

Workshop on Historical Writing.

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Historical writing is usually about content and tends just to answer the questions “how, why, when , and who”.

What I would like to offer are some techniques to make the connection to more creative and skills-based assignments that will lead to more sophisticated historical writing incorporating :

Contextualization

Causation

Compare and Contrast

Continuity and Change Over Time

The Bio Poem

RAFTing

Found Poetry

Story Chains

The Bio Poem

- 1. First Name**
- 2. Four traits that describe the character**
- 3. Relative of (parents, siblings etc)**
- 4. Lover of (three people)**
- 5. Who feels (three things)**
- 6. Who needs (three things)**
- 7. Who fears (three things)**
- 8. Who gives (three items or feeling)**
- 9. Who would like see (three items)**
- 10. Resident of**
- 11. Last name**

Abraham
tall, awkward, homely and honest
relative of Tom, Nancy and Sara
lover of his stepmother Sara, Mary and their sons
who feels all men should be free, the Union preserved, and slavery abolished
who needs an office, his voice to be heard and a war won
who fears disunion, perpetual servitude, and losing
who gives patience , forgiveness and great speeches
who would like to see the government of the people, by the people and for the people survive
resident of Washington DC
Lincoln

Bio Poems are mostly for content but can be quickly adapted .

Imagine having students write bio poems of Hamilton and Jefferson. You could then have a compare and contrast situation by having students use certain lines from the two poems. You could use lines 5,6 and 7 for example to illustrate the difference between the two men and then you could create a causation lesson.

Great for a beginning of the year activity. I always write one for my students as an introduction and I have them write one for me as well.

RAFTing

Gives creative focus and allows for differentiation

**Also mostly for content but also can be used in a variety of ways depending
how you construct them.**

They can easily accommodate the historical skills of causation etc, you just have to construct them that way.

Role - who are they, what voice are they using?

Audience - who is the piece for?

Format - what will the piece be? A letter, document etc.

Topic- what are you writing about?

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
Principal Winthrop	Parents	Letter home	“The school upon the hill”
A Student	Yourself	Agenda Poetry	Am I a saint?
School Administrator	Students at your school	A page from your school rule book.	The new Puritan school rules
An Advertising Agency	Perspective students.	A newspaper add	Come to the school upon the hill!

Puritan Samples

Students can not wear lace.

Students must wear their undershirt known as a shift.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY DRILLS:

Stay put, and have faith that God will deliver his judgment in your favor. We hope you will discover there is a positive verdict. If not you are damned to hell.

Students must wear a corset and long petticoat.

Outerwear must be a gown, waistcoat or skirt

Skirts must be dragging on the ground. There shall not be an ankle showing.

Ladies must wear a close fitting white linen cap.

Baptizing will also be available for “elect” children. Your family might be in this pristine group if you are descendants of the first settlers.

Am I a Saint?

Today in science I dropped a beaker
The thing flew right out of my hand and hit my teacher
Oh, no I thought
Maybe this was my shot
Maybe I'm not saved after all

Role	Audience	Format	Topic
Native American Artist	Native Americans	A proposed monument	Native Pride
Text Book Writer	Text book readers	One page of a text book that portrays Natives in a positive way.	“What it was really like”
A Native concerned about the future	The general public	A speech	“Indigenous peoples day, really?”
A concerned Native American	The Washington Redskins	A letter	“It is offensive and heres why”

I always require 8 - 10 correct historical facts in a RAFT assignment.

To the Washington NFL team who call themselves The Washington Redskins; as a fellow native american, I can understand and sympathize with those who say that your name and mascot are offensive. Some may disagree and say that your name and mascot only reinforce the fact that people still remember us, which, yes, is a very endearing fact, for I know for a fact that myself and many others certainly do not want to be forgotten. Although we native americans do not want to be forgotten, we also don't want to be portrayed to the public in the way that your name and mascots stereotype us.

Not only is the name itself offensive but the mascots and logos are just as obscene. Fans come from all around cheering on the Indians, dancing around, dressing in hideous costumes, and chanting, portraying the stereotype that we're all fighters and making us only seem obnoxious and stupid. The clothes you have them wearing in these posters and logos and the clothes the mascots and costumes fans wear are clothing nothing like what we truly wore. And we did not chant and dance around obnoxiously as you all continue to do. Our histories may be different but underneath we are all the same.

Found Poetry: A poem is a collection of quotes that the students use to construct answers to a historical question.

A found poem is created from various sources that addresses a theme or a question.

- 1. Create a graphic organizer with your theme or main idea in the center.**
- 2. Collect quotes from various sources (I usually provide the quotes).**
- 3. Use the quotes to write a poem, all writing devices can apply. Found poetry does not have to rhyme!**

I usually require 16 - 20 lines.

Sample poem topics.

“Why did the colonies rebel against England ?”

“Did Lincoln’s views on slavery change over time?”

“Did the abolitionist movement change from 1770 - 1860?”

“Did the Civil Rights Movement change from 1896 - 1970?”

The Thirteenth Amendment is merely a legal distinction
Between the white and colored races.

The Fourteenth Amendment could not enforce
Social equality or commingling.

“We Want Freedom!” we scream.

“We Want Power!” we cry.

“Wait!” they demand.

For justice delayed is justice denied.

The President declared that there shall be equality
For all persons in the armed services.

But I stood on the outside looking in at

Two dozen German Prisoners of War.

“Why are they treated better than we are?” I scream.

“What are we fighting for?” I cry.

“Wait!” they demand.

For justice delayed is justice denied.

The blacks in Africa were talking of freedom

And liberation, thousands of miles away.

All I ask is that you respect me as a human being.

You demand us to be peaceful,

But be peaceful means obey the law

And obey the law means send him to the cemetery.

Must it be the ballot or the bullet?

I declare indifference.

**My ancient faith teaches me
“all men are created equal;”
if the negro is a man
he is entitled to all natural rights
as much as the white man**

but he is not my equal

**I have no purpose to interfere with
the institution of slavery where it exists.
I have no inclination to do so.**

**This government cannot endure
half slave and half free, it
will become all one thing or all the other.
It shall become alike lawful in all the States,
North as well as South.**

**My paramount objective
is to save the Union.**

**If I could save the Union
without freeing any slave
I would do it.**

But we cannot escape history

freedom to the slave assures freedom to the free

**That on this first day of January
in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three
all persons held as slaves
shall be forever free.**

**This nation shall have a new birth of freedom
and the promise being made
must be kept.**

Advantages of Found Poetry

- **Students are working with primary source documents**
- **They learn not to “over quote”**

“Here is a question that each Negro Soldier is asking. What is the Negro soldier fighting for? On whose team are we playing? As you know, Old Man Jim Crow rules.[On a train trip through Arizona] The only place where we could be served was at the lunchroom at the railroad station, but of course, we had to go into the kitchen. But that's not all; 11:30 A.M. about two dozen German Prisoners of War, with two American guards, came into the station. They entered the lunchroom, sat at the tables, had their meals served, talked, smoked, in fact had quite a swell time. I stood on the outside looking in.... why are they treated better then we are?”

“What is the Negro soldier fighting for?”

The Story Chain

Story chains are based on students being able to “predict” or explain a series of events (vocabulary) delivered in sequential order.

Story Chain Example

Vocabulary

Jack

Jill

Hill

Water bucket

Bad accident

Anticipated Story

Advantages of Story Chain

You need a “robust” topic sentence.

Teaches students to not just list definitions (like a bad DBQ).

Students learn to paraphrase or allude to the document.

The Peculiar Institution
Story Chain
APUSH
Edmondson

**Use the following terms to tell the historical story
(narrative).**

You must use more than half of the vocabulary.
You must include one piece of outside information.
You must include a topic sentence.

The Northwest Ordinance
3/5 Compromise
Missouri Compromise
Compromise of 1850
Kansas - Nebraska Act
Dred Scott Decision

The Northwest Ordinance protected civil liberties and outlawed having slavery in the new territories in 1787. That same year the ruling that $\frac{3}{5}$ of slaves were counted towards determining direct taxation. This was called the $\frac{3}{5}$ compromise. In 1820 congress passed a bill that Missouri would become a slave state only if it was forbidden in the rest of the Louisiana purchase. The compromise of 1850 was passed. This meant the newly gained territories of Utah and New Mexico would have popular sovereignty; they could determine their government. This was controversial alongside the Dred Scott decision. The Dred Scott Decision was the supreme court's ruling that if a person of color lived in a free state and territory they were not free because they were still someone's property.

The debate over slavery in America seated a gradually expanding rift between those for it and those against it; compromise only became more difficult until hope for even that was lost. The Missouri Compromise established a precedent for the admittance of new states as slave or free, and with this, was able to bridge the gap of this debate.

But new acquisition of land in the Mexican Cession finally brought slavery back to the forefront of American politics, and stress was renewed between free and slave advocates. However, the passing of the Kansas-Nebraska act broke this precedent and worked to increase the tensions, as it left the possibility of slave states above the 36-30 latitude. This momentum carried into the Dred Scott decision, where the courts ruled that slavery could go anywhere, as slaves were property. All prior aspects of compromise between the two parties were undermined, and in this, the peculiar institution of slavery and the divide it created was unshackled, and would eventually see the end of the Union between North and South.

Sample Topic Sentences :

- 1. The Northwest Ordinance protected civil liberties and outlawed having slavery in the new territories in 1787.**
- 2. The debate over slavery in America created a gradually expanding rift between those for it and those against it; compromise only became more difficult until hope for even that was lost.**
- 3. During the period between 1820 and 1857, the question of whether or not slavery should be permitted in certain territories was a highly debated and heated issue in America.**

1. The Dred Scott Decision was the supreme court's ruling that if a person of color lived in a free state and territory they were not because they were still someone's property.

2. “momentum carried into the Dred Scott decision, where the courts ruled that slavery could go anywhere, as slaves were property.”

3 .Dred Scott was an African-American slave who lived in a free state, and he longed to be a U.S. citizen; however, the U.S. Supreme Court thought otherwise. In fact, in the Dred Scott case, the Supreme Court ruled that Scott was not entitled to freedom, and that African-Americans could never be true U.S. citizens. The Missouri Compromise of 1820 also comes back into play here, as the Supreme Court announces that the compromise was unconstitutional.

Sample Story Chain Lists

President George Washington

Jay's Treaty

Washington declares Neutrality

Hamilton's Financial Plan

Citizen Edmund Genet

Washington's Farewell Address

President John Adams

Quasi War with France

XYZ Affair

Alien and Sedition Acts

Election of 1920

Red Scare

Emergency Immigration Quota Act

Prohibition

McNary - Haugen Bill

Henry Ford

Buying on Margin

"Wall Street Lays an Egg"

Howley - Smoot Tariff

Questions?

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