



## Exploring the Writing Process with Primary Source Materials

Lesson Topic: Drafting - Anecdotes

### Lesson Plan Created By:

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### Grade Levels:

6th - 8th, High School

### Primary Source:

Lomax, John A, and Alan Lomax. *Writings, books, "Our Singing Country," 6/8, John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax papers*. United States, 1941. Manuscript/Mixed Material.

[https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1933001\\_ms449/](https://www.loc.gov/item/afc1933001_ms449/).

### Compelling Question:

Why do authors use anecdotes in their writing?

### Supporting Question:

How do anecdotes make the writing more memorable?

### Objective:

In this 50 minute lesson, students will explore a manuscript from the John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax Papers to better understand the use of anecdotes in writing.

### Standards - Common Core:

#### Lesson Standards 6th - 8th

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-8.5

Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

#### Lesson Standards 9th - 10th

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

## Lesson Standards 11th - 12th

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

## Lesson Activity Instructions

### **Whole Group Class Discussion Question: (5 - 10 minutes)**

What is an anecdote?

An anecdote is a brief, self contained story used within a piece of writing to make a point or to make a moment more memorable. Most anecdotes revolve around a central event or theme and focus on one person.

In what genres of writing are anecdotes used?

Anecdotes can be used in fiction or nonfiction. In this lesson, we will analyze an anecdote in a nonfiction piece of writing. Anecdotes in nonfiction are true stories which can be used in informational, opinion, or persuasive writing.

What makes a good anecdote?

A good anecdote makes use of strong descriptive language that will be memorable.

Are there different types of anecdotes?

Yes. Anecdotes may be used as cautionary tales, inspirational, characterizations, humorous, to persuade, or to inform.

### **Lesson Activity: (25 - 30 minutes)**

In this activity students will analyze a manuscript from the John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax Papers. Have students work with a partner to read the excerpt and complete the analysis worksheet. Review directions with students before they begin.

### **Closing Summary (5 - 10 minutes)**

Choose a few questions from the analysis worksheet to discuss with the class. Review the definition and purpose of an anecdote.

See accompanying activity handouts for students.

## **Credits**

The creation of this lesson plan was funded by a grant from the Library of Congress *Teaching with Primary Sources* program.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## EXPLORING THE WRITING PROCESS WITH PRIMARY SOURCE MATERIALS



**Lesson Topic:** Drafting - Anecdotes

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**Directions:** Access the primary source and to go to image two. Read the excerpt and complete the following questions.

Who is telling the story?

What is the tone of this anecdote?

Briefly summarize this anecdote (include the beginning, middle, and end).

What is the author trying to accomplish with this anecdote?

Do you think the author was successful at accomplishing that goal? Would you have changed anything in order to achieve that goal?

In paragraph two, the author uses dialogue. How does this help to make the character Tom Hight come to life?

What does this anecdote teach the reader about the character Tom Hight and what kind of a person he is?

Does this anecdote help the reader to better connect with the character Tom Hight? Why or why not?