Theme 2

THEME 2: American Stories
Challenge Activities for

American Stories

Selections

1 Tomás and the Library Lady
2 Tanya’s Reunion
3 Boss of the Plains
4 A Very Important Day
1. The Library, Live!  150 MINUTES  INDIVIDUAL

Materials: stiff paper, cardboard, or oak tag; ice cream sticks or others; and miscellaneous clean, recycled scraps

**Day 1**

**Choose Your Inspiration**
Tell students that they should think carefully about the qualities of the book that they like. Offer the following guidelines:

- Choose a book whose special qualities you can identify easily. Think about the characters, the setting, how the story is told, exciting events, and so forth.
- As an option, look for a character with a strong personality whose "voice" can carry the story.

**English Language Learners:** Brainstorm with students lists of qualities of their favorite characters.

**Day 2**

Students continue to work on this project.

**Day 3**

**Choose Your Scene**

Check with students on their progress in choosing a book and a passage to present. Remind them that their goals are to generate interest and curiosity in a book.

**Day 4**

Students continue to work on this project.

**Day 5**

**Show What You Know**

- Tell students to choose a presentation format that showcases the main qualities of their story and will interest their audience.
- Invite other classes to watch the presentations.

**Expected Outcome**

A good presentation will include:

✔ an excerpt that demonstrates the qualities of the book, such as how the story is told, the exciting events, the characters, and so forth.

✔ a well-rehearsed, well-planned, and creative presentation.
2. Meet the Librarian  60 MINUTES  INDIVIDUAL

Materials: tape recorder (optional)

If more than one student works on this activity, suggest a group interview in which interviewers pool their questions but prepare their own articles from their notes.

3. From Seedling to Harvest  60 MINUTES  INDIVIDUAL

(Social Studies) (Science)

Materials: diagram of the life cycle of a major crop

Remind students to clarify when work is done by people rather than machines. If necessary, review sequence of events and time words with students.

Additional Independent Work

Connecting/Comparing Literature

Have students compare the Leveled Reader selection Emma Rides on the Erie Canal with the anthology selection Tomás and the Library Lady, using what they have learned about sequence of events. Students may discuss or write about their comparisons.

Other Activities

• Theme 2 Assignment Cards 1, 2
• TE p. 174, Literature Discussion
• TE p. 181, Social Studies
• TE p. 181E, Challenge Word Practice

• TE pp. R9, R17, Challenge
• Education Place: www.eduplace.com

More activities related to Tomás and the Library Lady

• Accelerated Reader®, Tomás and the Library Lady

Expected Outcome

A good interview will include
✔ the date and time of the interview, details and information that answer student interview questions
✔ paraphrased answers and direct quotations from the librarian
✔ a well-organized summary with a strong opening and effective closing

Expected Outcome

A good story will include
✔ specific details of the life cycle of a crop grown in Texas or Iowa
✔ a clear description of how the work is done
✔ an orderly presentation of a sequence of events
1. Road Games  60 MINUTES  INDIVIDUAL

**Materials:** game books, a hole punch, index cards, folders, drawing paper, crayons, and markers

**Collecting**

Explain that it can be hard to read a lot of text in a moving vehicle. Therefore, the games should not require much reading. Games could include things passengers can see out the windows, such as

- buildings
- license plates
- road and other signs

Remind students to check their notes and carefully explain how to play each game.

**Sorting Out**

Check with students on the progress of their books. Tell them that their list will help them to include games they want.

**English Language Learners:** Students might like to make a game book with directions in their primary language and in English.

**Show What You Know**

Each student should proofread his or her work. If possible, make duplicates for each student to take home.
2. In Search of the Grand Canyon

60 MINUTES   INDIVIDUAL PAIR

(Challenge Theme Paperback)
(Science)

Materials: a dictionary and tracing paper

Students should make their choices after reviewing the text for more than one event.

3. A Quality Character

60 MINUTES   INDIVIDUAL

Advise students that they need factual material to support their opinions. Ask volunteers to share their character sketches with the class.

Additional Independent Work

Connecting/Comparing Literature

Have students compare the Leveled Reader selection Coming Home with the anthology selection Tanya’s Reunion, using what they have learned about Making Inferences. Students may discuss or write about their comparisons.

Other Activities

- Challenge Theme Paperback, In Search of the Grand Canyon
- Theme 2 Assignment Cards 3, 4
- TE p. 210, Literature Discussion
- TE p. 215E, Challenge Word Practice

- TE pp. R6, R11, R19, Challenge
- Education Place: www.eduplace.com
- More activities related to Tanya’s Reunion
- Accelerated Reader®, Tanya’s Reunion
**Activities**

**SELECTION 3: Boss of the Plains**

1. **Story Hat**

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**Materials:** self-stick notes, tape or glue, construction paper, crayons, markers, and anthologies of traditional stories

**DAY 1**

**Find the Stories**

Tell students of the tradition of oral storytelling. Explain how traveling storytellers used their storytelling to earn a living and by chance to spread the culture of their people. Then suggest that students use these guidelines in selecting stories:

- Choose simple stories.
- Choose stories that make it clear what the main character is seeking.
- Choose stories that reflect their original culture.

Students read and select three stories. Students practice retelling the selected stories.

**English Language Learners:** Students may be able to share stories from their primary language. Have beginners work with more advanced students to present the story in English.

**DAY 2**

Students continue to work on this project.

**DAY 3**

**Make the Hat**

Check with students on the progress of their story gathering.

- Have them time their stories for ten minutes or less.
- Allow time for rehearsal and, if possible, an audio recording.
- For health reasons, participants should not share hats.

Students continue to work on this project.

**DAY 4**

**Share What You Know**

- The storytellers should introduce themselves and say whether the audience is to take part.
- You may wish to let the storytellers surprise their audiences. Or a “runner” can announce the storytellers’ approach.
2. What’s the Reason?  60 MINUTES  INDIVIDUAL  PAIR
(Social Studies)

Materials: reference sources

Students may make different generalizations based on the same facts. Discuss how the same facts can be interpreted in different ways. Remind students that their generalizations should include signal words like most, often, and usually.

3. Song of the West  60 MINUTES  INDIVIDUAL  PAIR
(Social Studies) (Music)

Materials: songbooks or recordings of traditional tunes

Tell students that in writing lyrics their main concerns should be
• to capture the rhythm, mood, and special vocabulary of the work.
• to fit the lyrics to the music.

English Language Learners: Students might use tunes from their primary language.

Additional Independent Work

Connecting/Comparing Literature

Have students compare the Leveled Reader selection Elisba Otis’s Ups and Downs with the anthology selection Boss of the Plains, using what they have learned about Making Generalizations. Students may discuss or write about their comparisons.

Other Activities

• Theme 2 Assignment Cards 5, 6, 7
• TE p. 238, Literature Discussion
• TE p. 245, Music
• TE p. 245E, Challenge Word Practice
• TE pp. R13, R21, Challenge
• Education Place: www.eduplace.com

More activities related to Boss of the Plains
• Accelerated Reader®, Boss of the Plains

Expected Outcome

A good result will include
✔ three acceptable generalizations as to why people wear hats
✔ a well-organized chart showing the bases for the generalizations
✔ words that signal a generalization, such as often, few, many, and so forth

A good song will include
✔ a familiar tune
✔ lyrics that match the tune
✔ lyrics that tell something about the work

SELECTION 3: Boss of the Plains
1. The Start of a New Day

**150 MINUTES**  
**SMALL GROUP**

**Materials:** poster board, crayons, markers, and a calendar showing all current holidays

---

**DAY 1**

**Set Up the Choices**

Have students form small groups. Ask if they know the guidelines for a democratic procedure, including:

- raising one’s hand for recognition from the moderator
- listening carefully as others speak
- not interrupting other speakers

Students may wish to make and illustrate a poster with guidelines for a democratic procedure.

**English Language Learners:** Group students with fluent speakers or students with a more advanced facility with the language.

---

**DAY 2**

Students continue to work on this project.

---

**DAY 3**

**Vote on the Holiday**

Check on the progress of the choices and the ballot. Explain what a majority vote is.

---

**DAY 4**

Students continue to work on this project.

---

**DAY 5**

**Share What You Know**

If more than one group has created a holiday, you may wish to have the entire class vote their preference. If possible, arrange to observe the created holiday in your classroom.
2. New Americans’ Contributions
60 MINUTES INDIVIDUAL
Materials: encyclopedia and other reference sources

You might want to brainstorm a list of famous immigrants. Remind students that an immigrant is anyone from another country who comes to the United States to live permanently.

3. Sorting States 60 MINUTES INDIVIDUAL PAIR
(Social Studies)
Materials: map of the United States

Point out that there are many categories to choose from. Be sure that every state belongs in its chosen category.

Additional Independent Work

Connecting/Comparing Literature ★

Have students compare the Leveled Reader selection Poppy’s Timeline with the anthology selection A Very Important Day, using what they have learned about Categorize and Classify. Students may discuss or write about their comparisons.

Other Activities

• Theme 2 Assignment Cards 8, 9, 10
• TE p. 268, Literature Discussion
• TE p. 275, Mock Election
• TE p. 275E, Challenge Word Practice
• TE pp. R15, R23, Challenge
• Education Place: www.eduplace.com

More activities related to A Very Important Day

• Accelerated Reader®, A Very Important Day

3. Sorting States

Materials:

- A map of the United States

This activity is to help students categorize states into different categories. The maps can be used to help students visualize the states and their different categories. Students can discuss or write about their categories and why they chose them.

Expected Outcome

A good word web will include:

✔ clearly understandable categories
✔ states that belong in each category
✔ an organized format

2. New Americans’ Contributions

Materials:

- Encyclopedia and other reference sources

This activity is to help students learn about famous immigrants who contributed to the United States. Students will write reports on these immigrants, including where they came from, when they immigrated, and what major contributions they made. They will also explain why they think this person is important.

Expected Outcome

A good report will include:

✔ a clear presentation of facts
✔ the major contributions of the chosen person
✔ why that person was chosen