

Jean-Paul's Daring Adventure:
Stories From Old Mobile

Overview

This lesson asks students to place themselves in the shoes Bienville, Father of Mobile, and write a persuasive letter to the King of France, Louis XIV, explaining why he believes the town of Mobile should relocate. This lesson can be used after the lesson titled *Interpreting a Painting*, which provides students with an overview of King Louis XIV, or on it's own.

Objectives

In this lesson, students will:

- Learn about and understand factors that led to the relocation of the town of Mobile;
- Activate creative faculties to produce a mnemonic device that will aid in the retention of historic facts;
- Acquire experience in persuasive writing.

State Standards

- Social Studies – Grade 5
 - 2.) Identify causes and effects of early migration and settlement of North America.
 - 4.) Determine the economic and cultural impact of European exploration during the Age of Discovery upon European society and American Indians.
 - Identifying significant early European patrons, explorers, and their countries of origin, including early settlements in the New World
- English Language Arts – Writing Standards – Grade 5
 - 22.) Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. [W.5.1]
 - a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose. [W.5.1a]
 - b. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details. [W.5.1b]
 - c. Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., *consequently*, *specifically*). [W.5.1c]
 - d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented. [W.5.1d]

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Historical Background

The city of Mobile is named in honor of the alliance the French had with the Mobilian Indians. The French chose to establish the colony twenty-seven miles from the mouth of the river specifically because it was near the Mobilians, whom the French relied on for protection, food, and trade. This location is now known as 27-mile bluff or Old Mobile, in present-day Axis, Alabama. Initially efforts focused on building a fort, a seminary, and the establishment of proper lots and streets. However, nine years later, in 1711, the burdens of being so far upriver, a fifty-mile paddle from the Gulf, and in a location prone to flooding had taken its toll. Bienville was forced to make the difficult decision to move the colony down river to where Fort Conde is located today. The decision was a difficult one. Bienville was fully aware of the immense costs and labor this would occasion; but the fort was already in need of major repairs and he knew the inhabitants were disgruntled from having to deal with constant flooding.

Novel Connection

This activity connects with pages 43 & 44 of the graphic novel, where Bienville is speaking to Margaret and struggling with the decision as to whether or not to move the town of Mobile. Here we learn some of the factors that will influence Bienville's decision to finally move the town to where Fort Conde is today.

Prior Knowledge

Students need to have a clear understanding of what a monarchy is and how it functions, what a colony is, and who King Louis XIV was.

Activities

Primary Document Analysis

Have students read *Letter from Bienville*, a primary document where Bienville wrote to Lord Pontchartrain to let him know about the colony's needs. *Think-Pair-Share*: Pair students off and ask them to discuss the letter's main points. Further, ask them to describe the letter's tone. How might the letter sound if it had been written yesterday?

Novel Analysis

Ask students to re-read pages 43 and 44 of *Jean-Paul's Daring Adventure* and make a list of reasons why the colony should move. *Think-Pair-Share*: Ask students to compare their answers. Tell students that they will now step into Bienville's shoes and write a letter to King Louis XIV to provide compelling

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arguments as to why Bienville believes the town should move. Have students individually fill out the worksheet *Persuasive Letter – Prewriting RAFT*. The worksheet is designed to help students flesh out and organize the letter.

After the RAFT worksheet is complete, instruct students to compose a letter from Bienville to King Louis XIV to convince the King to approve the town's relocation. ADAPTATION: For higher grades or gifted students, have them also identify reasons for not moving and counter-argue them in the letter.

What's My Address? – developed by Anthony Fitzpatrick*

Have students create an address for the letter using *What's My Address* guide and worksheet. As a class, review the concept and walk through several examples to ensure students grasp the idea. Students will use the address they create to "mail" the letter to King Louis.

Materials

- Primary Document - *Bienville letter to Pontchartrain*
- Worksheet: *Persuasive Letter Prewriting RAFT*
- *What's My Address – Guide & Worksheet*
- *Scoring Guide – Letter to King Louis*

Extra Resources

- Bienville Biography - www.biographi.ca/en/bio/le_moyne_de_bienville_jean_baptiste_3E.html
- The Old Mobile Project Newsletter - www.southalabama.edu/archaeology/newsletters.html

* Anthony Fitzpatrick is currently the Innovation Manager in the Division of Teacher and Leader Effectiveness for the New Jersey Department of Education. This educational strategy and more are explained in *Text InSPECtion on the Core: Close Reading Strategies for Uncovering Informational Text* (Inedvation Programs, 2014).