

Teachers Guide for Faces

April 2010: The Midwest
prepared by Elisabeth Greenberg

Elisabeth Greenberg grew up in a big family with two brothers and four sisters. Family is still important to her and she stays in touch with her own children by telephone, VOI, and email as well as birthday cards and family celebrations. She has written three books on Saudi Arabia and many magazine stories and articles about other parts of the world.

GETTING READY:

Explain to class that brainstorming means to contribute any ideas about a topic without censoring them. Then write THE MIDWEST on a large piece of paper or the blackboard, and ask students what comes to mind when they think MIDWEST. If they have trouble getting started, you might suggest topics, such as places, food, family, activities, industries, etc. Write down anything students say. You may want to organize student contributions by using different colored pens, grouping similar items in specific spaces, or webbing. Review the ideas that students have offered, and ask, "What would you like to know about the Midwest?" and list their questions. Keep the information posted throughout the study of the magazine.

At a Glance

Geography: Ask students to review these pages and work in pairs to answer the question: "Why were the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers so important to the Midwest?" Ask them to note particularly the industries associated with the different states and to think about how rivers and water are used. Discuss answers with entire class.

Oh, Give Them a Home

Creative Writing: Explain to students that an acrostic poem is based on a single word written down the left side of the page. Each line of the poem then begins with the letter of the topic word. Each line of the poem should relate to the topic word.

Have students read the article, then write an acrostic poem about bison, using the facts in the article and the images that they produce in the students' imaginations. Encourage students to illustrate their poems if they have time. Have students share their poems by reading aloud to the class or in small groups or collect the poems for a bulletin board display or a class book.

Welcome to America's Heartland

Thinking About What You Read:

After the class reads the article, use the following questions for discussion.

1. What happened to the population of the Midwest after Horace Greeley wrote, "Go West, young man" in 1865? What other changes were taking place in the US at that time?
2. How did the Midwest's population change from the 1600's to the late 1800's and why?
3. What happened to the land rights of the Native Americans in the Midwest at different times in US history?
4. How did the growth of different industries affect housing patterns?
5. How is current unemployment affecting the Midwest economy?

Old Man River

Communicating What You Read:

After reading the article, have students choose to work on one of the following projects individually, with a friend, or in a small group.

1. Advertise the tourism potential of the Mississippi river system by creating a tourism brochure.
2. Create a poster showing how the Mississippi waters have contributed to the economic potential of the Midwest.
3. Give a short speech or panel discussion on the history and importance of the Great Lakes.
4. Research and explain how the Great Lakes were formed.
5. Research and explain the importance of locks and dams for water shipping.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Play Ball

Writing a Persuasive Essay:

After reading the article, choose your favorite of the three sports events celebrated and write an essay convincing the reader make your favorite his/hers.

Big Stuff

After reading the article, make a list of the "biggest" things in the Midwest. After you list the "big stuff" mentioned in the article, discover some more Midwestern "big stuff" through your own research.

Growing Up in the Midwest

Writing a Compare/Contrast Essay:

After reading the descriptions of life in the Midwest, choose either Emily or Scott and write a compare and contrast essay about your lives are the same and how they are different. Students may want to share these by reading aloud or creating a class book or bulletin board.

Eating Your Way Around the World...in the Midwest

Math Connection:

As a class, make a list of the different foods mentioned in the article. Then have students frame a math question or project related to the foods, for example, What percentage of our class prefers Midwestern deep dish pizza to thin crust pizza? Or, Which country contributed the largest number of foods on the list? Or make a graph of how many foods on the list each person in the class has eaten.

Zoo Teens

Reading for Information

1. How old does an Indianapolis Zoo Teen have to be?
2. How much time does a Zoo Teen commit to volunteering at the zoo?
3. Describe the first and second year activities of the Zoo Teens.
4. Why does the Indianapolis Zoo include group interviews as part of the application process?
5. What do the volunteers mentioned in the article identify as highlights of the program?

Thinking about What You Read:

1. Would you apply for the Zoo Teen program? Why or why not?
2. If you had your choice of volunteer programs, what kind of program would you choose?
3. What would you hope to learn from volunteering?

Life on the Farm

Questions for discussion:

1. What conservation techniques does farmer Daryl Barry practice on his land?
2. Can you think of other techniques that might be effective?
3. What weather hazards do Midwestern farms face? Can you think of a way to decrease the effects of weather hazards?
4. Why do you think farmers often supplement their farming income with another job?
5. Why do you think Daryl Barry continues to farm?

Legend of the Moccasin Flower

Encourage students to practice reading the story aloud with drama. A group may want to present the story as a skit or dramatic reading for another class.

For fun, have students choose a favorite flower or plant. Then make up a folktale to explain how it got its name.

WRAP UP

Review the questions students had in the beginning and ask them what they have learned that answers the question. Then ask students, What did you most enjoy learning about the Midwest? Why?