

Teacher's Guide for FACES

February 2014: WILD & WEIRD

Prepared by Heather Bode

Heather Bode lives in Montana with her husband and five children. They have been experiencing wild & weird weather: 50-degree days in January! Heather enjoys researching non-fiction topics for children and adults. Her degree is in elementary education and she has many years of experience working in private and public school settings.

****All codes listed in parentheses refer to Common Core Standards.****

Getting Started

Give students a piece of blank paper. Write the words Wild & Weird across the top. Encourage students to write their own definitions of these words underneath their title. Then make a T-chart: one side labeled WILD and the other side labeled WEIRD. As you make your way through the issue, tell students to classify each article topic as either wild or weird based on their definitions.

High 5

(RL3) Classify the five points by their physical location as NEAR or FAR from your location. Even if they are all classified as FAR, what do they have to say about world geography? Why are they good examples for this issue?

Some Big and Not So Big: Wild Cats

(RL1) Locate the geographic regions mentioned in the article.
List each cat's adaptations to its environment.

(RL6) What is the author's point of view and purpose?

(W7) Conduct short research to find additional information on these cats to present to class.

Here Come the Zombies

(RL1) Where did the idea of zombies originate?

(RI1) How did Americans misinterpret Haitian cultural traditions? What effects (good or bad) might have been caused by this misinterpretation?

(RL1) According to Blumberg, what do zombies represent?

(RI1) Why does zombie popularity spike during certain times?

(SL1) Debate whether or not you agree with this statement in the article:
"We need monsters. Monsters are important in our culture because they give us that escape valve. They give us that way to deal with fear safely."

(RL8) Find evidence in the article that shows how zombies help in education.

(SL1&W3) Work in groups to develop a disaster plan for your school in the event of a zombie attack. Could any of your ideas be used in real life situations?

Where the Earth Boils Beneath Your Feet

(SL2) Go to youtube.com and search: The Coolest Stuff on the Planet-Rotorua. Watch this video and evaluate the information presented in it vs. what you read in the article.

(RL3) What U.S. national park displays many of the same features as Rotorua?
Compare/Contrast Yellowstone and Rotorua.

(RI1) The second paragraph explains the geological makeup of Rotorua. Illustrate it.
The second to last paragraph describes the Eighth Wonder of the World: the Pink and White terraces. What do you think they looked like? Illustrate it.
(Extra Credit: How many Ancient Wonders of the World were there?)

(RL1) How have people adapted to life in Rotorua starting with Maori to present-day residents?

(W1) What's your opinion? On the bottom of page 14 into the top of page 15, the author mentions a problem with bore holes and geyser activity. What happens when civilization begins crowding our natural resources? In your opinion, what is the answer? Support your opinion with information from the article and/or additional sources.

(SL1) Class discussion: What are the pros/cons of living in a place like Rotorua? Would you live there? Why/why not?

A Jarring Discovery

(RL7) How does the illustration added to the photograph help you understand the article?

(W3&7) Conduct short research on Laos: its culture and geography. Make up a story about how the jars came to be and what purpose they served. Take into consideration the location of the Plain of Jars and the culture of the area.

(RL9) How might the Plain of Jars be considered a version of the Egyptian pyramids? Consider: ancient objects often defy explanation until some small piece of the puzzle comes together.

Dear Tommy

(RL1/RI1)

- Do you remember where Tommy lives? (New Jersey)
- Where do you think Lily lives? Why?
- List Lily's responsibilities. How do they compare to your home responsibilities?
- Use the photos to come up with a list of words describing Lily's personality.
- (RL8) Find evidence in the emails confirming your list of words.

Pee-Yew! Stinky Plants of Indonesia

(RI1) Locate Indonesia on a world map. How does Indonesia's physical location account for the fact that it is home to 10% of the world's plant species?

(SL2) The article says the *rafflesia* is not a plant. What is it? Watch this video to find out.
m.youtube.com/watch?v=ZgHhDsJSXOI

(W7) The *rafflesia* is endangered. Conduct short research to find out why.

(W1) Should it be saved? Who cares about a stinky "flower" on the rain forest floor? Write an opinion paragraph stating your position. Provide facts and information to support your stance.

Showing Off Their Skills: The Chilean Rodeo

(RL4) Vocabulary: accordions, huasos, medialunas, cueca, fiesta

(SL1) Work in groups to create a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the Chilean Rodeo to American Rodeos. Consider setting, events, wardrobe, etc.

(RI1) The article states, "Most of them (cowboys) are as skilled on the dance floor as they are on horseback." Why? What skills are needed for rodeo? Dancing?

(SL1) The final paragraph presents an ongoing debate about Chilean Rodeo. Choose a side of the issue and use information from the article to support your position.

Ringling Rocks/ Singing and Squeaking Sands

(RL1)

- How did early discoverers/explorers explain the presence of the ringing rocks and singing sands? Why?
- What is the scientific explanation behind these?

(RI1) Scientists used unique technology to find out about these. How do scientific discoveries help us over time?

**The Ringing Rocks article presents a good opportunity to practice the SQ3R method. This is a basic study/note-taking method.

S= survey the article

Q= turn headings into questions

R= read the article looking for answers to the questions

R= recite your answers/write them down

R= review what you learned

Eat-la-WHAT?

(RL7) Before you read: Google huitlacoche images. Also look at the photo on p. 30. What is your reaction? Can you think of another food that looks gross but tastes good?

(L5) Have you heard the expression: Looks can be deceiving? Apply this to huitlacoche.

(RL1/RI1) List names given to huitlacoche. Do they have a positive or negative connotation?

(W7) Research Aztec and Mayan culture. What were they known for? Where did they excel?

*Note that they both recognized huitlacoche as something good.

(W1) You are a farmer. Write an opinion paragraph on why huitlacoche is/is not good for your crops.

(SL1&5) Work in groups to come up with additional uses for huitlacoche based on the nutrients it produces. Then develop a marketing campaign for your products. Present your campaign to the class.

Skiing in the Desert

(RL1/RI1)

- Locate the United Arab Emirates. How does the physical location make this intriguing?
- Why do skiers rent everything?
- Do you think Emiratis still participate in traditional pastimes? Why/why not?
- How has the discovery of oil changed life for Emiratis? How might your life change if you suddenly became rich?

(SL1) Do you think indoor skiing creates a real experience? Why/why not? How is it any different than an indoor ice rink or swimming pool?

The Vast Australian Outback

(RI1) Find words used in the article to describe the Outback: vast, harsh, remote, isolated, lonely. What image do they create?

(RL8) Find evidence in the article proving these words are accurate.

(RL7) AFTER you read: Google Australian Outback images. Also look at photos accompanying the article. How do these images reinforce the vocabulary chosen by the author?

Areas of the Outback are experiencing severe drought. Read about it at:

www.theaustralian.com.au. Once you are at the site, search Drought in Queensland. There are many up-to-date articles on this.

Check into the Ice Hotel

(RL1/RI1)

- How did the people in Sweden take a perceived negative (living in a cold dark place in winter) and turn it into a positive (the ice hotel)?
- Similarly, what could your town/city do?

(SL1) Would you stay in the Ice Hotel? Why/why not? List the positives and negatives of such an experience.

(W7) Do you have to go to Sweden to experience an Ice Hotel? Conduct short research to find Ice Hotel locations in North America.

The Wolf Who Knew How to be a Friend

(RL5) What format is this written in? How does it differ from the previous articles?

(RI1) Infer the setting of this folktale. Use illustrations and character names/clothing to help you.

(L5) Discuss the meanings of these lines from the play:

- "There is one way to tell a wise man from a foolish one. A wise man makes a mistake just once."
- "In this world, you can kill a man and you can kill a plant. But you can't kill the truth."

(RL2) What is the central message of the story?

(RL3) Describe the three brothers. Give characteristics and find the character flaw in each one.

(RI1) Who is the true hero in the story? Why?

Wrap Up

1. If you did the activity under **Getting Started**, have students compare their lists. How did their definitions guide the placement of certain topics?

2. A Sensory Experience

Ask the students: Which article most resonates with you? Ask students to analyze which senses are involved in their choice. (i.e. the huitlacoche article has strong visual elements but also relies on taste, the Rotorua article plays with the sense of smell, the ringing rocks depends on the sense of hearing, etc.)

Students may find that they are drawn to a certain article based on the senses involved as much as the topic the article discusses.