

### Activity 3: Journal Writing

#### **Lesson Description:**

**1.** Introduce journals after creating characters. Gather as a whole group to discuss traits of good writing (focus on good word choice, voice, sentence fluency, and conventions). Discuss writing in a different perspective with an emphasis on voice. Ask students what kind of language they think stampeders used back in the late 1800's. Share with them ways to express their ideas of voice (I'm heading' north at get me some of that there gold!). Share with them some phrases that were indicative of this time in history (Ho for the Klondike! Strike it rich! Stake a claim! etc.). This first journal entry will restate much of what the students explained in their miner's license but with more detail. Students should include the following details in their first entry:

- a. A compelling opening/lead-in
- b. Describe your character
  - i. Interests, family, friends, profession
- c. Tell how you first heard the news that gold was found in the Klondike
- d. Tell how you feel
- e. How do you plan to get to Seattle?
- f. Who are you traveling with?
- g. Why are you going to the goldfields? Tell about pushes & pulls
- h. What are your hopes and goals? What do you plan to do in Dawson?
- i. A good closing

**2.** Share with them the following example of a first journal entry:

*February, 1st, 1898*

*Dear Journal,*

*It's been a whirlwind of a week! Mother and I were listenin' to the radio last week while folding laundry when the regular programming was interrupted with a news report. GOLD was found in the Klondike! The Portland had docked in Seattle with over two tons of gold. Everyone was in a frenzy. People are leavin' their families and quitting their jobs to head north to the goldfields. We're goin' too. I live here in Iowa on a farm with my mom and two sisters. My father passed away recently from an illness. The depression has hit us hard. Mother says she can't afford to pay the bills and the farm is just too much for her to handle. So, she's decided to sell it and use the money to get us to the Klondike! We're really strugglin' without pop. Mother went to town this morning to get us tickets to Seattle. She's not even that excited about finding gold! She's more interested in finding our uncle Henry. He left for the Klondike a few months ago. We haven't heard from him since. We're hoping to find him in Dawson City. Maybe we can work on his claim. Mother plans to stay a while in Dawson. She says that if we can't find Uncle Henry we'll just open up a dress shop and start a new life. Our train leaves tomorrow morning — bright and early. I don't think I'll be able to sleep tonight. I'm much too nervous. I sure hope we strike it rich! I'm sure going to miss our farm Ho for the Klondike! Wish us luck! I'll write again soon.*

**3.** Next, have students share ideas for compelling openings to help get ideas flowing. For example, "I just quit my job! Why? I'm headin' to the Klondike...Holy Cow! Gold in the Klondike. I'm headin' north to get me some of that there gold!"

**4.** You may want to do a shared writing with the whole class at this time to model what

expectations before students work independently on their journal entry. Post expectations for students to refer to as they write.

5. Continue to have students write in their journals after each lesson throughout this unit. Students should include facts/details from each lesson (readings and excerpts). Each entry should not only reflect the activity but the experience on the Klondike at each point. Students should use this writing activity as a reflection piece to tell about each leg of the journey.

Here is a list of possible journal entries throughout the unit

1. *introduce character/pushes & pulls*
2. *tell about invention/gimmick*
3. *shopping for supplies*
4. *steamboat ride to Skagway*
5. *arrival into Skagway*
6. *reasons to take Chilkoot and not White Pass*
7. *experience up the Chilkoot (obstacle course)*
8. *making boats at Lake Bennett*
9. *journey down the Yukon River*
10. *arrival into Dawson City*

Look at [samples](#) for each entry.

**OBJECTIVE:** To have students practice writing in a different perspective as they reflect on activities throughout the unit; To document the experiences on the Klondike Adventure in student journals.

**MATERIALS:**

1. Collection of biographies of Klondikers mounted on poster board
2. Chart paper title "Pushes and Pulls"
3. [Example of Biographies \(PDF file\)](#)