



SCHOOLHOUSE NEWS

The Purcell Register

Middle School

Middle School ELA & Reading Supplement
April 13-17

Instructions:

Each week you will receive 3 Quick Write topics, a reading passage, and a writing assignment related to the reading topic. You will have until April 17 to complete the assignments. I will post the due dates for these assignments within the google classroom.

Quick writes:

Write for 15 minutes at least 3 times per week. Find a place, get comfortable, and write on the assigned topic. This is not an exercise in perfect grammar and spelling, but a time to think and free write on a topic. The point is to WRITE. If you want to look up words you couldn't spell, do it after the 15 minutes. During the quick writing time, the two main requirements are to be CREATIVE and to write in COMPLETE sentences and paragraph form.

Topic 1: Soundtrack of Your Life - If you could create a soundtrack for your life, what songs would you include and why? Discuss at least 2 songs and explain why you picked them.

Topic 2: Flight or Invisibility? - Would you rather be able to fly or turn invisible? Why? What would you do with your power? What problems would having this power cause?

Topic 3: Your Future- What do you hope to become in the future? What job or career do you dream of having? Is there a particular school that you hope to someday attend? Do you plan on living in another state or country? Write two or three paragraphs describing what you hope your future may look like.

Theme: Connecting with the past

Reading

As I stated in our google classrooms, we are now going to be combining our ELA and Reading assignments for the remainder of the school year. Below is your READING portion for this week's assignments. Once you have finished reading the passage, answer the comprehension questions that follow to the best of your ability. You may need to read the passage more than once.

I am also attaching a short Youtube video about the Dust Bowl. Please watch it to get a better idea of what life was like during this time. Just as we are experiencing a change in our day to day lives right now, the dust bowl period also changed and altered day to day living. As you watch the video, consider these changes and the challenges that were created for the people living back then.

The Dust Bowl

By Jessica McBirney
2018

The Dust Bowl was a time of harsh dust storms in the central United States during the 1930s. In this informational text, Jessica McBirney discusses the causes of the Dust Bowl and how Americans were impacted by this period of dust storms. As you read, take notes on what contributed to the Dust Bowl.

On the afternoon of April 14, 1935, young Irene Thompson looked up in horror. A huge black cloud that covered the sky was racing towards her. It wasn't a thunderstorm, and it wasn't smoke — it was dust. Before Irene could do anything, the flying dirt became so thick that she could not find any of the buildings on her own farm. She later remembered, "They called it the Black Sunday. And some people actually thought the world was coming to an end." Another man recalled, "It looked like a wall of dirt coming at us — 500 to 1,000 feet high."

Black Sunday was one of the worst dust storms in American history, during a time known as the Dust Bowl. However, it was definitely not the only storm. For almost 10 straight years, between 1930 and 1940, high winds and terrible dust storms destroyed most of the farms and towns in the Great Plains, a region of flat lands that runs through the central United States.

What was the Dust Bowl?

One-third of the Great Plains suffered from severe dust storms during the Dust Bowl. The storms covered 100 million acres across Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas. In the worst storms, the dust in the air became so thick that people could not see more than a few feet in front of them. They had to wear masks and cover their faces with handkerchiefs just to breathe outside.

Natural and Man-made Causes

Several factors caused the Dust Bowl. In the 1920s, the central U.S. had more rain than usual, and agriculture boomed. New immigrants moved to the Great Plains states seeking to start their own successful farms. However, they did not practice environmentally-friendly farming techniques. They made two big mistakes. First, in order

to plant as much wheat as possible, they plowed over all of the natural prairie grasses that kept the topsoil in place. Second, they planted crops too often, instead of giving the soil a break every now and then. As long as the rain kept falling, neither of these mistakes caused problems.

But in 1930, the rain stopped coming. The soil became dry, loose, and unable to support crops. This drought would have been bad enough for farmers, but then strong winds picked up across the Great Plains. Those winds picked up all of the dry soil and sent it flying. People called these strong dust storms "black blizzards," which could sometimes last for one or two days straight.

Dusty Refugees

Farming families realized they could not stay in the Great Plains. Their houses and belongings were always dirty; the dust blew into their lungs and made them sick; and their farms were unproductive. They could not afford to stay. Thousands of families packed up their lives and moved west to find work. Immigrants from the Plains were called Okies because most came from Oklahoma. Many headed all the way to California because they heard California had good agricultural jobs. However, the whole United States was suffering from an economic crisis, and California's farms did not have room for many new workers. Okies did manage to get away from the thick dust storms, but they could not escape unemployment and poverty.

Families who stayed faced a never-ending layer of dirt in their houses. Irene Thompson's family stayed in Kansas throughout the Dust Bowl. She remembers constantly cleaning dirt out of her kitchen and bedrooms, and she recalls how many people got "dust pneumonia" from all of the flying dirt. People tried to continue on with life as usual, going to school and inviting friends over for dinner. But they never knew when or where they would be trapped by a dust storm.

Ending the Dust Bowl

The Dust Bowl did end eventually. The U.S. government realized that it had to encourage farmers to practice more responsible farming techniques. The Soil Conservation Service studied the land and came up with some ways to preserve the earth in the future. The agency also worked with farmers to develop farming methods that were better for the soil. A group of government employees planted trees throughout the region to restore root networks and keep the dirt stuck to the ground.

By 1938, the amount of dust blowing around had been reduced by 65%. In 1939, large amounts of rain came and ended the drought. Most farmers returned to the area to

reclaim their farms. This time, they had better ideas of how to care for the environment around them; if another drought came, they knew their new farming techniques would help prevent another natural disaster like the Dust Bowl.

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After reading the passage about The Dust Bowl, please complete the comprehension questions below. The last question is a written answer. Please answer it using at least three COMPLETE SENTENCES.

1.RI.2

PART A: Which statement identifies the central idea of the text?

- A. Farmers aggressively harvested the land in the Great Plains, despite warnings from environmentalists that it could result in dust storms.
- B. There was nothing that farmers could have done to prevent the Dust Bowl, as they merely chose the wrong time and place to farm.
- C. Farmer's treatment of the land weakened it against the elements and resulted in dust storms that negatively impacted life in the Great Plains.
- D. The Dust Bowl negatively impacted life for everyone in America, as dust spread beyond the Great Plains and farmers couldn't produce crops.

2.

RI.1

PART B: Which TWO details from the text best support the answer to Part A?

- A. "Several factors caused the Dust Bowl. In the 1920s, the central U.S. had more rain than usual, and agriculture boomed." (Paragraph 4)
- B. "First, in order to plant as much wheat as possible, they plowed over all of the natural prairie grasses that kept the topsoil in place." (Paragraph 4)
- C. "Those winds picked up all of the dry soil and sent it flying. People called these strong dust storms 'black blizzards,' which could sometimes last for one or two days straight." (Paragraph 5)
- D.