Our 2016 Educator-in-Residence Brandi Love (Kirby High School, Shelby County Schools) has produced two new lesson plans that explore different approaches to group work. In Investigating the Relationship Between Harry Truman and Douglas MacArthur, students analyze images and political cartoons like puzzle pieces. In World War II & the Atomic Bomb News Project, students research the use of atomic weapons at the end of WWII and develop a news broadcast.

Yellow fever, civics and government for the younger grade levels, and immigration are just a few of the topics that we plan to explore this fall in our workshops. To get a full list of workshops topics, dates, and locations, check out our workshop schedule on the Web site.

**“Awesome” Source of the Month:**

"Mark Twain,” America's best humorist [1885]

In addition to contributing characters like Tom and Huckleberry to American literature, Mark Twain also travelled the world telling stores and doing stand up comedy! Read more about Twain’s life comedy career [here](#).

**Theme: Classic American Literature Vol. II**

For this month, we decided to revisit the theme of American literature, first tackled in our November 2014 issue. (We’ve also done issues on Literature and Poetry, Children’s Literature, and Poetry.) This issue is therefore mainly aimed at English teachers, but Social Studies teachers will find plenty to fulfill their standards as well.

September is the month of the National Book Festival, which is put on annually in Washington, D.C., by the Library of Congress. The Book Festival Web page features a blog (with podcasts), a Kids and Teachers guide, and plenty of author webcasts that will be posted by the Library as the event unfolds. Is your favorite author going to be there? What do the featured authors have to say about the writing process and how they chose to become authors?

**Upcoming Events:**

- **September 20** (Murfreesboro) - “Primary Source for the Primary Grades” Afterschool workshop at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.
- **September 23** (Knoxville) - "Expanding the Vote" Workshop at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.
- **September 28** (Nashville) - Tennessee Council for History Education conference at Scarritt Bennett Center. For more information visit www.tnche.com.
- **October 13** (Murfreesboro) - “Expanding the Vote” Workshop at the Heritage Center of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To register, email Kira Duke.
- **October 21** (Knoxville) - "Immigration: The Creation of the American Melting Pot" Workshop at the East Tennessee History Center from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET. To register, email Lisa Oakley.
LESSON IDEA— *THE DEERSLAYER SERIES*

*The Deerslayer series,* also called *The Leatherstocking Tales,* is a series of five novels by American author *James Fenimore Cooper* (1789-1851). Although published between 1823 and 1841, the novels were actually set in the years spanning the 1740s to the turn of the 19th century. They follow fictional character *Natty Bumppo,* an Indian-raised outdoorsman, from the earliest days of the opening of the westward frontier up to the days of the early republic.

Read the following excerpts from *The Pioneers* (1823), a novel set in the late 18th century, when the frontier—at least, the western frontier in Cooper’s native New York—was giving way to advancing white settlement: top half of p. 66; top half of p. 67; and 3rd through 7th full paragraphs on p. 69. Ask students to discuss the different reactions to the pigeon shoot from Natty Bumppo (a.k.a. Leatherstocking), Mr. Jones, Judge Marmaduke, Mr. Edwards, and the other townspeople. Whose reaction do you think the author sympathizes with the most, and why? How does this disagreement over a pigeon shoot represent a larger disagreement over westward settlement (particularly settlers’ use/abuse of the environment)?

Project onto a large screen a *map that was created in 1791.* By comparing to Google Maps, find and zoom into the area where Cooper lived (*Cooperstown on Otsego Lake*). What is the evidence in this map for westward settlement? How do you think this affected Cooper’s attitudes in *The Pioneers*?

This lesson idea meets state standards for 8th grade Social Studies (8.38 & Primary Documents and Supporting Texts to Consider) and English Language Arts (Reading: Literature).

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LESSON IDEA— *LITTLE WOMEN*

*Little Women* (1868) is the work of *Louisa May Alcott,* daughter of educator and transcendentalist *Amos Bronson Alcott.* Louisa spent much of her early childhood surrounded by literary greats, such as Henry David Thoreau (her instructor) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (from whom she borrowed books). The Alcott family’s financial status was constantly in doubt, and as a result Louisa and her sister picked up jobs as teachers or caretakers.

In addition to working, Louisa began earning income publishing short stories in *The Atlantic Monthly.* Her publisher suggested that she write a story for girls, and thus *Little Women; or Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy* was published in 1868. The book was a hit upon its release and continues to be a classic story of relationships, independence, and resilience in the face of adversity.

Begin class by having the students brainstorm what was going on during the 1860s in the United States. This can include military, political, cultural, social, and even global events.

Once they have had the chance to brainstorm, ask the class to share their answers. After sharing, have them go through selected readings to trace some of the aforementioned events/issues throughout the book. You can create a worksheet or an assignment in which students report what they found in their research. For example, the students would discover the themes of feminism and then list the examples from the book in which the characters display feminist attitudes or views. (This *Web list* contains lesson ideas for 5th grade as well.)

To further develop the lesson idea, you can have students create a *Little Women* blog in which they take on the identity of Jo or one of her sisters and write about the many issues that she faced, using primary sources from the Library of Congress Web site to add context for their experiences. For example, when writing about feminism they could include this suffragette *song,* or when discussing the Civil War use this *image.*

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state standards for 5th-8th grade English Language Arts (Reading: Literature & Informational Text), and 5th grade (5.3) & 8th grade Social Studies (8.50).
Lesson Idea—Lonesome Dove

American popular culture has long had a fascination with tales of cowboys, outlaws, and life in the West. One of the most influential western novels is Lonesome Dove, written in 1985 by Larry McMurtry. This first novel in what would become a series and later an extremely popular television miniseries is a fictionalized account of Charles Goodnight’s and Oliver Loving’s cattle drive, during which Loving dies as a result of injuries sustained from a Comanche attack and requests that his body be taken back to Texas for burial. The novel explores the drama that occurs when driving cattle through the western frontier.

Begin by asking your students what they think it would have been like to be a cowboy driving cattle to market in the West. Then have your student watch this video. How does the video compare to their predictions? Next have your students read excerpts from Lonesome Dove. What similarities can be seen between the excerpts and the video? Ask students to summarize the setting and tone of their excerpts from the novel. Have your students select a character and provide a brief character analysis based on the portions of the book they have read. If you have students reading different excerpts from the book, you may wish to have them compare their answers to gain a greater understanding of the plot and characters.

Next, students will analyze the oral history of Ben Kinchlow who worked as a cowboy in Texas in the 1870s. You may wish to use a jigsaw method to examine the complete oral history, or select specific excerpts for your students to read. How does Kinchlow’s experiences compare with those of the characters in the novel? Is the novel realistic in its portrayal of what life was like in the West, and particularly what life was like for cowboys?

This lesson idea can be adapted to meet state standards for 8th grade & High School English Language Arts (Reading: Literature & Informational Text) and 8th grade Social Studies (8.97 & 8.98).

Featured Feature—To Kill a Mockingbird: Real Women of Alabama

To Kill a Mockingbird is a classic novel that has been required reading for many students. Rutherford County educator Cynthia Savage developed this lesson plan, designed for high school English classes, which explores the characterization of females in To Kill a Mockingbird. What female influences would Scout have been exposed to in this coming-of-age story? Students will create a “Fakebook” profile of a female character they select from the novel, and then compare textual evidence from the novel with real women from Alabama during the Great Depression. During the course of the lesson, students are challenged to understand the variety of roles and experiences of women in Alabama during the Great Depression, and how these experiences intersect to portray complex motives and relationships in the novel. Students will need to read the novel prior to this lesson.

Students are tasked with finding and selecting appropriate primary sources from the Library of Congress collections to create their “Fakebook” profiles for their selected female character. The lesson plan does include a few relevant collections to help students get started and a sample profile to help illustrate what they are being asked to do.

This lesson plan encompasses up to three class periods. It is a great way to challenge their comprehension of the story, research skills with digital collections, and writing skills. The format allows students to have fun with the assignment using a medium that most all students are familiar with.
La cuisine française. French cooking for every home. Adapted to American requirements. [1893]

In 1961, Mastering the Art of French Cooking was published and helped to launch the career of Julia Child. Have your students compare this much earlier publication with the classic from 1961. What conclusions can they draw about French cooking and its popularity in America?

"The Raven" [1884]

Edgar Allan Poe was a master of the macabre, writing stories and poems that were creepy, scary, and hauntingly beautiful, and even inventing the genre of the detective story. How may his turbulent life have influenced his style of writing? Read his most famous poem, “The Raven,” in a classic book edition illustrated by Gustave Dore (or in a French edition), and then read about this poem in this blog article.

Thoreau's cove, Lake Walden, Concord, Mass. [n.d]

Henry David Thoreau moved to a hut on the shores of Lake Walden in 1845. He spent two years in this hut with minimal human contact and material possessions. He wrote about his experiences and published them in the book Walden. What experiences do you think Thoreau had? Would you want to spend two years in a similar environment? What can you infer about Thoreau’s personality from his choice of locale? For more ideas, check out this past newsletter.

Copper sculpture "Full Circle: Profile of Courage" in the John F. Kennedy Federal Building, Boston, Massachusetts [2009]

Inspired by John F. Kennedy’s book Profiles in Courage, this sculpture was created in 1966 in tribute to Kennedy. What does the sculpture symbolize? What statement is the artist Herbert Ferber making about Kennedy’s life? How does that connect with the men he profiled in his book?