



John McLoughlin

Context Clues

Grade: 4-5

Overview

The pragmatics of language have changed considerably throughout history. The purpose of this lesson is not only to expose students to the changes that have occurred in language and word use, but also to give students the opportunity to practice decoding difficult texts. This lesson focuses on context clues and how they can help us understand the meaning of words we do not understand. This lesson can be coupled within an Oregon history unit, since John McLoughlin was such a vital figure and driving force affecting how Oregon came to be.

Oregon Common Core State Standards

Language Arts Standards:

- CCSS.ELA.RI.4.2 Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
- CCSS.ELA.RI.4.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to *grade 4 topic or subject area*.
- CCSS.ELA.W.4.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- CCSS.ELA.W.4.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
- CCSS.ELA.W.4.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Social Studies Standards:

- Historical Knowledge 4.2: Explain how key individuals and events influenced the early growth and changes in Oregon.
- Historical Thinking 4.7: Use primary and secondary sources to create or describe a narrative about events in Oregon history.

Materials

- Historic Oregon Newspapers website
- Copies of articles
- Document camera
- Highlighters or something with color
- Context clues activity sheet
- Dictionary
- Brainstorm graphic organizer (optional)

Key Vocabulary

- Recourse
- Mendicants
- Unsalable
- Arduous
- Prescience
- Supineness
- Destitute

Please note: These vocabulary words are tentative. Feel free to adapt to the needs of your students.

Lesson

- *Introduction:* Remind students of their studies in Oregon history.
 - Tell students the main focus of today's lesson will be John McLoughlin, one of the crucial figures impacting the founding of Oregon. McLoughlin was a doctor and superintendent for the Hudson's Bay Company, which helped many people survive their journey across America into Oregon by providing them with necessary supplies such as shelter, food, and clothing, and helping them become acclimated to Oregon.
- *Read aloud:* Read the text together chorally, teaching-directed, or popcorn style.
 - Students should each have a copy of: ["Dr. John McLoughlin-'Father of Oregon' by Frederick V. Holman"](#)
- *Discussion:* Facilitate a discussion of the students' first reading of the text, eventually leading students to offer up vocabulary words that were confusing.
- Some discussion questions to consider:
 - What are some thoughts you have about this article?
 - How do you feel about what happened to John McLoughlin for helping the settlers?
 - What are some things that may have confused you?
 - What do you think about John McLoughlin?
 - How do you think you would feel traveling through America?

- Were there any vocabulary words that you were stuck on? (Write the vocabulary words that students offer on the board. Then write five pre-chosen vocabulary words on the board, and ask the class to choose five more. Or choose ten vocabulary words for the students.)
- *Introduce activity:* Make sure the mandatory words are circled or outlined for students to refer to when doing the activity.
 - Each student should have a context clues activity sheet.
 - Students will be circling the vocabulary word with the writing tool, and then highlighting the context clue that helps them understand what the vocabulary word means. Then the students will be finding the dictionary definitions for each word.
 - Model finding the context clue and the procedures for the activity sheet.
 - Remind students that to find the context clue, they must read before and after the vocabulary word.
- *Activity:* Release students into partnerships, or decide to perform as an independent activity
 - Some vocabulary word ideas are listed above.
- *Reread article:* Once students are finished with the context clues activity, reread the article together as a class, in partnerships, or in table groups.
- *Debrief:* When finished rereading the text, call the class together to debrief.
- Some debrief questions to consider:
 - What was the most interesting word you learned? Why?
 - What was your favorite word? Why?
 - Do you think context clues are useful?
 - Did you understand the article because of the context clues?
 - What was the most difficult word to find? Why?

Extension Activity Ideas

Activities can be modified several different ways, depending on the grade level and focus of study. Listed are activity ideas that can be adapted and extended to and for any grade level.

- *Narrative/journal writing:* After students have finished rereading the article, have them write in their journals or write a short summary about something interesting they learned about John McLoughlin. This can be done as a way to decompress the information that was presented in the article, or in a more formal style with brainstorming. A brainstorm graphic organizer is available below.

Context Clues Activity Sheet

Context Clues Activity Sheet

1. Circle the vocabulary word in the text.
2. Find and highlight the context clue.
3. Write down the context clue.
4. Find the dictionary definition of the word. You may do this after you have found all of the context clues.
5. Find all 10 context clues and definitions.
6. When finished, you may find 3 bonus vocabulary words and repeat steps 2-4. You may find your own or choose from the list on the board.

	Vocabulary Word	Context Clue	Dictionary Definition
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			

7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
Bonus			
Bonus			
Bonus			

Brainstorm graphic organizer

<p>Driving Question:</p> <p>What was the most interesting thing you read about John McLoughlin? Why?</p>	<p>Brainstorm Graphic Organizer: John McLoughlin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think of something interesting that you learned about John McLoughlin. 2. Write down several interesting facts. 3. Write some details about why you were so drawn to those facts. Think about the variety of connections we have made in class: text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world. 4. Choose one of the facts to write about and circle it. 5. Write a short summary about it. 6. Don't forget to use complete sentences, legible handwriting, and punctuation. 	
<p>Interesting Facts</p> <p>Write down all the interesting things you read about John McLoughlin. Write them down below.</p> <p>You do not have to fill in all of the spaces. Then write about why you thought that fact was interesting.</p>		
1	2	3
Why you thought it was interesting	Why you thought it was interesting	Why you thought it was interesting
4	5	6
Why you thought it was interesting	Why you thought it was interesting	Why you thought it was interesting

Summary

Write a short summary about which fact you chose.

Don't forget to write about why you chose it.

What kinds of connections did you make with it?