Maritime Programs Curriculum Series

Writing It All Down

Time: unlimited
Grade Level: 3-8
Group Size: individual
Vocabulary: log, watch, senses, observation

OVERVIEW

Students will design their own logbooks and make entries for a week. This activity is designed to increase the students' powers of observation, unleash their creative imagination and improve their ability to express themselves verbally.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

Life onboard a sailing ship was a 24-hour job. Vessels underway did not stop and anchor for the night and they certainly could not sail by themselves. Therefore, a crew of sailors had to be awake at all times. This division of crews is known as “watches.” If a ship was anchored or in port, it was still necessary to have a crew on watch to protect the ship, cargo, crew and passengers. This “anchor” watch was often shortened to two hours instead of the normal four hours.

Standing watch was and is a great and important responsibility. It was important to keep a record of all occurrences on board in the ship's logbook. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a logbook as:
1. A book with a permanent record made of all events occurring during a ship’s voyage.
2. A traveler's diary.
3. A regularly maintained record of progress or performance.

Logbooks were originally inscribed on shingles cut from logs and hinged so that they opened like a book. The name “log book” was logical and has lasted to this day.

While “sailing” on the Euterpe, each student crew will stand a minimum one and a half-hour night watch and each crewmember will have an opportunity to write in the ship’s log. The students will be responsible for recording all of their observations as well as their personal thoughts and feelings about the voyage.

The following activity will encourage students to become more in tune with their emotional and sensory responses so that they may be prepared to make entries into the actual Euterpe logbook.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Log keeping was important because Captains were responsible to the ship owners for all happenings on the ship.
- Life onboard a sailing ship was a 24-hour job. Vessels underway did not stop and anchor for the night and they certainly could not sail by themselves.
- Using all of the senses made the log book descriptions more accurate and helps the officers to understand what went on when they were not on watch.

MATERIALS

- An example of a record, log or journal
- Materials to create a log book for each student - construction paper, string and writing paper works well

ADVANCED PREPARATION

- Copy enough worksheets for each student.
- Provide materials for students to create their logs.
- Provide or create a sample logbook.

PROCEDURE

Engage: Have the students brainstorm on what they think would be included in a ship's log and why.

Read an excerpt from a sample log or record.

Challenge: Give each student enough construction paper and writing paper to make his or her own logbook. Each book should have enough paper to make an entry each day for a week plus enough to make some entries after their Euterpe voyage. The students can be creative when decorating the cover of their log. Each student will record his or her thoughts, feelings and experiences in anticipation of the voyage. In making log entries, the students should include things described in terms of the five senses.

Discussion: Questions for class discussion

- Why is the ship’s log so important?
- When might a sailor be without one or more of his senses?
- Can you think of an experience that stimulates only one of the five senses? Two? Three? All five?
- How are emotions and feelings part of your sensory abilities?
- Discuss the difference between emotional and sensory responses.
- What are some examples?

Extend: The students should continue their log entries after their voyage – compare and contrast their feeling and thoughts from before, during and after their program.
♦ THE CHALLENGE

Get some construction paper and writing paper to make your own logbook. Each book should have enough paper to make an entry each day for a week plus enough to make some entries after your *Euterpe* voyage. Be as creative as you can when you decorating the cover of your log. Record your thoughts, feelings and experiences in anticipation of the voyage. In making your log entries, you should include things described in terms of the five senses. Some questions to consider while making log entries might be:

- How will the *Euterpe* smell?
- How will the ocean air feel?
- What sounds will the ship make? The ocean?
- How will the food aboard the *Euterpe* taste?
- What will the Captain be like? The First Mate? The Cook?
- How do you feel about voyaging on the *Euterpe*?

You can record anything in your logbooks. It may be a journal or diary of your daily lives. However, you should be organized around the theme of the *Euterpe* voyage. If you choose to make it a journal, take on a “character” personality that would actually have sailed in the 1800’s.

After the voyage, write down your feelings and experiences. Compare your thoughts to what you wrote before the trip.