Research Daily Life During a Historical Time Period

1. Focus

Explain Researching Daily Life During a Historical Time Period

Say: We’ve learned about researching the time when our historical stories take place. This helps us tell a story based on facts. Now we need to focus on our characters. To make sure they seem authentic, or believable, we will do research to learn about their daily lives. We’ll want to find out about the clothes they wore, the food they ate, what type of work they did—basically how they lived. Today we’re going to practice doing that together.

Model Researching Daily Life

Display the modeling text and the research chart from the previous lesson using chart paper or the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the modeling text aloud. As you continue to think aloud, model taking notes on the research chart.

On the trip across the Atlantic, ships only carried seven pounds of food per week per passenger. Since most of the poor Irish who traveled on the ships brought no food with them, they had to rely on the meager pound-a-day food rations, which amounted to starvation rations. Makeshift brick fireplaces were the only places where immigrants could cook their food. Often it was undercooked, causing upset stomach and diarrhea. Besides lack of food, passengers also suffered from a lack of fresh water. Sometimes the water was stored in old casks that had previously stored wine, vinegar, or chemicals. Many ships ran out of water before they reached America.

Modeling Text

Sample think-aloud. Say: I’m going to use the second half of the chart to record what I learn about the daily life of people on board a ship headed to America in 1855. I looked up some information online.

Say: This source tells me that life on board the ships was awful. The people received very little food and it was often of poor quality and undercooked. People were sick. And there wasn’t enough water. I’ll add this to the Daily Lives section. For the Culture of the Times section, I’m going to note that the characters are fleeing the Irish Potato Famine. I can also fill in the Character Traits section now that I know more about what the trip was like. People not only needed to be mentally strong, they also needed to be physically strong so they wouldn’t get sick. They certainly needed to be tough to survive.
3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Today we learned about researching the daily lives of people for our historical fiction stories. To create believable characters, we need to include information based on facts about how people lived—the clothes they wore, what they ate, and where they lived. We need to think about what kind of person a life like this would produce. Our historical fiction stories will be much more convincing because they will be based on real information from history.

During independent writing time, have students use their copies of the partially completed BLM 3 to research the daily lives of people. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share some of the information they discovered about how people lived. Ask them how this will help them write accurate historical fiction stories.

2. Rehearse

Practice Researching Daily Life During a Historical Time Period

Ask students to use their partially completed BLMs from the previous lesson to generate lists of what they think they’ll need to find out about the daily lives of people during the time period when their stories take place. Ask: What do you need to know about people’s daily lives during that time period in order for your characters to be believable?

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share the lists they generated. Discuss with students where they might begin their research. Ask students to discuss how they can apply this strategy to their independent research.

Strategies to Support ELs

**Beginning**

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. You will want to work with them individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the practice activity.