

Swashbuckling Adventures on the High Seas:

Classroom Activities for a Unit on Pirates

Elizabeth M. Frye, Woodrow Trathen, and Kelley Wilson

In the previous article (pages 15 and 16), we described a unit of study based on using fiction and nonfiction “twin texts”: *Pirate Diary: The Journal of Jake Carpenter* and *What If You Met a Pirate?*¹ In this Pullout, we describe in more detail how we use double-entry diaries and a data retrieval chart during the lessons.

Double-Entry Diaries

The Double-Entry Diary (DED) is a method of taking notes in two-columns. DEDs help students locate important information in a text and monitor their own comprehension of the material. The left side of the paper is reserved for specific information from a text, such as a short passage, quote, factual information, or a summary. The right column provides an opportunity for students to write responses or personal reactions and connections to the information written in the left column.

To model the process, the teacher places a quote (from the text the class is reading) on the left side of the board. On the right side, the teacher records what she is thinking about those words. The teacher “thinks aloud,” modeling how her background knowledge and/or experience have connected to the text. Emphasize to the class that proficient readers constantly seek to use their personal knowledge to help them make sense of new information.

After modeling the activity, the teacher gives the students a written DED guide (**HANDOUT 1**).

Engaging with the Books

We divided the Twin Text lessons into four sections. We spend a minimum of three days on each section; however, this pacing depends on you students and curriculum. The teacher reads aloud at the beginning of section 1 and models the strategies with the students.

For sections 1 through 3, students silently read the majority of the twin texts and then complete the activities and writing in their Pirate Notebooks. There can be periods when students read with a partner or work in small groups, reading the texts aloud. After the reading and writing, students formed small groups to discuss their notebook entries. The teacher serves as a facilitator, scaffolding student learning by reminding students of their “want to know” questions.

During the discussion, students constantly revisit the books to find answers to questions, make connections and confirmations, address questions that they have about the text, clarify confusing passages, locate places on the maps, discuss vocabulary words, and much more. (For example, We found the best approach is to view Jake’s travels on Google Earth then track his route on a map that the teacher hands out.)²

Individual Research

Section 4 serves as a transition from the twin texts to more individualized research on a pirate of each student’s choice. The teacher and students read the “Notes for the Reader” in the back of *Pirate Diary* that tells about colonial America and the impact of pirates on these colonies, a history of piracy, and biographical information about some of the most famous pirates,

The teacher models how to research a single pirate, focusing on Edward Teach, aka Blackbeard. She then invites students to research one of the following famous pirates: The Barbarossa Brothers (Aruj and Khayr ad-Din), Captain Kidd (William Kidd), Jean Lafitte, Henry Morgan, or the pair Anne Bonny and Mary Read. These were chosen because the teacher had The Library of Pirates series of nonfiction books in her classroom.³ These nonfiction books are written on a third-grade reading level, with large print, bold text, illustrations and a glossary. Other appropriate books and websites were also used (**HANDOUT 2**).

A Data Retrieval Chart

Graphic organizers have long been used to help students organize information and concepts from text to support students’ reading comprehension. The data retrieval chart (DRC) is a graphic organizer that aids students in organizing information, as they read, analyze, and evaluate the nonfiction text (**HANDOUT 3**). As students read their nonfiction books and websites, they complete DRCs and then use the information to create “Wanted” posters for their chosen pirates. To produce a more authentic look, students used brown paper bags or stained white paper with coffee grounds or tealeaves. You’d not want to bump into any of these pirate fellows (or gals!) in a dark alley down by the docks!

Notes

1. Richard Platt, *Pirate Diary: The Journal of Jake Carpenter* (Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2001); Jan Adkins, *What If You Met a Pirate?* (New Milford, CT: Roaring Book Press, 2004).
2. The map we used can be viewed at www.isd12.org/bhe/Archives/Activities/Pirates/images/Map.gif
3. Aileen Weintraub, *The Library of Pirates* (New York: Rosen, 2002).

ELIZABETH M. FRYE is an assistant professor, and **WOODROW TRATHEN** is a professor, both in the Department of Language, Reading, and Exceptionalities at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina.

KELLEY WILSON is a fourth grade teacher at Hardin Park Elementary School in Boone, North Carolina.

Handout 1

DOUBLE ENTRY DIARY

Pirate Diary: The Journal of Jake Carpenter, Written by Richard Platt and Illustrated by Chris Riddell

What If You Met a Pirate? Written and Illustrated by Jan Adkins

You are invited to go on a piratical journey with Jake Carpenter. You will read about Jake's adventures through the diary he kept throughout his travels. You will learn about Colonial America and pirates, as well as many other exciting people, places, and happenings. In addition, you will be reading sections of the nonfiction book *What If You Met a Pirate?* by Jan Adkins. You will expand your knowledge of pirates as you read more specific information about topics introduced to you through Jake's adventures. As your teacher, I invite you to keep your own Diary of sorts.

You will begin a Double Entry Diary, otherwise known as a DED. You will be reading, writing in your diary, rereading, and discussing as we study these entire books of historical fiction and nonfiction.

For each assigned reading, you will write three entries in your DED for each section of *Pirate Diary* and two entries in your DED for each section of *What If You Met a Pirate?* You will find important words, quotations, or passages from the book. Then you will explain why those words, quotations, and passages are important—in other words, when you read them, what do those words mean to you?

You will write each entry in a two-column format, like below. Include quotes, passages, terms. Please include the page and paragraph.

Words from the Book	What It Means to Me

Here are some piratical and nautical terms that you may come across in your reading:

Pirates	Muskets	Spanish Main	Almanac
Buccaneers	Pirates' Articles of Agreement	Brig	Quarterdeck
Privateers	(Brethren-of-the-Coast Rules)	Masts	Boatswain
Corsairs	Rigging	Starboard	Maggots
Lubbers	Hull	Port	Marooning
Gale	Bow	Upper topsails	Moored
Doubloons	Stern	First mate	Articles
Pieces-of-eight	Aft	Helmsman	Deserters
Jolly Roger	Galley	Contraband	League
Ransom	Mainmast	Customs taxes	Tacking
Barnacles	Hold	Molasses	Careen
Seven Seas	Sloop	Flogged	Powder monkey
Cutlass	Galleon	Latitude	Magazine
Pistols	Mainsail	Backstaff	

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Handout 2

Nonfiction Books

Adkins, Jan. *What If You Met a Pirate?* New Milford, CT: Roaring Book Press, 2004.

Brevertton, Terry. *The Pirate Dictionary*. Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2004.

Courtlaud, Sarah and Davies, Benji. *On a Pirate Ship*. St. Louis, MO: Usborne Books, 2007.

Fryar, Jr., Jack E. *Pirates of the North Carolina Coast*. Wilmington, NC: Dram Tree Books, 2007.

Jones, R.L., Gower, Terri and Lawrence, Michelle. *1001 Pirate Things to Spot*. St. Louis, MO: Usborne Books, 2007.

Jones, R.L. and Muhle, Jorg. *See Inside Pirate Ships*. Tulsa, OK: E.D.C. Publishing, 2007.

Jones, R.L. and Dutrait, Vincent. *The Story of Pirates*. Tulsa, OK: E.D.C Publishing, 2007.

Thompson, Julie, Macintosh, Brownie. and O'Brien, P. *A Pirate's Life for Me! A Day Aboard a Pirate Ship*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Books, 2006.

Weintraub, Aileen. *Library of Pirates*. New York: PowerKids Press, 2002.

Williams, Brian. *Pirates*. Milwaukee, WI: Gareth Stevens, 2005.

Yolen, Jane. *Sea Queens: Women Pirates Around the World*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2008.

Fiction: Chapter Books/Novels (Reading Level)

Babbitt, Natalie. *Jack Plank Tells Tales*. New York: Scholastic Books, 2007. (4th)

Barry, Dave, and Pearson, Ridley. *Peter and the Starcatchers*. New York: Disney Editions, 2006. (5th or 6th)

Molloy, Michael. *Peter Raven Under Fire*. Somerset, UK: The Chicken House, 2005. (5th or 6th)

Osborne, Mary Pope. *Pirates Past Noon*. New York: Random House Books for Young Readers, 1994. (3rd)

Platt, Richard and Riddell, Chris. *Pirate Diary: The Journal of Jake Carpenter*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2001. (4th)

Rees, Celia. *Pirates!* New York, NY: Bloomsbury USA Books, 2005. (5th or 6th)

Scieska, John and Smith, Lane. *The Time Warp Trio: The Not So Jolly Roger*. New York: Puffin Books, 2004. (4th)

Graphic Novel

O'Donnell, Liam and Spoor, Mike. *Blackbeard's Sword: The Pirate King of the Carolinas*. Mankato, MN: Stone Arch Books, 2007.

Multigenre Books

Croce, Pat. *Pirate Soul: A Swashbuckling Journey through the Golden Age of Pirates*. Philadelphia, PA: Running Press Book Publishers, 2006.

Lubber, W.C. and Steer, D.A. *Pirateology: The Pirate Hunter's Companion*. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick Press, 2006.

Matthews, John. *Pirates*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2006.

Matthews, John. *Pirates Most Wanted*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2007.

Niehaus, Alisha and Heckler, Alan. *Piratepedia*. New York: NY: DK Publishing, 2006.

Poetry

Yolen, Jane and Shannon, David. *The Ballad of the Pirate Queens*. New York: Voyager Books, 1998.

Lewis, J. Patrick. *Blackbeard the Pirate King*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2006.

Historical Fiction Picture Books

Faulkner, Matt. *The Pirate Meets the Queen*. New York: Philomel Books, 2005.

Kimmel, E.A. and Fisher, L.E. *Blackbeard's Last Fight*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2006.

Websites

www.nationalgeographic.com/pirates

www.cindyvallar.com/piratearticles.html

webtech.kennesaw.edu/jcheek3/pirates.htm

www.blackbeardlives.com

cybersleuth-kids.com/sleuth/History/Pirates/index.htm

Handout 3

Data Retrieval Chart

You are invited to research a pirate of your choice. First, complete your Data retrieval Chart (DRC) as you read informational books and consult web sites. Then, using your DRC, please create a WANTED poster following the pattern shown in the template below. Please make your wanted poster as creative as possible: use paper from a brown paper bag, or stain a sheet of white paper with coffee grounds or tealeaves. Be sure to use piratical terms, such as Lubbers, Gale, Doubloons, Pieces-of-eight, Jolly Roger, Ransom, Barnacles, and Seven Seas.



Pirate's Name and Alias _____

Name of Pirate Ship _____

Key Questions	Book of Pirates	Website (list the URL too)
When did the pirate live?		
Where and how did the pirate's career begin?		
What were the pirate's favorite weapons?		
How did the pirate look and dress?		
How did the pirate act and treat others?		
What was the pirate's life like?		
Why is the pirate legendary?		
What became of the pirate?		

Template for the Wanted poster:

WANTED!

Pirate's Name

Also Known As (AKA)

Early Days (Where and when pirate was born, nationality)

How Career Began

Piratical Prowls (Describe an adventurous exploit)

Name of Ship

Appearance and Attire

Personality

Likes

Dislikes

Hang Outs

Place Last Seen

Wanted For

Sketch the pirate's Jolly Roger here: