



Tales of a Time Traveler

Post-Visit Activity

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Demonstrate their knowledge of the three elements of culture discussed at Mesa Verde (basic needs, activities of daily living, and adaptations to environment) through stories.
- Identify at least three specific features of Balcony House in their stories.
- Explain the significance of cultural artifacts or ideas.
- Demonstrate an ability to compare and contrast elements of their culture with another's.

CO ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- Reading, Writing, & Communicating
3.RWC.OEL.1, 4.RWC.WC.3
5.RWC.RAP.2, 6.RWC.OEL.1
7.RWC.OEL.2, 8.RWC.RR.1
- Social Studies
4.SS.GEO.2, 5.SS.HIS.2
6.SS.HIS.1, 6.SS.GEO.2
7.SS.GEO.2, 8.SS.GEO.2

MATERIALS

- Paper and pencil for all students
- Pictures from your Mesa Verde field trip, or alternatively from the park website (www.nps.meve)
- Copies of diagrams on p. 3 and p. 4, or alternatively draw these on chart paper or chalk/white board

INTENDED GRADE/RANGE

3rd - 8th grades

TIME INVOLVED

Two to four class periods

LOCATION

Classroom

OVERVIEW

This POST-VISIT ACTIVITY is intended for use after a trip to Mesa Verde National Park and an educational tour of Balcony House. *(Although Balcony House is used throughout this activity, you can easily choose any cliff dwelling you visited during your field trip to Mesa Verde National Park).*

Students write a story describing a trip back through time to Balcony House in the year A.D. 1250. In their stories, students will describe what the environment is like, how they meet their basic needs, and describe some of their everyday activities. Once the stories are completed, a class discussion will enhance the lesson by considering how difficult students think it would be for them to adapt to life as an Ancestral Puebloan, while comparing and contrasting their lives.

PREPARATION

1. If time permits during your visit to Mesa Verde National Park, visit the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum. Encourage students to look closely at the dioramas and note some of the activities going on within the cliff dwellings.
2. Review *Background Information for Teachers* and *Background Information for Students*.
3. You may wish to prepare a schedule to meet with each student during the activity so you can monitor their progress.
4. Before beginning the writing exercise, you may want to discuss brainstorming techniques and mind mapping which can be helpful in this process (see PROCEDURE, Part 1).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background For Teachers

Tales of A Time Traveler is a writing exercise that can also be useful as an assessment tool. It can employ a number of skills such as brainstorming, character development, setting development, plot, comparison and contrast, and point of view. In PART ONE, students are challenged to apply their knowledge of Mesa Verde in developing a story describing

what it would be like to live in the days of the Ancestral Pueblo people. In PART TWO, once the stories are completed, a class discussion will allow the students to compare and contrast the lifestyle of an Ancestral Puebloan living at Balcony House with their own modern culture. This activity will not only reveal what students have learned from their trip to the park, but will encourage them to assess what they now know of culture through more than one point of view as they attempt to find similarities and differences between two distinct cultures.

Choose, or have students choose one of the following topics for their writing project:

1. Write a story about the daily life/activities of an Ancestral Puebloan living in a cliff dwelling at Mesa Verde.
2. From the perspective of an Ancestral Puebloan, write a letter to a family member or friend describing their daily life in a cliff dwelling at Mesa Verde.

To help students begin brainstorming ideas and content for their stories, show pictures taken during their Mesa Verde field trip to remind students of what they saw and experienced during their visit. Begin a discussion about what they learned about the Ancestral Pueblo people. Ask them to describe certain activities, such as how they farmed, hunted, wove, started a fire, made pottery, prepared meals, prepared for celebrations or ceremonies, built a room in a cliff dwelling, etc. (If your students had an opportunity to look at the dioramas at the Chapin Mesa Museum, ask them to describe some of the things they saw happening in the cliff dwellings.)

Additional examples of activities that can be described in the stories

If students need more detailed examples for their stories, here are a few:

- Describe how they help their family work in the fields growing corn and vegetables, such as using a digging stick, weeding, carrying pots of water from a seep spring, building a check dam, harvesting, etc.
- Cite other ways they help their parents get food through gathering, growing, or hunting.
- Narrate activities they and their friends do together such as snaring rabbits, gathering fire wood, picking berries or pine nuts, playing with their dogs, making miniature pots, etc.
- Explain a chore they may help their parents with such as preparing a meal, making repairs to their houses, making pottery, grinding corn, etc.
- Describe watching adults with their various chores such as building a kiva, preparing for a ceremony, weaving baskets, making stone knives, etc.

Background For Students

The purpose of this activity is for you to take what you have learned about the Ancestral Puebloan culture in class, at Mesa Verde, and on the Balcony House tour (or other cliff dwelling) and use it to create a story. The story will focus on what it would be like for you to live in the days of the Ancestral Puebloan people. It should describe what the environment is like, how you meet your basic needs, and some of your everyday activities. Here are some helpful hints to help you get your story started.

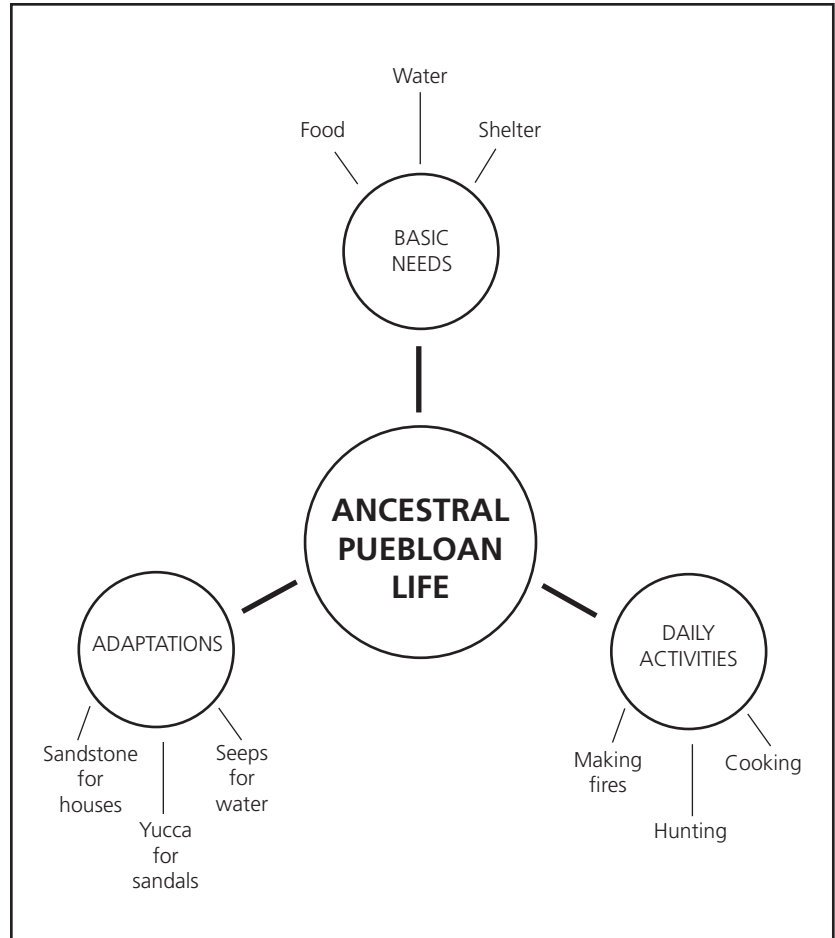
1. Your story should include daily activities that you and even your friends can do (help build a new room, hunt, hike, work in the fields, help your parents with chores, etc.).
2. Describe the environment you live in and how you must adapt to it (use sandstone for your home, depend on rain for your crops, use yucca for your sandals, etc.).
3. Through the course of your story, whether a day, a week, or a season, tell about the things you do to meet all three of your basic needs (plant corn, gather pine nuts, get water from a seep spring, etc.).
4. Share some of your favorite things to do (watch thunderstorms, build things, play music, sing, dance, cook, make rock art, pottery or baskets, etc.).

Remember, that your story should include at least three details that you learned while about Mesa Verde. If you need more ideas to help get your story started, ask your teacher for additional examples.

PROCEDURE

Part One - Preparing For and Writing Stories

1. Introduce *Tales of a Time Traveler* with a review of what the students learned on their field trip. Focus specifically on three components of culture discussed during your field trip or pre-trip studies: environment, basic needs, and daily activities.
2. Ask students to give examples of each one of the components while you write their answers on the chalkboard or overhead. Having a record of the responses will give students ideas for their story. The chart at right is just one example of how to do this. Label the center circle, "Ancestral Puebloan Life." Label one circle extending from the center, "Basic Needs," a second circle, "Daily Activities," and a third circle, "Adaptations." Around each of these three circles, record the details of each (ie: around the "Adaptations" circle, record ways the Ancestral Pueblo people adapted to their environment.)

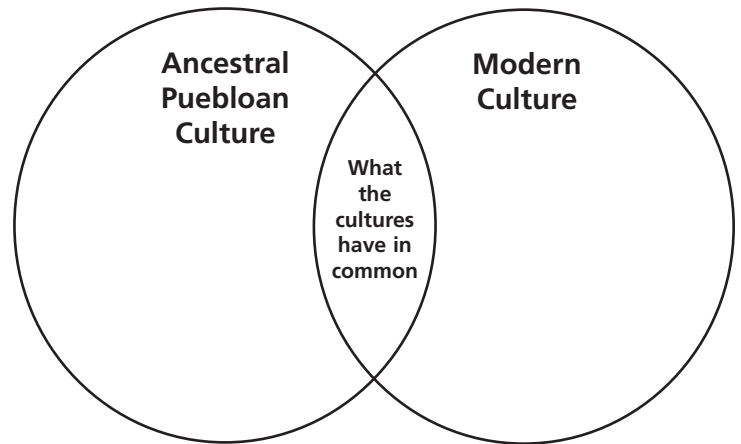


3. Hand out or read from the *Background Information for Students*. Read it aloud as a group, or explain the activity to the class in your own words. (See *Background Information for Teachers* for additional information and examples.)
4. Encourage students to incorporate at least three sensory details from their visit to Balcony House. These can be colors, smells, sounds, textures, sights, tastes, objects, or other details. Emphasize creativity.
5. If students need more time than is allotted, they can complete the writing and revising as homework. Sharing *Tales of a Time Traveler* stories in class is a great way to conclude a trip to Mesa Verde.

Part Two - Compare/Contrast

1. After the stories are completed, select a few of the students' stories that portray accurate pictures of Ancestral Puebloan culture, and as a class discussion, have students compare the fictional stories with their own modern lives. How difficult would it be for them to adapt to life as an Ancestral Puebloan? The discussion should allow them to demonstrate an ability to compare and contrast elements of their culture with that of the Ancestral Pueblo people.
2. To help organize your discussion, draw a Venn Diagram (or whatever means you prefer) to compare and contrast the two lifestyles. The Venn Diagram above, can be used in the following way:

In one circle, record details about the life of the Ancestral Pueblo people in Balcony House. In the other circle, record similar details about modern life. Can the class create any connections or similarities between the cultures? Record these in the center.



ADAPTATIONS

This activity may be adapted for different learning styles, needs, or ages in the following ways:

- For younger students, consider focusing only on daily activities for the story.
- For older students, adapt the assignment to include additional characters. If you would like them to compare and contrast within the story, the following are examples of how this might be done:
 - a. A modern boy hikes along a path and sees a rabbit. He realizes that a boy living 800 years ago might have walked along that same path on the way to check his snare in hopes of having caught a rabbit to help feed his family. The modern boy wonders how it would feel to wear a rabbit skin robe or eat rabbit for dinner.
 - b. A modern girl walks along a canyon rim and discovers a piece of broken pottery, jewelry, arrow point, or other artifact on the ground. She realizes that it might have once belonged to an Ancestral Puebloan. As she looks at it, she wonders how it is made, and how it came to be where she found it. She imagines being the person who made it. As she prepares to leave, she is careful not to disturb the artifact. She wants others to be able to enjoy what she has seen.
- Working in teams can be a good option for some classes.
- Another alternative is to substitute art work or drama for writing. Develop the story as a cartoon series, a diorama, a collage, a play, or other art form. Some students might enjoy acting out their story as a dialogue between characters living in two different times.
- For the upper level students, this activity can be adapted to be done as a newscast. Have one or two students act as anchors for the news. Have two other students act as field reporters. Other students can play roles as Ancestral Pueblo people. The "top story" of the day is two reporters traveling back in time to interview Ancestral Puebloans as they go about their activities of daily living. Commentary by the anchors and reporters can incorporate inferences, similarities and differences. The class might even want to make their own props and turn this into a play to present to others.

EXTENSIONS

- Attaching the story to a drawing or painting of Mesa Verde can make a beautiful display at the school.
- Consider adding another feature to the story by having the two characters meet one another through time traveling, dreams, or other means.
- For an additional twist, ask each student to select one item or idea from the present that they can take back in time. What would they choose and why? Likewise, when they return to the present they can take one item or idea from the Ancestral Puebloan culture to bring forward in time. Again, what would they choose and why?
- Send the completed stories back to the National Park Service Ranger who led your Balcony House tour. She or he would enjoy seeing the many creative ways that students incorporate their learning at the park. Think of the stories as a marvelous thank you note!

ASSESSMENT

As a post activity, *Tales of a Time Traveler* is intended to give the teacher a way to assess student learning from the field trip to Mesa Verde and the tour of Balcony House. Writing a story with concepts and details from the field trip gives the teacher insight into what was most effective and memorable about the trip. In addition, you can evaluate the success of the activity in these ways:

1. Students will demonstrate that they know the three elements of culture discussed at Mesa Verde (basic needs, daily activities, and environment) by incorporating them into their stories.
2. Using their stories as a foundation, students will compare and contrast the past with the present. Since the environments, basic needs, and daily activities of the characters will differ students will learn to experience differing points of view.

COLORADO ACADEMIC STANDARDS

- 3.RWC.OEL.1 Oral communication is used both informally and formally
- 4.RWC.WC.3 Correct sentence formation, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are applied to make the meaning clear to the reader
- 5.RWC.RAP.2 Ideas found in a variety of informational texts need to be compared and understood
- 6.RWC.OEL.1 Successful group discussions require planning and participation by all
- 7.RWC.OEL.2 Small and large group discussions rely on active listening and the effective contributions of all participants
- 8.RWC.RR.1 Individual research projects begin with information obtained from a variety of sources, and is organized, documented, and presented using logical procedures
- 4.SS.GEO.2 Connections within and across human and physical systems are developed
- 5.SS.HIS.2 The historical eras, individuals, groups, ideas, and themes in North America from 1491 through the founding of the United States government.
- 6.SS.HIS.1 Analyze and interpret historical sources to ask and research historical questions
- 6.SS.GEO.2 Human and physical systems vary and interact
- 7.SS.GEO.2 Regions have different issues and perspectives
- 8.SS.GEO.2 Conflict and cooperation occur over space and resources