



# Historical Nonfiction Children of the Dust Bowl

# Sarah Collinge

with Bethany Robinson



Seattle, Washington Portland, Oregon Denver, Colorado Vancouver, B.C. Scottsdale, Arizona Minneapolis, Minnesota Copyright © 2014 by Read Side by Side

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#### Welcome to the C. I. A. Unit of Study for the book *Children of the Dust Bowl: The True Story of the School at Weedpatch Camp* by Jerry Stanley

This unit of study was put together for the purpose of teaching students how to read longer, more complex text. Unfortunately, in classrooms where only basal readers are used, many students do not learn how to make the transition from picture books, to series books, to more complex chapter books. As a result, students struggle during independent reading. This unit of study will teach students the fundamental processes of reading text, specifically longer, more complex chapter books. It follows an approach described in its companion text, *Raising the Standards through Chapter Books: The C. I. A. Approach.* I hope you enjoy guiding your students through the authentic work of expert readers!

*Children of the Dust Bowl* is one of many photo essays written by Jerry Stanley. This historical nonfiction text tells the story of the Okie migration from the Southern Plains to California between 1935 and 1940. Students will read about the hardships this group of people endured and come to understand the pride of the Okies and their determination to accept hardship without showing weakness. *Children of the Dust Bowl* also highlights the inspiring story of Leo Hart, the man who helped the Okie children build their own school.

This unit of study connects well to the previous unit, 6.1, *The Westing Game*. Students will draw upon their understanding of the American Dream.

Jerry Stanley blends the chronological story of the Okies with photographs and interviews that document the migrants' shocking circumstances. You and your students will become emotionally engaged by the text as you learn about the realities of the poverty and injustice the Okies faced.

*Children of the Dust Bowl* is a challenging text for sixth-graders because it demands a great deal of background knowledge about this time in history. The first several lessons in this unit will give students an opportunity to expand their background knowledge on the topic of the Great Depression. Throughout the unit of study, students will view the PBS documentary, *American Experience: Surviving the Dust Bowl* (2007). (To support these lessons, you will need to purchase or download this video from the PBS website.) In addition, students will read various supporting articles about the people and events of this time period. Students will take time to study the photographer Dorothea Lange and consider how her photograph "Migrant Mother" has become an American icon.

Notes taken from multiple sources throughout the unit of study will support a formal writing piece that students will write at the conclusion of the unit. This formal writing piece will explain the geographic and economic challenges the Okies faced, and will also highlight the strength of this group of people.

Included at the back of this unit is a section titled "Supplementary Materials for Social Studies Connections." Here I make suggestions for additional related projects and lessons that might be conducted during your content area literacy block while teaching this unit. If time allows, I highly recommend participating in some or all of these activities or using your own resources to further students' understanding.

Finally, this unit of study is also designed to teach students the features of historical nonfiction and familiarize them with the text structure of a photo essay. They will learn the importance of recognizing cause and effect relationships and consider how the message in *Children of the Dust Bowl* has significance for and influence on our lives today.

Throughout this unit, it will be important to keep charts easy to read, colorful, and displayed on the classroom wall, as they will be used often for referencing and for monitoring comprehension. I suggest having a United States history timeline displayed somewhere in your classroom. Mark historical events already covered in your school-wide social studies curriculum on the timeline, along with the events of the Great Depression. This offers students a visual representation of the relationship between events throughout history. I have used the U.S. History Timeline Topper Bulletin Board Set found at Mark Twain Media Publishing Company (#CD 1921).

I know you will enjoy immersing yourself in this beautiful book. Remember, the purpose is to bring history alive for your students by letting them see history through the eyes of the people who experienced it. Use all the resources available to you to help students visualize and understand this time period. For them, the experience will be memorable!

Before starting this unit of study with your students, you will want to read and label a copy of the book *Children of the Dust Bowl*, to be used as a teacher guide. You will also want to acquire a class set of books for students to use during read-aloud. Take time to get to know the scope and sequence, and input lessons into your plan book ahead of time. Plan for social studies connections in your content area literacy block.

At the back of this unit you will find a vocabulary handbook. Please print a copy of this handbook for each student. It will be used almost daily and is an essential component of this unit of study.

If this is your first time teaching a C. I. A. unit, you will want to first familiarize yourself with the C. I. A. approach. You will then need to lay the groundwork for optimizing your success with this unit in your classroom by:

- Designating a reading block in your daily schedule
- Setting up a meeting area
- Planning for turn and talk
- Preparing reader's notebooks
- Preparing for assessment

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# *Children of the Dust Bowl* Unit of Study— Distribution of Standards

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Distribution of Common Core State Standards, C. I. A. Unit of Study: Historical Nonfiction, Children of the Dust Bowl 6.2

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# Children of the Dust Bowl Text Complexity

#### **QUALITATIVE MEASURES**

#### Levels of Meaning

Multiple themes throughout the book increase the challenge for readers of this text. Themes include but are not limited to culture, overcoming hardships, the spirit of optimism, and the historical importance of how a group of people lived in past times.

#### Structure

The narrative of this informational text is told in sequential order, with a detailed focus on Leo Hart's involvement with the Okies. Photos, maps, and interviews that the author showcases in the book add depth to the story. Cause and effect relationships contribute to the overall structure of this text.

#### Language Conventionality and Clarity

Historical language adds depth to the language of this text. In addition, vocabulary used throughout the text is advanced vocabulary for sixth-grade students.

#### **Knowledge Demands**

Students will need to have a great deal of background knowledge about American history in the time period around the Great Depression.

#### **QUANTITATIVE MEASURES**

The Lexile level for *Children of the Dust Bowl* is 1120, based on word frequency and sentence length. This is in the high range of the complexity band for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade according to the Common Core State Standards.

#### **READER TASK CONSIDERATIONS**

These should be determined locally with reference to motivation, knowledge, and experiences as well as to the purpose and complexity of the tasks assigned and the questions posed.

#### DAY 3, CHARACTER—INTRODUCTION (PP. 1-2) & AUTHOR'S NOTE

#### **Mini-Lesson**

Vocabulary Routine: *migrants* (L 4, 5)

The base word 'migrant' means *a person that moves from one region, place, or country to another.* The suffix 's' makes this word plural.

## **Instructional Read-Aloud**

**In this section of the text...** the author gives information he believes is necessary for the reader to know prior to reading the story. The introduction summarizes some of the important events from the time period of the 1930s and includes information about John Steinbeck and his famous book *The Grapes of Wrath*.

**In this lesson...**you will be modeling how readers focus on important characters in the text. You will demonstrate how readers keep track of important characters as they read.

## Learning Targets:

Read closely to monitor comprehension (RI 1)

- Visualize
- Infer

Show understanding of important story elements (RI 3)

• Character

Understand text structure (RI 5)

• Introduction

Gather and categorize information through note taking (W 8)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

#### **Connect:**

We have been learning...

... that good readers generate questions from the text features in order to set a purpose for reading.

# Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

...that good readers gather important information about characters as they read. When reading historical nonfiction, you can expect those characters to be real people who lived during that time in history.

Today we will be using the author's note and the introduction to help us recognize the important groups of people and key players in our text and gather important information about them.

Watch me as I model how I locate important information about the groups of people and key players in our text.

Today we will be using this stem for turn and talk: When the book said \_\_\_\_\_, I thought this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This helps me understand \_\_\_\_\_.

Open up your reader's notebooks to two clean pages. Title these pages **Character List**. This is where we will be keeping track of the important groups of people and key players in our text, as well as details about them.

Begin reading the introduction on page 1.

## Model:

**Stop after:** "...and orchards of the San Joaquin Valley." (p. 1)

When the book said that there was a group of people in California in the 1930s who called themselves Okies, I thought this was important because the Okies were the people who moved to California from Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, and Missouri during the 1930s. This helps me understand that we will be reading about what their life was like during that time period.

(Model adding this group of people to the character list, and details about them.)

# **Guided Practice:**

**Stop after:** "They were called 'dumb Okies' by the Californians." (p. 1)

What other details did you learn about the group of people who called themselves Okies?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem: When the book said \_\_\_\_\_, I thought this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This helps me understand \_\_\_\_\_.

(Model adding these details to the character list.)

Another important group of people was introduced in this section, the Californians.

Discuss: What details did you learn about this group of people?

(Model adding this group of people to the character list, and details about them.)

#### Model:

**Stop after:** "Steinbeck called this, 'a crime that goes beyond denunciation.' " (p. 1)

This is the second reference to the newspaper reporter named John Steinbeck.

When the book said John Steinbeck visited the Okies in a farm-labor camp and was upset by the starving and sickness that he saw there, **I thought this was important because** now I know that John Steinbeck will be a key player in this book because he spent time with the Okies. **This helps me understand** that he had compassion for them.

(Model adding this key player to the character list, and details about him.)

# **Guided Practice:**

**Stop after:** "Today, many teachers at universities call *The Grapes of Wrath* the greatest American novel ever written." (p. 2)

What other details did you learn about John Steinbeck?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem: When the book said \_\_\_\_\_, I thought this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This helps me understand \_\_\_\_\_.

(Model adding these details to the character list.)

# **Guided Practice:**

**Stop after:** "One hundred twelve people were waiting to read it at the time." (p. 2)

We learned more about the Californians in this section of the text. What details did you learn about the Californians?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem: When the book said \_\_\_\_\_, I thought this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This helps me understand \_\_\_\_\_.

(Model adding these details to the character list.)

# Stretch It:

The author's note right before the introduction of this book tells about the term "Okie." Please turn to that page in your book and follow along with me as I read.

**Stop after:** "...a determination to accept hardship without showing weakness."

Discuss: In the author's note, what important information do you learn about the Okies?

(Model adding these details to the character list.)

# Link:

*Today and every day when you read...* ...I want you to gather important information about characters as you read. The following list is an example of what your co-created list *might* look like:



#### DAY 5, CAUSE AND EFFECT WRITING

#### **Mini-Lesson**

In this lesson...students will be synthesizing the causes and effects of the stock market crash of 1929 in writing.

## Learning Targets:

Explain author's use of reasons and evidence (RI 8)

Write an informational/explanatory piece (W 2)

• Cause and effect

Write clearly and coherently according to task (W 4)

Recall and gather evidence from the text (W 8, 9)

Write within a short time period (W 10)

Acquire and use key vocabulary (L 6)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

#### **Connect:**

We have been learning...

...that good readers gather important information from outside texts. We have also been learning that good readers think about the effects of an event on people and society.

# Teach:

*Today I am going to teach you...* ... that good readers stop to synthesize their thinking in writing.

Today you will each be writing a short piece that describes the causes and effects of the stock market crash in the United States in 1929.

Please open up your reader's notebooks to your copies of our important events list. You will be using a cause and effect frame to help you organize information from this chart into well-structured paragraphs. Remember, you will want to put the information in your own words, adding some details about each item.

Now turn to a clean page and title it **Cause and Effect Writing**. This is a piece of writing that will be graded. Therefore, you will want to do your best work, making sure your writing looks like sixth-grade writing.

#### Introduce the Cause and Effect Frame.

# Scaffold:

(Depending on your students' levels of readiness, you will need to decide whether the assignment will be done as:

- Shared writing—written as a group on chart paper or a document camera while students copy this writing into their reader's notebooks.
- Guided writing—started as a group on chart paper or a document camera and then released to be completed collaboratively or independently.
- Collaborative writing—each student works collaboratively with a partner, but is responsible for his or her own writing.
- Independent writing—completed by the student with limited or no guidance.)

## Share-out:

(Have students share their writing with their partners or the class. Partners or classmates should respond to student writing using the stem:

I agree with you because \_\_\_\_\_, OR I disagree with you because \_\_\_\_\_.)

# Cause and Effect Frame

Introduction	was caused by
	The effects of the
	(These sentences should tell the major events and the cause and effect rela- tionship between these events.)
Body	Describe several results of the one major event. Include <b>some</b> detail.
	Use transition words such as: First, next, then, finally, First, next, after that, in the end, In the beginning, then, after that, finally,
Conclusion	Describe your thinking about the causes and effects of the major event. Use concluding words such as:
	In conclusion, All in all,
	As you can see, It is true,
	I is truc, I am thinking, I predict,

Adapted from Step Up to Writing Curriculum (Auman, 2010)

## Cause and Effect Writing (Student Sample):

The U.S. stock market crash of 1929 was caused by a large number of stock market investors who all began selling shares at once. Suddenly the value of stocks dropped dramatically. The effects of the stock market crash were disastrous. Banks failed, people lost all of their life savings, and millions of Americans became unemployed.

First, between 1925 and 1929, the values of stocks were on the rise. Many Americans invested in stocks. Some people borrowed money from the bank in order to invest in stocks. In 1929, the total value of the stock exchange was \$27 billion.

What happened next was a massive sell-a-thon. On October 24, 1929, many investors began selling their shares all at once. The value of the stock market dropped. This day is known as "Black Thursday."

Next began a series of events that created a major economic depression in the United States. When the stock market crashed, people could not pay back their loans. That caused banks to fail and close. As a result, people lost their entire life savings.

After that, people stopped spending money, and businesses were forced to lay off workers. Millions of Americans became unemployed. By 1932, 12 million Americans were unemployed. This time of unemployment and poverty lasted 10 long years and is known as the Great Depression.

As you can see, the effects of the stock market crash were disastrous. The Great Depression was a time when millions of Americans were unemployed and starving.

#### DAY 11, OUTSIDE TEXT

#### **Mini-Lesson**

Vocabulary Routine: despair (L 4, 5) The root 'spair/sper' means *hope*. The prefix 'de' means *opposite of*.

# **Instructional Read-Aloud**

Video: *Surviving the Dust Bowl* (PBS, 2007) Viewed on March 27, 2014, at http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/dustbowl/player/.

Also available on DVD: PBS. (2007). *Surviving the Dust Bowl* [film]. Steward/Gazit Productions, Inc., for PBS American Experience.

Transcript retrieved March 27, 2014, from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/transcript/dustbowl-transcript/.

**This video tells about...**the drought in the Southern Plains in the 1930s and the dust storms that occurred as a result. Firsthand accounts of this time period, as well as pictures and video, make this documentary unforgettable.

In this lesson...you be modeling how readers focus on gathering important information from the documentary. You will teach students that sometimes readers use outside sources to help them build background knowledge about a topic and gain understanding of the author's message.

Prior to teaching this lesson, you will want to make sure each student has a copy of the first eight pages of the transcript of *Surviving the Dust Bowl*.

# Learning Targets:

Read closely to monitor comprehension (RI 1)

• Predict

Determine central ideas or themes (RI 2)

Show understanding of important story elements (RI 3)

• Plot

Integrate content presented in diverse media formats (RI 7)

Analyze how two texts address similar topics (RI 9)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

## **Connect:**

We have been learning...

... that good readers use outside sources to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

## Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

... that good readers continue to use outside sources to gain a deeper understanding of the topic.

Today we will be watching the next segment of the documentary titled *Surviving the Dust Bowl*. As we view this documentary, we will be recognizing the important events that happened between 1931 and 1935 and considering the effects these events had on the economy of this region—the wealth and resources of the region.

You will be using the transcript of the documentary to help you recognize important events. Today, as we watch the documentary, watch me as I model recognizing important events and highlighting those events in the transcript.

Notice how I consider the effects these events had on the wealth and resources of this region.

Today we will be using this stem for turn and talk:

When the video said \_\_\_\_\_, I was thinking this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This makes me think \_\_\_\_\_.

Play the video *Surviving the Dust Bowl*, starting at 12:50 online or 14:45 on the DVD. You will be starting where Judge Wilson Cowen of Dalhart, Texas, says, "The farmhouses looked terrible—the dust was deposited clear up to the window sills of the farmhouses, clear up to the window sills."

# Model:

**Stop after:** "But she realized how Dad was havin' to work, what little he was makin', and we'as about to starve to death." (19:08 online, 21:03 DVD)

Melt White, in this section of the documentary, is talking about the effects of the dust storms on her family's prosperity.

When the video said that farmers had three years of planting with little to show for it, I was thinking this was important because it tells me that the farmers who lived in the Dust Bowl region during this time experienced a time of very little income. This makes me think that the farmers and their families had very little money to live on.

Let's highlight this part of our transcript.

(Model highlighting the words "For farmers it was going on three years of planting with little to show for it.")

When the video said Melt's mother would cry over the condition her family was in, I was thinking this was important because it tells me that the families were struggling to survive. As it said in the video, families were "about to starve to death." This makes me think that the situation was so bad that families were losing hope.

Let's highlight this part of our transcript.

(Model highlighting the words "Dad was havin' to work, what little he was mak'in, and we'as about to starve to death.")

# **Guided Practice:**

II.

**Stop after:** "Piece by piece, farmers were losing everything they cherished." (21:22 online, 23:16 DVD)

In this section of the documentary, Imogene Glover talks about the meager amount of food they had at that time. Let's highlight this part of our transcript.

(Model highlighting the words "We had meager food at that time. Everyone did. And we lived literally on cornbread and beans.")

The narrator says, "Piece by piece, farmers were losing everything they cherished." Let's highlight this part of our transcript.

Why is this event important, and what does it make you think?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem: When the video said \_\_\_\_\_, I was thinking this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This makes me think \_\_\_\_\_.

Resume playing the video *Surviving the Dust Bowl* starting at 25:51 online or 27:47 on the DVD, where the narrator says, "April 14, 1935, was the worst day of them all."

# **Guided Practice:**

 $\overline{\mathcal{A}}$ 

**Stop after:** "Living on the plains was becoming an act of sheer will." (29:34 online, 31:27 DVD)

In this section of the documentary, we learned about the worst dust storm—on the day now known as Black Sunday. Let's highlight this part of our transcript.

(Model highlighting "April 14, 1935" and the words "Black Sunday.")

We learned that this was a time when the wind blew for 27 days and nights. Let's highlight this part of our transcript.

(Model highlighting the words "In the spring of 1935, the wind blew 27 days and nights without quittin'.")

The narrator tells us in this section of the documentary that, "Living on the Plains was becoming an act of sheer will." This means the farmers had to fix their minds on nothing else but survival. They could not let despair overtake them. Let's highlight this part of our transcript.

(Model highlighting the words "Living on the Plains was becoming an act of sheer will.")

Why is this event important, and what does it make you think?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem: When the video said \_\_\_\_\_, I was thinking this was important because \_\_\_\_\_. This makes me think \_\_\_\_\_.

## Stretch It:

**Stop after:** "Throughout the country, word spread of a mass exodus from the Plains. In all, a quarter of the population would flee the region." (35:03 online, 36:58 DVD)

In this section of the documentary we learned that many farmers left the Dust Bowl region to travel west, hoping to get a farm job in California. Let's highlight this part of our transcript.

(Model highlighting the words "Dust Bowlers watched as their neighbors and friends picked up and headed west in search of farm jobs in California.")

Discuss: What were the economic factors that let to the migration of the Okies to California?

## Link:

Today and every day when you read...

...I want you to consider how information in outside sources might help you understand the topic of a text better.

#### DAY 12, NOTE TAKING FROM MULTIPLE SOURCES

#### **Mini-Lesson**

In this lesson...students will be taking notes from multiple sources in order to prepare for a formal writing project at the end of this unit of study.

## Learning Targets:

Show understanding of story elements (RI 3)

- Character
- Setting
- Plot

Recognize main idea and details (RI 2)

Explain author's use of reasons and evidence (RI 8)

Integrate texts on one topic (RI 9)

Recall information and draw evidence from the text (W 8, 9)

Acquire and use key vocabulary (L 6)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

#### **Connect:**

We have been learning...

...that good readers use outside sources to gain a deeper understanding of the topic. We have been learning about the reasons why the Okies migrated to California. We have considered both the geographic and economic factors that led to their decision to move.

# Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

... that good readers gather notes from multiple sources in order to prepare for formal writing.

At the conclusion of this unit of study, each of you will be writing a research paper outlining the reasons why the Okies migrated to California. You will include both geographical and economic reasons in your research paper.

Today, you will begin gathering research notes to use for this piece of writing.

Open up to a clean page in your reader's notebooks. At the top of the page please write, "Why did the Okies migrate to California?" Below this question, draw a T-chart. On the left side of the T-chart write "Geographical Factors" and on the right side of the T-chart write "Economic Factors."

Today you will be rereading the transcript from the documentary *Surviving the Dust Bowl* and recording facts that support the geographic reasons and economic reasons for the Okie migration. Label this section of your notes "<u>Surviving the Dust Bowl</u>."

Next, you will reread chapter 1 of *Children of the Dust Bowl*, recording facts that support the geographic reasons and economic reasons for the Okie migration. Label this section of your notes "<u>Children of the Dust Bowl</u>."

Remember, if you use a direct quote from the transcript you will need to reference it in your notes. When writing a direct quote you will need to use quotation marks and reference the author and the page number where the quote was found.

This note-taking sheet will be a tool that will help you prepare the first draft of your formal writing piece at the end of this unit of study. Therefore, you will want to do your best work, making sure your writing looks like sixth-grade writing.

# Scaffold:

(Depending on your students' levels of readiness, you will need to decide whether the assignment will be done as:

- Collaborative writing—each student works collaboratively with a partner, but is responsible for his or her own writing.
- Independent writing—completed by the student with limited or no guidance.)

## Share-out:

(Have students share their notes with their partners or the class. Partners or classmates should respond to students' notes by using the stem:

I agree with you because \_\_\_\_\_, OR I disagree with you because \_\_\_\_\_.) The following list is an example of what each student's list *might* look like:

why did the O California?	kies migrate to Burniving the Dust Bowl
Geographical Factors	Economic Factors
<ul> <li>People came to the Southern Plains in the early 1900s</li> <li>and abused the</li> <li>land by plowing</li> <li>up the plains.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Farmers in the Southern Plains</li> <li>could not make a</li> <li>living by farming</li> <li>because of the</li> <li>drought and dust</li> <li>storms.</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>In 1931 it stopped raining and the crops withered in the fields.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Families were starving to death.</li> <li>Farmers were forced</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Dirt storms blew</li> <li>away the topsoil</li> <li>making farming</li> <li>impossible.</li> </ul>	to look for work in California.

# Why did the Okies migrate to California? <u>Children of the Dust Bawl</u>

	Geographical Factors	Economic Factors
	FUCIDIS	FUCIDIS
٠	In 1931 it	• "By 1932 one
	stopped raining	thousand families
	and the crops	a week in Texas,
	failed.	Oklahoma, and
		Arkansas were
٠	Winds blew from	losing their farms
	1936 to 1940 and	to the banks." p.3
	took away the	1
	topsoil.	· People lived on
	1	biscuits, beans,
٠	Farming was	and fried jack
	Farming was impossible.	rabbits.
		· "The Okies were
		broke Hoen unere
		without land, and they were hungry."
		they were hunary."
		p.10
		1

#### DAY 15, NOTE TAKING—CHAPTERS 3-4, PP. 22-39

#### **Mini-Lesson**

Vocabulary Routine: *squalor* (L 4, 5) The root 'squal' means *to be dirty*. The suffix 'or' makes this word a noun.

#### **Mini-Lesson**

In this lesson...students will be taking notes to prepare for a formal writing project at the end of this unit of study.

# Learning Targets:

Show understanding of story elements (RI 3)

- Character
- Setting
- Plot

Recognize main idea and details (RI 2)

Recall information and draw evidence from the text (W 8, 9)

Acquire and use key vocabulary (L 6)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

## **Connect:**

We have been learning...

... that good readers show empathy for groups of people in order to understand the people and their circumstances better.

# Teach:

*Today I am going to teach you...* ...that good readers gather notes in order to prepare for formal writing.

At the conclusion of this unit of study, each of you will be writing a research paper outlining the reasons why the Okies migrated to California. You will include both geographical and economic reasons in your research paper. You will also discuss the hardships the Okies faced once they arrived in California.

Today, you will continue to gather research notes for this piece of writing.

Open up to a clean page in your reader's notebooks. At the top of the page please write **Hard-ships**. As you reread chapters 3–4, you will be recording a list of hardships the Okies faced once they arrived in California.

Remember, if you use a direct quote from the text, you need to demonstrate that it is a direct quote by putting quotation marks around it, and you must also give reference to the page number on which the quote was found.

This note-taking sheet will be a tool that will help you prepare the first draft of your formal writing piece at the end of this unit of study. Therefore, you will want to do your best work, making sure your writing looks like sixth-grade writing.

# Scaffold:

(Depending on your students' levels of readiness, you will need to decide whether the assignment will be done as:

- Collaborative writing—each student works collaboratively with a partner, but is responsible for his or her own writing.
- Independent writing—completed by the student with limited or no guidance.)

# Share-out:

(Have students share their notes with their partners or the class. Partners or classmates should respond to students' notes by using the stem:

I agree with you because \_\_\_\_\_, OR I disagree with you because \_\_\_\_\_.) The following list is an example of what each student's list *might* look like:



#### DAY 19, LINE OF THINKING

## Mini-Lesson

**In this lesson...**you will be modeling and guiding students toward ways of thinking about possible themes emerging in this book. Readers choose a theme to focus on at the end of the second quadrant. A theme can be described as a big idea that continues to surface in the story, or a message that the author is trying to convey to the reader. In this mini-lesson, students will be reflecting on the first two quadrants of the book in order to consider what the author is trying to tell the reader. You will help students brainstorm several themes emerging in the book.

# Learning Targets:

Determine central ideas or themes (RI 2)

Gather and categorize information through note taking (W 8)

Draw evidence from the text (W 9)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

#### Connect:

We have been learning...

... that good readers synthesize their thinking through writing.

# Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

...that good readers, when they reach the end of the second quadrant, stop to name a line of thinking and gather evidence from the text to support it.

A line of thinking is a theory about what the author is trying to tell the reader. A line of thinking is something the reader focuses on as he or she reads the second half of the book. When readers select a line of thinking, they think about what they know about the genre. While reading historical nonfiction, readers think about how the circumstances of the time period impacted and shaped the lives of the characters.

Watch me as I model how I think about what the author is trying to tell me in this book.

Notice how I think about how the hardships the Okies faced impacted their lives.

Today we will be using this stem for turn and talk: When the book said \_\_\_\_\_, I thought this was important. The author might be telling me \_\_\_\_\_

Please open your books to the map titled "Route 66, 'Mother Road' " found on pages 14 and 15.

# Model:

The Okies experienced many hardships including drought, dust storms, starvation, poverty, and death. Many families lost their homes and were displaced. Thousands of farmers left the Panhandle in search of jobs in California. On page 15 we learn that the Okies remembered, "every hardship and every happy moment."

When the book said, "they remembered every hardship and every happy moment" I thought this was important. The author might be telling me that the Okies stayed positive even during times of hardship.

Discuss: Do you agree or disagree with my thinking?

# **Guided Practice:**

When the Okies arrived in California, they discovered that there were too many workers and not enough jobs. The Okies lived in squatter camps and suffered terrible hardships. The Californians were hostile to the Okies.

Please turn to page 39. Follow along with me as I read at the bottom of the page.

"...like their parents, the Okie children drew strength from one another. They were tough and they believed they could be as good as anyone else if they were just given a chance." (p. 39)

What is important here, and how is it helping you think about the author's message?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem: When the book said \_\_\_\_\_, I thought this was important. The author might be telling me

# **Guided Practice:**

When readers select a line of thinking, they also think about ideas that have repeated over and over again in the book.

Please turn in your books to the author's note. Follow along with me as I read.

"The term 'Okie' is used in this book as the Okies used it in the 1930s and still do today. Although used by others as a term of abuse, to the Okies themselves it meant pride, courage, and a determination to accept hardship without showing weakness."

This idea of accepting hardship without showing weakness has been a repetitive theme throughout the first half of the book *Children of the Dust Bowl*.

What is important here, and how is it helping you think about the author's message?

Turn and talk to your partners using this stem: When the book said \_\_\_\_\_, I thought this was important. The author might be telling me
# Model:

Please open your reader's notebooks to a clean page and title it **Evidence Collection Box.** This is where you will be keeping track of evidence to support our line of thinking. Below the title write, "Line of Thinking: The Okies were determined to accept hardship without showing weakness."

Now draw a large box on this page. You will use this box as a place to keep track of evidence that supports our line of thinking.

We already have some evidence to support our line of thinking. On page 15 we learned that the Okies remembered every hardship and every happy moment.

(Model adding this evidence to the evidence collection box.)

# Stretch It:

What other evidence do we have from the text that supports this line of thinking?

(Model adding this evidence to the evidence collection box.)

\*Give students time to work with their partners to add evidence from quadrants 1 and 2 to the evidence collection box.

### Link:

Today and every day when you read...

...I want you to identify a line of thinking and gather evidence to support that line of thinking as you read.

The following chart is an example of what your co-created chart *might* look like:

Evidence Collection Box Line of Thinking: The Okies were determined to accept hardship without showing weakness. They remembered every hardship and every happy moment. (p.15) They did whatever it took to survive even if it meant camping along the road, working add jobs for gas money, or eating coffee grounds. (pp.17-18) They stayed hopeful. (p.20) They worked hard to provide for their families. (p.30) The Okies were proud of the hardships they endured. (p.37) They drew strength from one another. (p. 39)

#### DAY 24, SYNTHESIS SUMMARY WRITING

### Mini-Lesson

**In this lesson...**students will synthesize *Children of the Dust Bowl* in the form of a written summary. Summarizing is more rigorous here than at the end of quadrant 1, as students are being asked to synthesize a much larger portion of text. Students will use a frame very similar to the retell summary frame. This frame requires students to retell only the most important events and limit the amount of detail used to describe these events. When summarizing the entire book, it is important to include the most important event—the turning point. Students should be expected to produce quality work.

# Learning Targets:

Determine theme and summarize text (RI 2)

• Synthesis summary

Write an expository piece (W 2)

• Synthesis summary

Write clearly and coherently for task and audience (W 4)

Recall information and draw evidence from the text (W 8, 9)

Write in a short time period (W 10)

Acquire and use key vocabulary (L 6)

Convey ideas precisely using appropriate vocabulary (L 3, 6)

Engage in collaborative discussion (SL 1, 2, 4, 6)

### **Connect:**

We have been learning...

...that good readers write in order to monitor their comprehension while reading and get to deeper thinking.

# Teach:

#### Today I am going to teach you...

...that good readers summarize in order to synthesize what they have read and check for understanding. When you synthesize information, you combine all of your thinking to help you understand the book better.

Today you will be using the synthesis summary frame to help you write a summary of the whole book. You are going to be very careful to include only the most important events.

You have each already written a retell summary of the first quadrant of the book. You have also collected a great deal of information in your reader's notebooks. Today you will be using that previous work to help you with your synthesis summaries.

Open up your reader's notebooks and title a clean page **Synthesis Summary**. This is a piece of writing that will be graded. You will want to do your best work, making sure your writing looks like sixth-grade writing.

#### Introduce the Synthesis Summary Frame.

# Scaffold:

(Depending on your students' levels of readiness, you will need to decide whether the assignment will be done as:

- Collaborative writing—each student works collaboratively with a partner, but is responsible for his or her own writing.
- Independent writing—completed by the student with limited or no guidance.)

## Share-out:

(Have students share their writing with their partners or the class. Partners or classmates should respond to student writing using the stem:

I agree with you because \_\_\_\_\_, OR I disagree with you because \_\_\_\_\_.)

# Synthesis Summary Frame

Introduction	The book by tells
	The introduction should broadly tell what the whole book is about and include reference to the author's message.
Body	Tell all of the <b>most</b> important events from the book. Include <b>limited</b> detail. Make sure the turning point is included in your summary. Use transition words such as: <i>First, next, then, finally,</i> <i>First, next, after that, in the end,</i> <i>In the beginning, then, after that, finally,</i>
Conclusion	Your conclusion will reveal the author's message. Use concluding words such as: In conclusion, All in all, As you can see, It is true, I am thinking, I predict,

Adapted from Step Up to Writing Curriculum (Auman, 2010)

### Synthesis Summary (Student Sample):

The book *Children of the Dust Bowl* by Jerry Stanley tells about the hardships the Okies faced as they were forced to migrate to California in the 1930s to find work. The Okies showed a determination to accept hardship without showing weakness.

In 1931 it stopped raining in the Panhandle. The farmers on the Southern Plains plowed up the land to plant wheat. When the drought began, the wheat withered in the field. Then, from 1936 to 1940 dust storms blew away the topsoil, making farming impossible. What had once been a bountiful land was now a barren wasteland. One million people left the Panhandle to seek work in California.

When the Okies arrived in California they discovered that there were more people than there were jobs. The surplus of people to work on the farms drove wages down. "Most Okie laborers couldn't find work for a nickel a day" (Stanley, p. 24). The Okies became squatters living in tents and shacks. They lived like animals. At the same time, the Californians were hostile to the Okies and hoped that the Okies would go back to where they came from.

Finally, Leo Hart, the head counselor at Kern County High School, felt compassion for the Okie children. He believed Okies should be given the same opportunities as others. When he became superintendent, he decided to build the Okies their own school. He hired the best teachers and received donations for the school.

In the end, the Okie children felt proud to build their own school. They welcomed hard work and were determined to learn. They changed their fate and were finally happy and hopeful.

As you can see, the Okies experienced many hardships including homelessness, starvation, sickness, and prejudice. But the Okies stayed hopeful and were determined to overcome their hardships.

#### DAYS 27-33, FORMAL WRITING: EXPOSITORY WRITING

### **Mini-Lessons**

**In these lessons...**your students will be practicing expository writing. Students will continue to work on a formal writing project that requires them to go through all phases of the writing process. You will need to use your own resources for teaching revision, editing, and publishing. You will need at least six days for this project.

Suggested Lesson Sequence:

- Day 1 Draft
- Day 2 Continue drafting
- Day 3 Revise
- Day 4 Edit and begin publishing
- Day 5 Continue publishing
- Day 6 Share

### Learning Targets:

Write an expository piece (W 2)

Write clearly and coherently for task and audience (W 4)

Practice all stages of the writing process, including publishing (W 5, 6)

Investigate different aspects of one topic (W 7)

Recall information and experiences to build and present knowledge (W 8, 9)

Write for an extended period of time (W 10)

Acquire and use key vocabulary (L 6)

Present ideas (SL 4, 5, 6)

#### Connect:

We have been learning...

...that good readers write in order to monitor their comprehension while reading and get to deeper thinking. We have also learned that readers write in order to synthesize and reflect on their thinking.

# Teach:

Today I am going to teach you...

...that good readers write in order to share their thinking about a book. Today we will be starting the first draft of your formal writing project.

Remember, for our formal writing, we will go through all stages of the writing process:

- Researching
- Drafting
- Revising
- Editing
- Publishing
- Sharing

Please take out your draft sheets. You have recorded all of the notes for this project, with the exception of the notes for your conclusion paragraph.

Explicitly state your expectations for drafting this formal writing piece. Make sure students understand that they will be expanding on their notes by including evidence and quotes from the texts.

Note: You will need to plan lessons for revising, editing, and publishing.

## Share-out:

(After students complete their published writing, have them share their literary essays with partners or the class. If this were set up as a formal presentation with media support, this activity would meet the requirements of SL 5.)

### Formal Writing (Student Sample): The Okie Migration, 1935 through 1940

What was the largest migration in U.S. history? Between 1935 and 1940 one million people, commonly referred to as Okies, moved from the Panhandle to California. Geographic factors and economic factors led to this large movement of people. Drought and severe dust storms in the Panhandle made farming impossible. Farmers and their families suffered from poverty and displacement. Despite these challenges, the Okies were determined to accept hardship without showing weakness. Instead of giving up, the Okies remained hopeful and worked hard to change their fate.

In 1931 it stopped raining in the Panhandle. The crops began withering in the fields. Then, the winds came and stripped away all of the topsoil, making farming impossible. What was once abundant farmland now was a barren wasteland. Despite these geographic challenges, farmers continued to work in the fields. They believed that the rain would come. But the drought continued from 1931 to 1940. People tried to protect themselves from the mean dust clouds. They taped the cracks around doors and windows, slept with washcloths over their faces, and wore dust masks to school. Every morning the people had to clean their houses and children had to clean the dust out of the animals' noses. They accepted that this was what life was all about, and continued to work hard to survive.

The drought and dust storms caused economic hardship for the people living in the Panhandle. Farmers could no longer make a living growing and selling crops. The drought and dust storms had made farming impossible. Most farmers had borrowed money from the bank for their farms, and now they could not pay the bank. "When a farmer couldn't pay the bank, a tractor was sent to knock down his farmhouse as a way of forcing him to leave the land" (Stanley, p. 10). Thousands of farmers were displaced. In spite of these economic challenges, the Okies remained proud. They didn't want to take help from the government because they felt it was a disgrace to accept charity. They didn't call themselves poor. They remained hopeful that they could make a better life for themselves in California.

A mass exodus from the Southern Plains to California was a result of the geographic and economic challenges the Okies faced during the time of the Great Depression. However, when the Okies arrived in California, they continued to face many hardships. A surplus of people in California drove wages down. "Most Okie laborers couldn't find work for even a nickel a day" (Stanley, p. 24). Okies were forced to sleep in tents and shacks. They lived in squalor. As if that wasn't bad enough, the Californians were hostile to the Okies. They called them names and shouted, "Okie, go home" (Stanley, p. 38). The Okies did whatever it took to survive. They welcomed hard work and worked for gas and food. They drew strength from one another and remained hopeful.

The Okies endured many hardships as a result of the drought and dust storms in the Panhandle. Despite these hardships, they remained hopeful that they could make a better life for themselves and their children. They worked hard and accepted their circumstances with dignity. I am glad Dorothea Lange took so many pictures to help us remember these people and the hardships they endured. Learning about history helps us make better choices today. I think it is important to take care of the land and not over-plow the fields. I also think it is important to remember that everyone has the opportunity to change his or her fate through hard work and determination.

## **Supplementary Materials for Social Studies Connections**

I suggest that, as you conduct this unit of study, you take advantage of your students' interest in the circumstances and people of the Great Depression era. You might choose to conduct some of these activities during the social studies class time, or encourage students to work on these projects outside of the school day.

#### **Classroom Library Suggestions:**

Blumenthal, K. (2013). *Six days in October: The stock market crash of 1929.* New York, NY: Atheneum Books.

Burgan, M. (2011). *The Great Depression: An interactive history adventure.* Mankato, MN: You Choose Books.

Coombs, K. (2000). Children of the Dust Days. Minneapolis, MN: Lerner Publishing.

Curtis, C. P. (1999). Bud, not Buddy. New York, NY: Delacorte Books for Young Readers.

Freedman, R. (2010). Children of the Great Depression. New York, NY: HMH Books for Young Readers.

Lassieur, A. (2009). *The Dust Bowl: An interactive history adventure*. Mankato, MN: You Choose Books.

Venezia, M. (2001). *Dorothea Lange.* Getting to know the world's greatest artists. New York, NY: Children's Press.

#### Additional Lessons and Activities

The following optional lessons and activities are suggestions I am offering you. There is certainly a wealth of materials available, and you may have access to materials or curriculum that is even stronger than what I have outlined here. Feel free to use these ideas, but do not feel limited by them. The most important thing is to listen to your students' questions and offer opportunities for them to answer those questions through extended learning!

# Woody Guthrie

Visit the Woody Guthrie Center website (woodyguthriecenter.org). Have students read about the life and music of Woody Guthrie. Download the lesson "Migrant Farm Workers of the Great Depression." Have students complete the activity linked to the song "If You Ain't Got the Do Re Mi."

Give students time to read and respond to other Woody Guthrie songs about the Great Depression.

Suggested titles:

- "Dust Bowl Blues"
- "Dust Bowl Refugee"
- "Dust Can't Kill Me"
- "Dust Pneumonia Blues"
- "Dust Storm Disaster"

(Lyrics of all of these songs can be found on the website www.woodyguthrie.org.)

Then, have students write their own Dust Bowl ballads.

## Edwards v. California:

Did you know that during the Great Depression, anyone who knowingly assisted a pauper in entering the state of California was guilty of a misdemeanor?

Have students read a summary of Edwards v. California.

Suggested Sites:

- http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095743238
- http://uscivilliberties.org/cases/3731-edwards-v-california-314-us-160-1941.html

Then have students write an opinion piece describing whether they agree or disagree with the judge's decision. Encourage students to use the Commerce Clause as evidence of their thinking. (http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Commerce+Clause)

## Black and White Photography:

Many of Dorothea Lange's photographs are of people posing out in front of their homes. View the photograph titled "The Simple Life, 1939."

Then have students take photographs (black and white if possible) of themselves and/or family members outside their own homes. Have students compare their homes to the home of the children in "The Simple Life." What other details in the pictures are similar or different? How have the circumstances of the times—past and present—impacted people's lives?

# Prefix List

PREFIX	DEFINITION	PREFIX	DEFINITION
anti	against	pro	to advance
con, com, col	together	re	again / back
de	opposite of	semi	half
dis	not / opposite of	sub	under / to yield
ec	out of	super	above
em	cause to be	sur	to give up
en	cause to	un	not
fore	before		
il	not		
im	not		
in	not		
inter	between / among		
ir	not		
mid	middle		
mis	wrongly		
non	not		
ob / op	against		
over	in / into		
para	alongside of		
pre	before		

# **Roots List**

ROOT	DEFINITION	ROOT	DEFINITION
apathe	unfeeling	memor / memen	memory / remember / capacity to store information
audi	hear	monu, monere	remind
auto	self	phon sound	
bio	life	photo	light
chrono	time	port	bring / carry
dict	say	pos / posit place / position	
dign	worthy	pover, povre poor	
fix	fasten	regula	rule / pattern
flict	strike	render	to give / to yield
form	shape / form	rog	to ask / to question
fus(e)	flow	rupt	break
gen	give birth	scope	see
geo	earth	serve / serv	to keep safe / servant / slave
graph	write	sect	cut / divide
gredi	to step	spair / sper	hope
ignore	not know / be unaware	squal to be dirty	
ject	to throw	struct	build
just / jus / jur	right	testi	evidence / witness

# Suffix List

SUFFIX	DEFINITION	SUFFIX	DEFINITION
able	can be done	ing	verb form / present participle
ade	act of / product of	ion	act / process
age	noun form	ious	possessing the qualities of
al	having characteristics of	ish	adjective form
ance	makes the word a noun	ism	belief / practice
ant	serving in the capacity of	ist	a person who practices
ary	noun form	ition	act / process
ate	verb, adjective, or noun form	itive	adjective form of a noun
ation	act / process	ity	state of
ative	adjective form of a noun	ive	adjective form of a noun
ed	past tense	ize	verb form
en	made of	less	without
ence	makes the word a noun	ly	characteristic of
ent	noun form	ment	action / process
eous	possessing the qualities of	mony	noun form
er	person connected with	ness	state of / condition of
er	comparative	or	person connected with
es	plural	ous	possessing the qualities of
est	comparative	ric	adjective form
etic	adjective form	s	plural
ful	full of	ship	a condition or circumstance
ia	condition of	tion	act / process
ial	having characteristics of	tious	adjective form
ible	can be done	ty	state of
ic	having characteristics of	ure	act of / process of
ice	noun form	у	characterized by

## **Vocabulary: Making Connections**

# Target Word: migrants

#### Context:

"Children of the Dust Bowl ... is told largely in the words of the migrants themselves." (blurb)

"But the Great Depression of the 1930s and a drought in the Great Plains states forced the Okies to leave their homes and head for California... When they arrived in California, the <u>migrants</u> discovered that few jobs were available." (p. 1)

I'd probably find this word in these contexts (places, events, people, situations):

Text to World

#### I'll remember this word by connecting it to:

(word, phrase, sketch)