

Collaborative Projects & School-Wide Themes

presented by

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**[http://www.usd376.com/hs/staff/brownleea/
resources/index.htm](http://www.usd376.com/hs/staff/brownleea/resources/index.htm)**

presented at Tri-Conference, Topeka, KS
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Two items included in my presentation at Tri-Conference but not included in this document:

- 3 pages of library songs and chants (these were taken from a variety of different sources, so I don't have rights to re-post them on the Internet)
- a PowerPoint outlining a collaborative research project where a student reads a biography and creates a monument or memorial to honor that person (includes photos I harvested from the Web and don't have permission to re-post them)

These items are available by request. Simply email me at brownleea@sterling.edu and request "library songs and chants" and/or "PowerPoint" and I'll be happy to reply to your email with the requested documents attached.

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Hero's Trail

Explanation of year-long theme: Walking the Hero's Trail at SGS

Books that inspired the theme and projects:

- *The hero's trail: a guide for a heroic life* by T.A. Barron
- *50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet* by Dennis Denenberg and Lorraine Roscoe.

Library Skills lessons:

- Book preview -- Musical chairs-style preview of biographies using the song "B-b-b-biography" from *Library Songs* CD, available from Upstart, \$16.95
- Hero's medal – Think about every day heroes like firefighters, police officers, soldiers, teachers and family members. On the hero's medal award form, write about why this person deserves to be a hero and color and decorate the medal. If possible, give the award to the person you chose.
- Biography Mobile -- Choose a hero, do some brief research, and create a coat hanger mobile that includes at least 3 symbols that show facts about the person's life.
- Diamante Poem -- Choose a hero, do some research, and create a diamante poem about that person's life. Type your poem and add clip art or a photo downloaded from the Web. Be sure to list the Web address where you found your picture!
- Stamp on History project – Conduct in-depth research on a person, create a postage stamp in that person's honor, and write a persuasive piece explaining why that person deserves to be honored with a postage stamp.

All-School activities:

- School-Wide Biography Challenge -- We received a \$2,275 ILDP grant to purchase new biography books for our library. To promote the new books, and all of our biographies, the library issued a challenge: Could the students of Sterling Grade School read 500 biographies in 3 weeks? We called the program "Cozy up with a good biography," and the prize for reaching the goal was an all-school pajama day. Older classes buddied with younger classes to read the biographies (Kindy and 4th; 1st and 6th, 2nd and 5th, 3rd with college reading buddies). We kept a thermometer in the library to track students' progress. We asked teachers to tally the number of biographies read in their classroom and email the numbers to me each Friday. The student response was amazing! Our kids doubled the goal, reading 1,003 biographies! Wow!
- Read Across America week-long celebration, "Saddle Up and Read." Because March's heroes of the month were Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, we used a cowboy theme for Read Across America this year. Our school always goes "all-out" for this event, and this year we had a wonderful variety of activities. Here is our schedule of events.

Walking the Hero's Trail at SGS

We are pleased to announce that “Walking the Hero’s Trail” is Sterling Grade School’s all-school theme for 2006-07. This theme will be showcased through our literacy, learning, character education and school health programs. Each month, we will focus on an American Hero who has made significant positive contributions to society and has character traits we can emulate.

The idea is that our journey through life is like hiking along a trail. It is full of ups and downs, and sometimes the path is rocky, sometimes it is smooth and easy. Along the way, we come to “forks in the road” where we have choices to make. That’s where the heroes step in. We can think of our heroes as “trail guides” who serve as a “moral compass” and allow us to follow in their footsteps.

Students will be introduced to each hero through library storytimes. Library skills classes will study biographies as a way to learn about other heroes and role models and will also talk about everyday heroes. Classrooms will participate in the school health walking program and p.e. instructor Susan Brown will chart each class’s progress along a poster-sized map of our “hero’s trail.” Elizabeth Madden’s art classes and the monthly Bear Necessities character traits will also tie in to the theme.

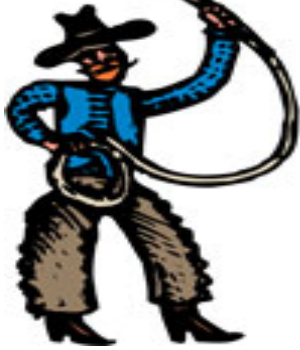
Monthly heroes and character traits are:

<i>Month</i>	<i>Hero</i>	<i>Character Trait</i>
October	Amelia Earhart Aviator (Pilot)	COURAGE
November	Eleanor Roosevelt Humanitarian, Diplomat, First Lady	LEADERSHIP
December	Helen Keller & Anne Sullivan Author, Teacher, Activists	FRIENDSHIP
January	George Washington Carver Scientist, Agriculture Innovator, Educator	CREATIVITY
February	Frederick Douglass Abolitionist, Author, Orator	FAIRNESS
March	Roy Rogers & Dale Evans Humanitarians, Movie Stars, Singers	GENEROSITY
April	John Muir Conservationist, Naturalist, Author	RESPECT for nature
May	Jesse Owens Track athlete, Olympic gold medalist	PERSEVERANCE

"Saddle Up and Read"

Read Across America Celebration

Feb. 26 - March 2, 2007
Sterling Grade School



SGS students and staff are invited to "Saddle Up and Read" for this year's Read Across America celebration Feb. 26-March 2. This week of activities ties in with our school wide "Walking the Hero's Trail" biography and character education theme by honoring our heroes of the month, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans, for their generosity.

Throughout the week: *Students bring items to donate to Sterling Food Bank. See the back of this page for donation suggestions. Students can round up a book from home in good, used condition to contribute to their classroom trading post.*

Thursday: *Wear Bear Cub t-shirts.* **Friday:** *Dress up in cowboy clothes.*

❖ "Saddle Up and Read" Rally and "Cowboy Campfire Buffet" – Monday

We'll kick off our Read Across America celebration with an all-school assembly featuring a special guest speaker. Students are invited to the "Cowboy Campfire" (in the art room) to sample some delicious western grub (food!).

❖ "Caught Reading" – Tuesday

Students will be challenged to get "caught reading" as they receive special bookmarks and stickers that highlight our cowboy theme.

❖ "Reading Roundup" Trading Post – Wednesday

Throughout the week, students are invited to "round up" a book from home in good, used condition to contribute to the classroom trading post. On Wednesday, each student who brought a book will be able to trade it for a different book to take home.

❖ "Corral a Good Book and Share It" – Thursday

Students will do some buddy reading 1:30-2:00 with their Sterling College football player reading "pardners." You can wear your Bear Cub t-shirt to show pride in your "herd."

❖ "Reading Stampede" and "Chuckwagon" – Friday

Students and staff are invited to dress up cowboy style – we want to see your hats, bandannas, and cowboy boots! Classes will "stampede" downtown to read in the lobbies of local businesses. While downtown, classes will deliver the items collected for the Sterling Food Bank. Our cooks will also serve us a "chuckwagon" lunch in the cafeteria.





Help us “round up” some needed items for the Sterling Food Bank!

FOOD BANK DONATION SUGGESTIONS:

- Canned fruit (priority item)
 - Sugar
 - Macaroni and cheese
 - Canned tuna or chicken
 - Saltine crackers
 - Cereal (nonsugared)
 - Instant potatoes
 - Pork & beans
 - Mexican items
-
- Paper plates
 - Paper towels
 - Toilet paper
 - Soap
 - Shampoo
 - Toothpaste
 - Deodorant
 - Cleaning supplies



Mississippi River

We chose our theme with the idea that we would be learning about the Mississippi River, which flows down to New Orleans and the area affected by Hurricane Katrina, which would give our students a chance to learn about this area and also do their part to help with relief efforts. Our goal was to find a sister school to correspond with and send donations to, but several attempts to get in contact with a school failed. We were able to donate school supplies and money to a church charity that could distribute them where needed. The p.e. walking program used the Mississippi River from St. Louis to New Orleans as their route for our “Walking the Mississippi” theme.

Library skills lessons:

- **“River of Writers”** – 5th graders are researching famous authors and writing riddles depicting facts about the author and inviting you to guess each author being described.
- **“Postcards from the Journey”** – 4th graders are imagining themselves walking the banks of the Mississippi River and are doing research on places and things they encounter along the way. Facts from their research will be presented in the form of a postcard home telling friends and family what was “seen” on their journey.
- **Tall Tales** – Grades 1-3 will participate in activities centered around tall tale characters Mike Fink, Sal Fink and Annie Christmas, legendary figures who traveled the Mississippi River. They will also choose and discuss which books they are “jazzed” about reading and fill out and color a “jazzed about reading” form. Resources: *Mike Fink: a Tall Tale* by Steven Kellogg and *Teaching Tall Tales* by Tracey West (Scholastic Professional Books).
- **Reading Chants & Songs** – Students in every grade learned a different reading chant or song to perform at the Read Across America “Jazzed About Reading” rally.
 - *Link to library songs -- <http://teacherweb.com/LB/ACS/LowerSchoolLibrary/h1.stm>
 - *More great library songs for kids -- http://northside.woodfordschools.org/Media_Center/library_songs.htm
 - *R-E-A-D song lyrics (sung to the tune of YMCA) -- <http://www.teachingheart.net/ymcaread.html>
 - *YMCA karaoke sound file, no background vocals (click on this link, then choose "save" or "open") --<http://members.tripod.com/~bbb1/miditunes/ymca.mid>
- **Storytimes** featured steamboats, other regional topics, and a special visit from the high school vocal jazz singing group.

Art & music:

Art students produced various projects involving jazz, musical notes and instruments. Third graders created 3-D steamboats. Music students listened to, studied and sang some jazz.

Read Across America

Highlights of this week-long celebration included a buffet of Louisiana cuisine prepared by one of our special ed teachers who is also a caterer. She had an amazing menu: jambalaya, collard greens, King’s cake, pralines, fruit smoothies, sweet potato pie. She talked to the kids about nutrition and the food groups involved in each dish

Our other big event was the reading rally, which included special guest speakers Mark Twain and his character Huck Finn, portrayed by a very talented local man and a college drama student. Their costumes were amazing, and the kids were spellbound as Mr. Twain told about his life, his writing, his character Huck Finn, and the importance of reading. Every class grades K-6 performed a chant or song learned in library skills class that promoted reading. One teacher commented it was the best school assembly they'd had in her 20+ years in the building.

“River of Readers”

Read Across America Celebration

Feb. 27-March 3, 2006

SGS students and staff will become a “River of Readers” for this year’s Read Across America celebration Feb. 27-March 3. This week of activities ties in with the “Walking the Mississippi” school health theme in which students will keep track of miles walked in Sterling and progress will be mapped on their “imaginary route” along the banks of the Mississippi River.

Activities are focusing on the Mississippi River, river wildlife (especially alligators), and jazz music. Library skills classes, storytimes, art classes and music will also be coordinating with the school-wide theme.

“Bayou Buffet” – Monday

Students are invited to the “Bayou Bistro” (in the art room) to sample some Louisiana-style cuisine.

“Fishing for a Good Book” – Tuesday

Students will snack on goldfish crackers while reading a good book during BEAR time.

“River of Readers” – Wednesday

Students are invited to wear blue and green clothing to create a “river” of readers that will “flow” (walk) downtown to read in the lobby of downtown businesses. Community members are invited to bring a book or magazine and join us!

“Jazzed About Reading” Rally – Thursday at 8:05 a.m. in the Gym

Our weeklong celebration will feature a school-wide rally where we show we’re “jazzed about reading!” The rally will feature the SHS jazz band and grade school classes performing reading chants and songs.

“River of Caring” – Friday

Students and staff are invited to bring school supplies to send to our adopted sister school in the hurricane-affected area. Students may also bring coins to help pay for the cost of shipping the supplies to Louisiana.

Lewis and Clark

In this year, our p.e. teacher and school counselor wrote and received a Coordinated School Health Grant. When they invited me to be part of the program and carry out the Lewis & Clark theme in the library, I was excited at the opportunity to partner with them, and our school-wide theme program was born.

Through grant funds they were able to purchase pedometers for students and launched the school walking program. The p.e. teacher posted a map of the Lewis & Clark trail on the gym bulletin board. During the warm months of the year in fall and spring, teachers were encouraged to take their students outside walking sometime during the school day wearing their pedometers to keep track of miles. Classroom teachers emailed their miles to the p.e. teacher, who charted the school's progress. The goal was to make it to Oregon on the map so we could make "winter camp" just like Lewis & Clark did. During "winter camp" time when it was too cold to walk, we did library skills lessons and storytimes related to Lewis & Clark. We also used the Kansas Read Week theme that year – Explore New Trails: READ! – for our Read Across America theme. Then in the spring, the walking program began again so the students could walk the trail back from Oregon.

Lewis & Clark library skills lessons
Kansas R.E.A.D. Week (Read Across America) Celebration
Guidelines for R.E.A.D. Week

LIBRARY LESSONS -- Throughout Jan. and Feb., library skills lessons and storytimes have focused on the Lewis & Clark Expedition to tie in with Miss Engelland's Lewis & Clark fitness walk program. All grades learned about who Lewis & Clark were, what the Louisiana Purchase meant to our country, and details about their adventures.

1st grade

Animals on the Lewis & Clark Trail

- Animal tracks – Read stories, were introduced to animal tracks field guide, created bulletin board (Make tracks to the library) featuring bear paw prints decorated with titles and drawings of students' favorite books.
- Focused on beavers and bears – Read stories, sang songs, did fingerplays.
- “Lost in a book” – discussed the function of maps and compasses, discussed the meaning behind getting “Lost in a book,” decorated door hangers, did a L&C word search puzzle.

2nd grade

Animals on the Lewis & Clark Trail

- Focused on beavers and bears – Read stories, sang songs, did fingerplays.
- “Lost in a book” – discussed the function of maps and compasses, discussed the meaning behind getting “Lost in a book,” decorated doorknob hangers as an art/craft project, did a L&C word search puzzle.
- Read and discussed the nonfiction book Two Orphan Cubs by Barbara Brenner and created a KWL chart (using Six Trait Reading strategies).

3rd grade

- Reading comprehension – Read *Kansas Kaleidoscope* magazine article “Lewis and Clark in Kansas” and answered comprehension questions.
- After studying maps created during the Lewis & Clark Expedition, students became “cartographers” (map makers) by creating paper sack maps.
- Read and discussed the nonfiction book Two Orphan Cubs by Barbara Brenner and created a KWL chart (using Six Trait Reading strategies).

4th grade

- Reading comprehension – Read excerpt from William Clark's journal (from *Kansas Kaleidoscope*) and completed graphic organizer and made an inference from the text.
- Learned to use World Book Online research source by searching topics related to Lewis & Clark. Created “Postcards from the Journey” to share what they learned.
- Completed a Lewis & Clark online scavenger hunt <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/west/main.html>.

5th grade

- Dictionary activity – Chose a word from a list of terms describing Thomas Jefferson (lexicographer, linguist, botanist, etc.), defined it in their own words with the help of a dictionary, and created an illustration showing the meaning of the word. Displayed on library bulletin board.
- Learned to use World Book Online research source by searching topics related to Lewis & Clark, writing down bibliographic information, and taking brief notes.
- Completed a Lewis & Clark online scavenger hunt <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/west/main.html>.

Kansas R.E.A.D. Week

Explore New Trails—READ!

Feb. 28-March 4, 2005



"On the Trail" with Books -- Monday

- Eat trail mix (healthy snack) during BEAR time.
- Bring a book for the Trading Post (see details under Thursday's activities).

President Jefferson Day -- Tuesday

- Bring President Thomas Jefferson, in the form of nickels, to school and donate proceeds to a charitable organization. Lewis & Clark gave gifts to the Indians to show they wanted to be friendly with people from another culture. We will "give the gift of reading" to children from another culture by helping the first children's library in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in Africa.
- Proceeds raised will benefit the Ethiopian Children's Book Center, a children's library in Ethiopia (www.ethiopiareads.org).
- Bring a book for the Trading Post (see details under Thursday's activities).

Help Seaman Load the Boat -- Wednesday

- The Lewis & Clark Expedition had to plan ahead and pack food and other supplies they would need. These supplies were carried in the bottom of their boats as they traveled on the rivers. We would like to collect a "boatload" of food to donate to the Sterling Food Bank. Seaman, the Newfoundland dog that accompanied the explorers on their trip, will watch over our SGS boat (watch for the collection canoe in the hallway) as students and staff bring donated items to "load the boat."

Trading Post Day -- Thursday

- On Monday and Tuesday, students may bring a used book from home (in good condition) to donate to the trading post in exchange for one ticket. On Trading Post Day, students can bring their ticket to the Trading Post to exchange for a book to take home. This builds on the idea that the Lewis & Clark expedition traded for goods they needed instead of purchasing them with money. Students will also receive a special "explorer's snack" to give them energy while choosing their books.

Team Spirit Day - Friday

- Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery had to work as a team in order to accomplish their goals. To show how our school works together as a team, wear Black Bear clothing or black and white to show YOUR team spirit!

Trading Post Guidelines

Books to be traded must be in good used condition. This means the books:

Have all the pages

Have a cover

Are age appropriate for school

Also,

Students may bring more than one book if they wish, but they will only receive **ONE** ticket and be able to take **ONE** book home with them from the Trading Post. Extra books will be used to help students who weren't able to bring a book from home earn a ticket and be able to participate in the Trading Post.

Students, be sure to get permission from your parent or guardian before donating a book to the Trading Post.

COLLABORATIVE & CROSS-CURRICULAR PROJECTS

NOTE: Each project listed below is explained in more detail on the following pages. Additional materials, such as student handouts and reproducibles, can be accessed through my Web site:

<http://www.usd376.com/hs/staff/brownleea/resources/index.htm>

PROJECT	CURRICULAR AREAS
<p>Biography Riddles Students research a person and present facts in the form of a riddle.</p>	Lang. Arts, Social Studies, Science, Fine Arts, Technology, Research
<p>Book Review Videos Students read a book, then write a script and videotape a Reading Rainbow-style book review.</p>	Lang, Arts, Technology
<p>Genre Study Students define and identify genres of literature, then recommend books to peers based on genres.</p>	Lang. Arts
<p>Monumental Influence Students research a famous person, then design and build a model of a monument to honor that person. Great for critical thinking!</p>	Lang. Arts, Social Studies, Science, Fine Arts, Technology, Research
<p>Parts of a Book / Textbook Students learn to use the table of contents, glossary and index using their grade-level science or social studies textbook rather than through isolated exercises.</p>	Lang. Arts, Social Studies, Science
<p>Personal Art Gallery Students choose a famous piece of art they'd like to have in their personal collection and analyze it, including information about the artist and style. Combines research with critical thinking.</p>	Lang. Arts, Fine Arts, Technology, Research
<p>Postcard Research Students research any topic and present their findings in postcard format through writing and drawing. Great for teaching World Book Online and SIRS.</p>	Lang. Arts, Social Studies, Science, Fine Arts, Technology, Research
<p>Propaganda Techniques / TV Commercial Students study propaganda techniques used in advertising and create and videotape a TV commercial that uses at least 3 propaganda techniques.</p>	Lang. Arts, Technology
<p>Stamp on History After researching a famous person, students design a proposal for a postage stamp in that person's honor. They create artwork for the stamp and write a persuasive piece explaining why that person deserves to be honored with a stamp.</p>	Lang. Arts, Social Studies, Science, Fine Arts, Technology, Research
<p>Westward, ho! or Westward? No! Through in-depth study of the book <u>Daily Life in a Covered Wagon</u>, students analyze the pros and cons of trail life, present information to the class orally and visually, and make a judgment based on information presented.</p>	Lang. Arts, Social Studies, Technology

COLLABORATIVE & CROSS-CURRICULAR PROJECTS

Biography Riddles

This project is a great way to have students present biographical research in a fun, creative way that discourages plagiarism. This project easily works across the curriculum through choice of the research subject: musicians, artists, scientists, explorers, authors, etc. Students can hand write their finished riddle on the template, or they can type it. At the bottom of their page, I had my students center the answer to the riddle. We cut out rectangular pieces of construction paper large enough to cover the answer and taped them on one side to create a “lift the flap” feature. When the riddles are displayed, people can read the riddle, then lift the flap to see the correct answer. It would also be fun to display the riddles and have a contest to see if students can correctly identify the person described. Answers could be revealed at the end of the contest. The idea for this project came from an NCTE publication called *Ideas Plus*, Book 17, p. 40-41, submitted by Christine Christensen.

Book Review Videos

This fall, a teacher in my building came to enlist my help in having her 2nd grade students create a Reading Rainbow style book review video. She assigned partners for the project and had each group choose and read a book to review. When the students came to me, I showed them some video excerpts of Reading Rainbow book reviews, and we discussed what made the reviews good (showing the cover of the book, telling enough about the book to make the reader interested but not giving away the ending, telling the title of the book, making eye contact with the camera, speaking loudly and clearly). Next, I gave three sample book reviews to the students that I had prepared ahead of time. On the first two, I made a variety of mistakes and had the students point them out. On the third one, I followed all the guidelines we’d discussed after watching the video.

Next, I handed out the book review script. We discussed how to organize the book review with a beginning, middle and end. Students spent 2 class periods writing their scripts, which they rehearsed and then videotaped. One note: if you plan to post any of the videos on the Web, don’t have students tell their first and last names during the book review like they do on Reading Rainbow.

Book Review Script

Genre Study

When a 5th grade language arts teacher asked me to work on genres with the 5th graders, I began searching for some fun activities. We started off by naming and defining the major genres and giving specific examples that 5th graders would be familiar with (for example, Harry Potter or The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe for fantasy). I found a wonderful list of genre definitions and a matching exercise from the professional publication *Library Sparks* that gives excerpts from books and asks students to identify the correct genre.

To extend the lesson, I then asked students to think of at least 2 books they’d read recently that they would recommend to other 5th graders. I had them use the OPAC or go to the book to provide some basic bibliographic information and fill in a brief recommendation form. I then set out genre posters I made using large 11 x 17 pieces of construction paper. I made a label for each genre poster using word art and glued it to the top of the page. Once students had filled out their recommendation forms, they

glued them to the appropriate genre poster. We displayed the posters in the library for students to refer to when they came in to check out books.

Genres (Kellner) *Library Sparks*, Feb. 2005, p. 40-46.
Book Recommendation Poster
Genre headings for poster
Recommendation slips (cut apart)

MONUMENTAL INFLUENCE

PROJECT TASK:

Imagine that a wealthy organization is planning to fund the building of a monument or memorial to honor a person who has made the world a better place. You want to submit a proposal in hopes your ideas will be made into a real monument! Your task is to design a monument or memorial to represent the contributions made to society by a hero of your choice. You will create a model of your monument and write about why your chosen person deserves to be honored.

I have used this project with 5th and 6th graders and have been very impressed with students' creativity. I've had students design a playground, a baseball stadium, a track and field stadium, a basketball court, a quilt, a sculpture, a museum, a movie theater, and a stained glass window, among other things. I love this project because it requires students to do in-depth biographical research rather than just a superficial look. I also love that the critical thinking and creative aspects make this assignment plagiarism-proof.

The first time I did this project, it was in collaboration with a 5th grade teacher who wanted students to do some biographical research on African Americans as part of Black History Month studies. Obviously the teacher has the freedom to ask students to choose a subject following certain guidelines (women, inventors, musicians, artists, etc.) or let the students choose whomever they're interested in.

Most recently I've done this project as part of a 6th grade reading class biography unit. The class reads and studies a biography together, then branches off into their own research with this project.

Biographies we've used for class study are:

- Lincoln: a Photobiography by Russell Freedman (Newbery Medal winner)
- Genius: a Photobiography of Albert Einstein by Marfe Ferguson Delano (starred reviews from School Library Journal and Booklist, and part of a wonderful series of children's biographies published by National Geographic)
- 50 American Heroes Every Kid Should Meet by Dennis Denenberg and Lorraine Roscoe (a wonderful collective biography)

I like studying a biography together as a class before initiating this research. One reason is that as we read and study together, I'm able to model reading strategies for biographies. We also practice the kinds of critical thinking skills students will need to complete the project.

After students choose their research subject, I require them all to locate and read a book about their person. I let them know that the kind of research needed for this project will require the in-depth information that a book gives that can't be found in an encyclopedia or most Web sites. Although an encyclopedia article gives them a good overview of the person's life and Web sites can be useful for providing additional information, the most recent information, and photo sources, the bulk of their research will come from settling down with a good book on the person's life.

PROJECT COMPONENTS:

Project Overview PowerPoint. I show this to students before they've chosen their research subject so they understand what is expected from them.

Building background:

Ask students what monuments or memorials they've seen in person or in photos, on TV, etc. What is the purpose of a monument? Why are they built? Why do people visit them? Why do people put up headstones in a cemetery?

Reading Rainbow DVD – The Wall. I show the section that interviews the architect who created the Vietnam Memorial. It talks about the creation of the memorial, the materials used, and the symbols. If possible, visit local monuments, memorials, and murals.

Virtual Field Trip -- Assign students a monument or memorial to research and then have them present the information to the class.

Student handouts & grading rubrics:

Student directions: explains written description and visual model, includes grading rubrics

In search of a hero – This is where students take notes on facts about the person's life.

In search of a hero grading rubric

Bib sheets – Helps students collect bibliographic information.

Web – Helps students plan important facts and how they will be shown on the monument.

PARTS OF A BOOK / TEXTBOOK

I came up with this activity when a fourth grade teacher commented that students may understand how to use a book's table of contents, index, and glossary, but they don't know when to use each feature based on an information need. In response, I got my hands on the fourth grade science textbook and came up with an activity that would allow students hands-on practice with this skills. I created four sets of the activity with different questions (this encourages independent work and discourages cheating), but they all cover the same skills. Our school uses the xxx textbook name, but you could easily adapt the questions to your school's text. This is sooo much better than the boring skills worksheets I used to use.

Parts of a book activity sheet – Sets 1, 2, 3, 4

PERSONAL ART GALLERY

This would be a wonderful collaborative project between the art teacher and librarian. Students choose a famous piece of art they'd like to have in their personal collection and describe and analyze it, telling about the artist, style, why they chose it, and where they would display it. Technology skills play a part when students are asked to either scan in a photo of the artwork from a book or download a photo from the Web. We had lots of discussions about why you often can't enlarge a photo from the Web too much, and how to pull from the corners, not the sides, to avoid distorting the image. I used this as

an enrichment project at the end of reading the art mystery *Chasing Vermeer*, but it could easily be used as a stand-alone project.

My Personal Art Gallery Project – resource links

<http://www.usd376.com/hs/staff/brownleea/vermeer/index.htm#gallery>

POSTCARD RESEARCH

Students research any topic and present their findings in postcard format through writing and drawing. This is a great tool for teaching kids to use the free online tools we get through Kan-Ed like World Book Online and SIRS.

Postcard Template

PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUES / TV COMMERCIAL

I came up with this project to teach propaganda techniques to my 6th grade reading class in preparation for the state reading assessment. We defined some specific propaganda techniques and discussed TV commercials we had seen that illustrated the techniques. We also spent part of a class period looking at magazine advertisements and identifying propaganda techniques. After taking a quiz asking students to identify the techniques, our culminating project was for students to work in partners to create a new cereal, define a target audience, and create a TV commercial incorporating at least three propaganda techniques. We videotaped the commercials and then used them to teach propaganda to other 6th graders. This was lots of fun!

Advertising Techniques Quiz

Cereal Box Advertising

STAMP ON HISTORY

This is another creative biography project that would work for any curricular area. After researching a famous person, students design a proposal for a postage stamp in that person's honor. They create artwork for the stamp and write a persuasive piece explaining why that person deserves to be honored with a stamp.

We used this activity to celebrate Women's History Month and asked students to choose a woman to research. We invited our local postmaster to be a guest speaker and talk about the process a proposal goes through to become a real stamp. She also brought some neat examples from her personal stamp collection as well as some posters we got to keep for the library. We had our postmaster "judge" the proposals and choose one to become a stamp. For a prize for first place, we scanned the student's artwork and used an online service that turns photos and artwork into a sheet of actual postage stamps. We carefully explained that the student's stamps would not be available for purchase at the post office, but that the stamps we purchased could be used to mail an actual letter.

Stamp Persuasive Writing

WESTWARD, HO! or WESTWARD? NO!

Westward, ho! or **Westward? No!**

**The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly:
Life on the Oregon Trail**

Setting: the year 1853 in the small town of Sterlingville, Indiana

Scenario: A town meeting has been called by the mayor of Sterlingville. Many local citizens are considering selling their farms and heading out on the Oregon Trail. Your class will prepare a presentation to be given at the town meeting that gives information about the pros and cons of trail life.

Small groups will become experts on assigned topics and will present the pros and cons through PowerPoint slides. Our primary source of information will be the book Daily Life in a Covered Wagon by Paul Erickson.

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We purchased multiple copies of *Daily Life in a Covered Wagon*, put students into groups and assigned each group a topic from the book. After introducing the project and discussing what pros and cons are, we read a small section of the book together and did a sample pro/con chart. Students then had 2-3 class periods to work with their partners to read their assigned section and take notes on the pros and cons. Next, students were instructed how to access the PowerPoint template and add their information. We were able to use a special folder on our school's computer network. When everyone was finished, I compiled all the slides into one PowerPoint show. When we held our town meeting, I introduced myself as the mayor and asked each group of students to present the pros and cons of their topic to the rest of the "citizens." The goal was to help each citizen make a decision on whether or not they would choose to head west. As each slide was displayed, the group that created it stood up and talked about the pros and cons and answered any questions that arose. At the end of the presentation, each student was given a ballot and were asked to decide if they would head west or not, and to give three reasons (facts from the presentation) that helped them make their decision. The students loved the "town hall" format and didn't mind pretending that PowerPoint belonged in a 1853 town hall meeting!

Trail project topic assignments
Pro / con chart
PowerPoint template
Westward ho ballot