

Title: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words, but You Must Write the Thousand Words  
Anyway  
Author/School: James J. Heffernan, James Ford Rhodes High School  
Course: Writing  
Grade Level: Ninth Grade  
Standards met: Ninth Grade Ohio Standards

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revisions.**

**A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words, but You Must Write  
the Thousand Words Anyway**

**A Unit Lesson Plan  
Somewhere Around Ninth Grade  
(Ninth Grade Ohio Standards)**

**By  
James J. Heffernan  
James Ford Rhodes High School  
Great Migration Project  
Summer 2003**

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Grade Level: 9<sup>th</sup> Writing

Summer 2003

**A Five Day Plan****By****Jim Heffernan****James Ford Rhodes High School**

*A picture is worth a thousand words, but you have to write the thousand words any way.*

The Oral Tradition in the African American Community

The power of story telling

Autobiographical essay/story

Activity	Materials	Time	Standard (OH)
Journal: Who is the most interesting person in your family and why?	Journal	10	Writing Application: 6. Produce informal writing
Discussion: Why are they interesting and how do you know?		10	Communication: Demonstrate an understanding of the rules of English language and select language appropriate to purpose and audience.
Brainstorming: What are the different ways information is passed on from one generation to the next?	Overhead/board	10	
Notes: The Oral Tradition (African Storytelling Intro)	<a href="http://www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/afrstory.htm">http://www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/afrstory.htm</a>  Social Sciences Connection/African Storytelling  One copy for each team/one set of presentation questions	10	Reading Process: Comprehension Strategies 2. Answer literal, inferential, evaluative and synthesizing questions to demonstrate comprehension of grade appropriate texts and electronic and visual media.
Jigsaw: African Storytelling Article, groups of four	Social Sciences Connection/African Storytelling  Divide the article into	20	Reading Process: Comprehension Strategies 2. Answer literal, inferential, evaluative and synthesizing questions to demonstrate comprehension of

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	as many parts as is appropriate for the group.  Assign questions to each group.		grade appropriate texts and electronic and visual media.
Report out: Each Group presents its section	Question sheets for all students for each section.	20	
Homework: Read and take notes	A Gullah History <a href="http://www.islandpacket.com/man/gullah/history.html">http://www.islandpacket.com/man/gullah/history.html</a>	5	Reading Process: Self-monitoring strategies 3. Monitor own comprehension by adjusting speed to fit the purpose, note taking or summarizing what has been read so far in the text.
Reflection	What have you learned today?	5	

## Day 2

Journal. List 5 things that you did not know about Gullah before you read the article.	Journal	10	Writing Application: 6
Discussion: What are traditions, and, or what makes up a culture?		10	
Read as a group about Gullah Story telling.  Discuss the reasons for the continued oral tradition.	<a href="http://www.islandpacket.com/man/gullah/storyteller.html">http://www.islandpacket.com/man/gullah/storyteller.html</a>  "Gullah Storytelling is Alive and Well"	30	Reading Application: 5. Analyze the author's implicit and explicit, argument, perspective or viewpoint in text.
Listen to "I am Sapelo"  Discussion: What are the advantages and disadvantages of listening to a story verses reading a story?	<a href="http://www.gacoast.com/navigator/iamsapelo.html">http://www.gacoast.com/navigator/iamsapelo.html</a>  Tape of "I am Sapelo"	15	Reading/Listening Applications 4. Assess the adequacy, accuracy, and appropriateness of an author's details, identifying persuasive techniques and examples of propaganda, bias and stereotyping.

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Homework: Bring in a story that has been passed down from an older person in your family that you believe is true. List five reasons you believe it to be true.		10	
Reflection		5	

## Day 3

Activity	Material	Time	Standard (OH)
Journal: From observing the picture on the overhead, try to explain what has happened.	Transparency of an ambiguous event.	10	#6
Discussion: What could have happened and why? What reaction does the photographer want you to have?		10	Reading Applications: #5
Review: Propaganda, bias and stereotype	<u>Elements of Writing</u>	10	Reading Applications: #4
View pictures from the <u>Color of Money</u> CD.  Discuss the reasons for putting pictures of an enslaved people on the money of slave owners.	<u>Confederate Currency</u> <u>The Color of Money</u> <u>Images of Slavery in Confederate and Southern States Currency</u>	20	Reading Applications: #4
Read: “A Visual Storyteller Engages the Gap”. Identify the persuasive techniques used by the author and the	“A Visual Storyteller Engages the Gap” pp17-21 <u>The Color of Money</u>	20	Reading Applications; #4 #5 #6 Analyze the author’s key points

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techniques attributed to the original designers of the money.			to support argument or point of view.
Homework: Bring in a picture of yourself that tells a story.		5	
Reflection		5	

## Day 4

Activity	Material	Time	
Journal: Do you still believe the story passed down in your family happened exactly the way you heard it? Explain why or why not.	Journal	10	Writing Application: #6
Review the criterion for a successful speech.  Make the necessary changes for a successful story.  Create rubric.	<u>Elements of Writing</u>	20	Communication: Speaking Skills and applications 5,6,7,and 8.
Write a short story about the events in the picture. See rubric.  This story will then be presented to the class in the storytelling tradition. See rubric		50	Writing Application: #6
Homework: Finish Writing			
Reflection		5	

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Day 5 of this unit will occur when the writing process is complete and the students have had time to practice telling their stories. It may last for more than one day.

Activity	Materials	Time	Standard (OH)
Journal: What do you hope to achieve with the telling of your story?	Journal	10	Writing #6
Draw lots for the order.		5	
Each student will tell their story and evaluate five other students' presentations.	Transparency of the picture and five evaluation rubrics.	5 minutes per student.	Communication: Speaking Skills and applications 5,6,7,and 8.  Communication Oral: Listening 1, 2 and 4

### Rationale

**"...[I]t is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior.**

**It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and the exploits of brave fighters.**

**It is the story...that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence.**

**The story is our escort; without it, we are blind.**

**Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story;**

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**rather it is the story that owns us and directs us."**

**--Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987)**

**We must not let our students make the same blunders of previous generations. They must hear these stories from us and learn how to pass on their own stories. There are three main goals of this lesson. First, the students will be exposed to the influence of African American culture on American culture as a whole. Second, the students will experience the thrill of passing on a part of their life through a story. Third and maybe most importantly the students will understand how the persuasive devices used in written speech are also used in oral and visual communication.**

**In order to place African American storytelling in perspective the lesson must start in Africa.**

**"Traditionally, Africans have revered good stories and storytellers, as have most past and present peoples around the world who are rooted in oral cultures and traditions. Ancient writing traditions do exist on the African continent, but most Africans today, as in the past, are primarily oral peoples, and their art forms are oral rather than literary. In contrast to written "literature," African "orature" (to use Kenyan novelist and critic Ngugi wa Thiong'o's phrase) is orally composed and transmitted, and often created to be verbally and communally performed as an integral part of dance and music. The Oral Arts of Africa are rich and varied, developing with the beginnings of African cultures, and they remain living traditions that continue to evolve and flourish today."**

**For more background information visit**

**<http://www.cocc.edu/cagatucci/classes/hum211/afrstory.htm>**

**Hopefully, this lesson can be taught in collaboration with the history teacher in order to place the events in historical perspective for the students. The next step is to show how the Gullah people continue the culture of storytelling in the low country of South Carolina.**

**<http://www.islandpacket.com/man/gullah/storyteller.html>**

**Once the students understand the past they must be shown the relevance for them today. Information regarding storytellers in Cleveland, OH can be found at**

**<http://clevelandstorytellers.com/>**

**Not only is it necessary to for the students to understand the importance of oral tradition, they must learn how to become proficient in the art themselves. Every student has a story to tell and each must be taught the skills necessary and given the opportunity to pass on that story. Using the information from the articles above and incorporating the objectives of the standards the class will be able develop their storytelling abilities and perhaps achieve a greater love for the oral tradition. (Or take all the fun out of storytelling by beating it to death in English class!) During this part of the unit, the students and the teacher must collaborate to create a rubric**

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**for the scoring of the eventual storytelling. This rubric must incorporate the standards addressed in the unit and any added areas deemed important by the class.**

**Finally, and perhaps the most interesting aspect of the project will be the study of persuasive techniques in communication. Using the articles and the artwork in John W. Jones' book *The Color of Money*, the students will be able to observe how the literary devices such as propaganda and slanting can be applied to both artwork and oral communication. The depiction of slave life in the artwork of confederate money was used for a reason. What it actually showed was entirely different, and what was recreated by the artwork on John W, Jones was something different yet again. <http://www.colorofmoney.com/>**

**The culminating activity for this unit should be a joyous day of storytelling. Somehow, the environment must be created for these students to use the skills they possess to pass on important information about themselves, their families and life in general as easily as they tell a story to a friend about some exploit. That is our job.**

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Terms

Etiological  
Irredeemably  
Reintegrated

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Oral traditions

Cunning

Indigenous

Static

Definitive

Attest

Vulnerable

Juxtaposition

Commodity

Poignancy