel on whaling*

*expeditions? Why or why not?* Provide students with books, websites, videos, photographs and other primary source documents related to this topic. Invite them to use these resources to conduct further research as they identify evidence to support their point of view. Allow students the choice of creating a video segment that accompanies their opinion piece. They may choose to highlight some of the documents/artifacts explored as they provide a voice over of their ideas.

**Students Needing Differentiated Instruction:**

The teacher will support learning through the use of thoughtful and purposeful questioning. The questions asked will enrich learning for high achieving students and scaffold learning for those students needing additional supports.

It will be important to provide students with appropriate level texts so they can access written information in an independent manner. Students who have difficulty organizing their ideas and reflections may benefit from the use of a graphic organizer when note taking observations/questions related to primary and secondary sources and when composing the opinion piece.

Students needing further challenge could prepare a counter argument for those whose point of view differed from their own. This counter argument would be based on additional textual evidence gathered and could be communicated orally or in writing.

***Greenland Whales Fisheries***

When the whale get strike and the line runs out  
And the whale makes a flounder with its tail  
And the boat capsized and I lost my darlin' man  
No more, no more Greenland for you, brave boys  
No more, no more Greenland for you

Twas in eighteen hundred and fifty three  
On June the thirteenth day  
That our gallant ship her anchor weighed  
And for Greenland sailed away, brave boys  
For Greenland sailed away

The lookout on the cross tree stood  
With a spyglass in his hand  
There's a whale, there's a whale, there's a whale fish, he cried  
And she blows at every span, brave boys  
She blows at every span

Well we struck and whale and the line played out  
But she gave a flounder with her tail  
And the boat capsized and four men were drowned  
And we never caught that whale  
We never caught that whale

Oh, to lose that whale, my captain cried  
It grieves my heart full sore  
But to lose four of my gallant men  
It grieves me ten times more, brave boys  
It grieves me ten times more

Oh, Greenland is a dreadful place  
It's a land that's never green  
Where there's ice and snow and the whale fishes blow  
And daylight's seldom seen, brave boys  
And daylight's seldom seen

When the whale gets strike and the line runs out  
And the whale makes a flounder with its tail  
And the boat capsized and I lost my darlin' man  
No more, no more Greenland for you, brave boys  
No more, no more Greenland for you