Created for the National Postal Museum's 2011 Owney celebration.

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A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

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Dear Educator,

Thank you for checking out this Owney Curriculum guide and contemplating the integration of some of our ideas with your classroom practice. We think this historical dog can illuminate the past and his spirit can inspire student enthusiasm for a variety of interdisciplinary lessons.

This project was inspired by teachers all over the country who took it upon themselves to create lessons based on Owney’s stories in books and at the Postal Museum. When we saw the wonderful projects they brought to life using the dog we’d come to think of as our mascot, we sought to share these ideas and generate new ones.

2011 became the year to spread the word as Owney has been the subject of a Forever postage stamp, with an augmented reality tool, an e-Book, and a full make-over. He continues to tweet and post to Facebook about these events and his past adventures that can add a new perspective on these lessons. See these and more at www.npm.si.edu/owney.

These lessons are designed for second grade classrooms, with accompanying lessons for students with special needs in reading, math, and writing. We also challenge teachers of all disciplines and grades to see how Owney can help with their practice. If you do have a success story, please share it with us.

In addition to teachers like you who keep Owney alive in their classrooms, the Postal Museum would like to thank the following educators in bringing this project to fruition: Heather Blake, Katie Biechman, Sharon von Schrader, Chris Huygen, Nancy Fenstemacher, Julia Godwin, Danielle Hickey, Julia Clark, Alexandra Roosenburg, Betsy Wendt, and Margaret M. Bustos.
On July 27, 2011, one of the museum’s most interesting objects was commemorated with a United States postage stamp. During his lifetime a scruffy mutt named Owney was the nation’s most famous canine. From 1888 until his death in 1897 Owney rode with Railway Mail Service clerks and mailbags all across the nation. Owney’s story begins in 1888 with his attachment to the mail clerks and mailbags at the Albany, New York, post office. His owner was likely a postal clerk who let the dog walk him to work. Owney was attracted to the texture or scent of the mailbags and when his master moved away, Owney stayed with his new mail clerk friends. He soon began to follow mailbags. At first, he followed them onto mail wagons, and then onto mail trains, beginning an almost decade-long story of travels far and wide. Owney’s journeys took him across the United States, into Canada, and possibly Mexico. On August 19, 1895, as part of a publicity stunt for the town of Tacoma, Washington, Owney left that city on a mail steamer and spent the next few months traveling around the world. He docked back in at New York City harbor in late December, returning by train to Tacoma on December 29, 1895.
Among the first to visit the dog upon his arrival in town was often the local reporter, eager to learn where the dog had been and share his travels with readers. This far-traveled canine would have achieved fame for his travels alone. But he also gathered attention for his fashion sense. Postal workers were the first to attach tokens to the dog’s collar, but soon just about anyone and everyone who had the opportunity to give Owney a little souvenir of his trip did so. Before long the poor dog was carrying so many tags on his collar that he could barely keep his head upright. His mail clerk friends began shipping excess tags back to the Albany post office, where the postmaster soon put them on public display. Postmaster General John Wanamaker had a special harness built for Owney to wear, so his tags could be spread out evenly all over his body. A writer for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported that “Nearly every place he stopped Owney received an additional tag, until now he wears a big bunch. When he jogs along, they jingle like the bells on a junk wagon.”

By the spring of 1897 Owney was in poor health. He had been “retired” from traveling and was living with a postal worker in St. Louis, Missouri. But the trains and the dog could not be separated and by June he was again riding the rails. On June 11, 1897 Owney was in the Toledo, Ohio post office. As usual, he’d followed the mailbags into the office where he was warmly greeted by postmaster Tucker and clerks.
Owney’s Death

This background information and the non-fiction sources on the Reading List both address Owney’s death. Death and dying can be a challenging subject to discuss with children, but in teaching Owney, you will probably entertain questions about his passing. Owney’s death was violent, which is why we do not mention it in any of our children’s material, but since he is on display, kids tend to come to the conclusion that he did die and ask questions about it. Our educators have come up with 3 inquiry strategies to discuss Owney’s death on a tour that can help shape your approach if this comes up in your class.

1. **Personal connection:** Does anyone know about a pet that has died?

2. **Historical context:** Owney lived over a hundred years ago, do you think dogs live for 100 years? Owney died when he was a very old dog.

3. **Scientific:** We learn about animals by preserving them with taxidermy. Have you seen any at a natural history museum?

Owney had often seemed reluctant to let people look at his tags, and on this day that reluctance took a violent turn, attacking and biting a mail clerk. The postmaster called for the town’s marshal, who shot and killed the dog. The Toledo clerks refused to bury their beloved mascot. Clerks across the country asked that the dog receive the honor they considered he was due by being preserved and presented to the Post Office Department’s headquarters. Owney was kept on display by the Department, and then forwarded to the Smithsonian Institution in 1911.
Owney’s travels continue to enchant new generations and finally, 123 years after Owney rode his first mail car, his place in America’s postal history will be cemented with his appearance on a postage stamp. The stamp features a profile of Owney’s face against a backdrop of a few of his many tags. Now Owney’s fans can celebrate this most fascinating postal pup in a most postal way.

Postage Stamps in Owney’s Lifetime

During the years that Owney rode the rails, there were typically three types of postage that filled the bags he traveled on. It cost someone 2 cents to mail a letter. Almost all of the two-cent stamps that were used in those days were red and had a picture of George Washington on them. Owney would have seen (and smelled) billions of these stamps.

Postmaster General John Wanamaker was the man in charge of all of the post offices and mail trains in Owney’s day. He gave him the harness upon which the clerks hung his tags. Wanamaker also issued the U.S.’s first Commemorative stamps. Little did he or Owney know that Owney would get his own commemorative stamp in 2011.

In 1893, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus reaching America, he issued 16 large size, pictorial stamps, which are commonly called the first commemoratives. Here is the “two-cent Columbian” which was used millions of times to mail letters while Owney rode the rails.

In addition to stamps on letters, Owney’s trains carried thousands of penny postal cards. These were cards with a 1-cent stamp printed on them, so no licking was necessary. They could be used by people who had just a short message to send that did not require an envelope. Postal cards were half the price of letters, and moved just as fast in the same mail bags.
Reading List

Despite living over 100 years ago, Owney has been the subject of many children’s books published in the last 20 years. We have compiled a list of books that will complement any Owney lesson in your classroom. If you plan to use a story to teach social studies-based units, please refer to the first list. The books in the second list provide great resources for creative writing and reading lessons.

Historically Accurate Owney Books

The following books are recommended by the Smithsonian Institution’s National Postal Museum because of their historical accuracy.

**Owney: Tales from the Rails** by Jerry Rees and Stephen Michael Schwartz

Published in 2011, and in support of this curriculum and the stamp launch, this book of historical fiction represents the Smithsonian Institution’s most recent scholarship on Owney the Dog. It is highly interactive and provides many opportunities to travel with Owney and see the people and places he visited on his journeys. This book is only available in e-Book and online formats. It is available and free of charge from the iTunes store or the Postal Museum’s website, after fall 2011.

**Owney the Mail-Pouch Pooch** by Mona Kerby

Another strong option, this book provides the Owney story for younger readers (ages 4–8). The information is all accurate, if not as thoroughly researched. The illustrations are inviting and whimsical. Ms. Kerby has also created numerous teacher aids for her book; they are available on her website.

**Owney—Mascot of the Railway Mail Service** Publication of the National Postal Museum

Written in 1990, this book is written for adults but provides a detailed amount of background and is the only true non-fiction book in the list. A lot of the scholarship has been improved upon (and available on our website). But this still provides a strong hard-copy reference book for educator or student research. It is available only by ordering from our publications website: [www.npm.si.edu/resources/6a_publications.html](http://www.npm.si.edu/resources/6a_publications.html)

Fictional Owney Books

The following books share in the spirit of Owney’s adventures, but don’t ensure historical accuracy. They will surely add to your classes’ enjoyment of the Owney Story, but they are fiction and should be recognized as such.

**The Further Adventures of a Lucky Dog: Owney, U.S. Rail Mail Mascot** by Dirk Wales

**A Small Dog’s Big Life: Around the World with Owney** by Irene Kelly

**All Aboard Owney! The Adirondack Mail Dog** by Jennifer Gordon Sattler
**INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT**

This unit introduces **Owney** using the themes of geography and map skills. His well-documented journeys and resources provide a foundation for different projects in which students learn about maps. This interdisciplinary unit supports second grade teaching and encompasses the areas of language arts, science and social studies, with opportunities for artistic and technological enrichment. Students will be assessed during and at the end of the unit through worksheets, modeling, and art project.

**MAPS :: LESSONS**

1. students will use Owney’s map to learn the basic parts of a map and understand the importance of maps.

2. students will interact directly with Owney’s interactive map and understand how maps are tools to learn about the United States.

3. students will recreate a model of a land or water form for an area that Owney visited. Students will extend this lesson by writing about how the topography of the area affects travel and life in the area.
4 students will create a collage of a U.S. location that Owney visited. Students must research this place to find important landmarks to include in their collage.

5 students will compare and contrast two places in the U.S. based on information gathered and presented by classmates.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What do we use maps for and what are the parts of a map?
2. How do maps help us learn about the world around us?
3. What are similarities and differences between parts of the United States?
4. What are some important landmarks in different parts of the United States?

Supporting Standards of Learning are available at: www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/SOLs.pdf

DID YOU KNOW!

Newspaper articles often praised Owney as an independent traveler, but he was often accompanied by a clerk who picked his destinations.

TEACHER RESOURCES

- Mapping Penny’s World by Loreen Leedy
- Tales from the Rails e-Book by Jerry Rees and Stephen Michael Schwartz
- Owney’s Interactive Map found at www.npm.si.edu/owney/#map
LESSON 1 :: READING A MAP

Lesson Duration: 45 minutes

Objective
Students will be able to identify key parts of a map, including compass rose, map key, scale, and symbols.

Key points
• Maps have key parts that help us understand what we are looking at
• Definitions and uses for the compass rose, map key, map scale, and symbols

Assessment
• Students will complete a worksheet defining key parts of a map.
• Students will mark up a map identifying key parts.
Opening

Read Aloud: *Mapping Penny’s World*. Ask comprehension questions relating to key points.

Guided Practice

- **KWL chart**: How do we use maps? Who do you know who uses maps? What maps do they use?
- Explain how we use maps to help us find places, show us directions to go somewhere, show us what is around us, or help us learn more about a place. Have students pair/share about map uses.
- Show a local map. Have students locate important places on it. Demonstrate how to find these places using key parts of the map. Show how to use the map scale to find out how far these places are from each other. Show how the compass rose shows which direction to travel to find these places.
- Show the same place on an online satellite map for comparison.
- Create symbols on the map for the locations chosen above. Add symbols to a "map key" for city map.

Independent Practice

Have students work independently or with partners to complete worksheet defining and identifying map parts. Students must label a map of the classroom (compass rose, map scale, map key, symbols).

Differentiation: The “Map Parts” worksheet can be modified to support different learners by adding a word bank. Another modification could be to provide the definitions and map features and ask the student to match the definition to the map feature.

Closing

Tell students that they will begin a unit exploring maps of the United States by studying the route taken by Owney the postal dog. Use a SmartBoard or computer to introduce Owney’s interactive map.

Materials

- *Mapping Penny’s World* by Leedy
- Chart paper
- Markers
- “Map Parts” worksheet [www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets](http://www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets)
- Local map (hard copy and/or online)
- Electronic whiteboard or computers with internet access
- KWL chart [www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets](http://www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets)
LESSON 2 :: THE SINGING MAP

Lesson Duration: 45 minutes

Objective
Students will be able to list five different things they can find on Owney’s interactive map. Students will demonstrate mastery of using maps by using map tools and finding locations from Owney’s journeys.

Key points
• The map shows the locations Owney visited across the United States.
• Each location can be selected and a primary source from that location will show more information.
• We can learn about a place from primary sources.

Assessment
Students will complete a scavenger hunt of Owney’s interactive map.

Opening
Show students Owney’s interactive map. Play song from the end of Owney’s e-Book. Show students how each location mentioned in the song is located on the map of Owney’s travel. Have students interact with the electronic whiteboard to find all the locations mentioned in the song.
Guided Practice

- Give a brief background of Owney. Show students how the interactive map tracks all the places Owney visited on his journeys. Select some of the cities to show students how each city provides a primary source related to Owney’s connection to the city.
- Explain to students that they will use Owney’s map to study and become familiar with maps and the United States. Ask students to come up with ways we can use Owney’s map to do this. Students can pair/share with a partner and then create a class list of ideas.

Independent Practice

Students will complete a scavenger hunt using Owney’s interactive map and the “Owney’s Map Interactive Scavenger Hunt” worksheet. Students should develop extension questions for the class. Students’ extension questions should include additional items to find on Owney’s map.

Differentiation: The pace and support for the reading involved with this lesson can be adjusted to accommodate a range of reading levels. The scavenger hunt can be done with a partner or small group to accommodate different reading levels. The “Map Parts” worksheet from Lesson #1 is also a great reference for understanding Owney’s map in this lesson.

Closing

Use two to three extension questions that students developed for a class extended scavenger hunt. Review with students the key parts to maps and how they relate to Owney’s interactive map. Encourage students to look at the interactive map at home.

Materials

- electronic whiteboard or computer with internet access
- Tales from the Rails e-Book by Rees and Schwartz
- Chart paper, markers
- Owney’s Interactive Map Scavenger Hunt worksheet
  www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets
Lesson Duration: Three 25 minute lessons to introduce and give time for model creation

Objective
Students will be able to create a model of a particular kind of land/water form for a U.S. city/area that Owney has visited. Students can extend this lesson by writing about how the topography of the area affects travel and life in the area.

Key points
• There are different land and water forms we can find in the U.S.
• Different land and water forms affect travel and life in an area.

Assessment
Student will create a model showing topography of one U.S. location meeting requirements of the rubric.

Opening
Show students videos or pictures of regional topography.
Guided Practice  
- Explain that there are different land and water forms. Use pictures to show students what various land and water forms look like.
- Have students complete a T-chart with characteristics of land and water forms.

Independent Practice  
Have students create a model of one area of the U.S. highlighting at least one landform and one water form found in that area. Models can be made using any classroom resources (such as clay, popsicle sticks, cotton balls, paper, etc.)

Differentiation: Provide support to students when they are completing the chart. This can be accomplished by giving the students a chart that has some of the information already provided. Give the students a checklist or the model rubric in grade appropriate language to guide them in the construction and ensure they include all the required elements.

Closing  
Students present completed models to their classmates, explaining the area they selected and the topography in that area. This project can be framed as what Owney saw out the train window while going through that part of the country.

Materials  
- Computer with internet access
- Pictures of various land and water forms (found in the U.S.)
- T-chart www.npm.si.edu/owney curriculum/workheets
- US Topography Model Rubric www.npm.si.edu/owney curriculum/rubrics.pdf
LESSON 4 :: OWNEY’S VIEW

Lesson Duration: Three 30 minutes lessons to introduce and give times for collage creation. Please note, this project aligns closely with Jobs, Lesson 4 (p. 28)

Objective
Students will create a project to illustrate a U.S. state or city that Owney has visited. Students must research this place to find important landmarks to include in their final project. Suggested projects can be a paper collage or electronic presentation.

Key points
Nationally-important landmarks are important places in a state or city.

Assessment
Students will complete a project illustrating a state or city meeting requirements of the rubric.

Opening
Show students pictures of U.S. landmarks. Help students identify landmarks by name and location. If necessary, explain that a landmark is a building, artwork, or other structure that is important due to its historical significance or how it looks. Some landmarks are officially listed as landmarks while others are simply recognizable by many people.
Guided Practice

- Explain that every place has special landmarks. These can be buildings, monuments, outdoor spaces, etc. As a class, brainstorm a list of landmarks in the place you live.

- Show students pictures of landmarks from your town or state. Explain that when you put pictures together on paper it is called a collage. When you put them together in the computer it forms an electronic presentation like a PowerPoint. Show how pictures can be combined to make a collage of a state or town. Show students how to label and cite pictures.

Independent Practice

Have students pick a place Owney visited. Have them pick what type of creative project they’d like to work on (or if options are limited, pick the project you can make available for them). Students should research these cities using the internet, magazines, or books from the library. Students will create a collage or electronic presentation based on the rubric. Ask them to think about what Owney would see when he travelled to that town.

Differentiation: Give the students a checklist or the model rubric in grade-appropriate language to guide them in the construction and ensure they include all the required elements.

Materials

- Pictures of U.S. national landmarks and landmarks from your local community
- U.S. Collage Rubric www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/rubrics.pdf
- Internet access and printer, magazines, scissors, glue, paper
- Computers with presentation software

Closing

- Students may share their collages or presentations with the class. Collages or print outs of the presentations may be added to the bulletin board of Owney’s map of his travels.

- Use Owney’s map to start each presentation to remind kids that Owney was looking at these places out the train window.
LESSON 5 :: SOUNDS OF THE CITY/ SOUNDS OF THE COUNTRY

Lesson Duration: 30 minutes

Objective
Students will be able to compare and contrast two U.S. places based on information gathered by classmates.

Key points
• Places in the United States have similarities and differences.
• We compare places to help us learn more about the world we live in.

Assessment
Students will complete a Venn Diagram comparing two U.S. places that Owney has visited.

Opening
Play sounds of a place (city or rural) and have students identify what is making the sound. Have students provide suggestions as to when, where, and why you might hear that sound in a certain place. Many websites (try “Partners in Rhyme”) offer free sound effects.
Guided Practice

- Explain to students that we hear different sounds in different places because of things we may find there. Compare some of the sounds (loud vs quiet, outside vs inside).
- Review how to use a Venn Diagram to compare two things.
- Choose two places that Owney has visited (Suggested: a town from the state you live in and Albany, New York, the town Owney is from). Model for students how to complete a Venn Diagram comparing two places.

Independent Practice

- Students will choose two places to compare and contrast on a Venn Diagram.
- Encourage students to include sounds that might be heard in the two places.

Differentiation: Modify the Venn diagram by labeling the sections. Help the students pick a city to compare with their city based on the available information at their reading level.

Closing

Have students share their Venn Diagrams with a classmate. Find similarities and differences with their peers.

Materials

- Computer with internet access
- Free sound effects can be found at www.partnersinrhyme.com
- Venn Diagram worksheet www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets
- Online Owney Map www.npm.si.edu/owney/#map
INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT

 Owney and his relationship with postal workers provide the foundation for this unit, particularly the idea that both people and animals can have jobs. Students may not have prior knowledge about this topic so read alouds are incorporated and a list of suggested books is provided to offer foundational knowledge. This interdisciplinary unit supports second grade teaching and includes the areas of language arts, math, science and social studies, with opportunities for artistic and technological enrichment. Students will be assessed during and at the end of the unit through several worksheets, group KWL charts and final written assignment.

JOBS :: LESSONS

1 students will learn that people have jobs throughout the community. Students will identify specialized workers, specifically the different jobs of postal workers.

2 students will learn that animals have jobs in the community, just as humans do. Students will name jobs animals have and compare and contrast them with human jobs.
students will explore jobs that animals can have and understand the things that all animals, whether working or not, need to survive.

students will understand that places can be classified as urban and rural and compare and contrast the two in relation to work and animals.

students will identify natural, human and capital resources and explain how they are used within the post office, as well as sort and represent them in a graph.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

1. What jobs needed to be done in Owney’s time for the post office and how did he help?

2. What important role do humans and animals play in the community work force?

3. What is the difference between urban and rural?

4. What are the three types of resources, why are they important to the postal system and how are they used?

Supporting Standards of Learning are available at: www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/SOLs.pdf

**DID YOU KNOW!**

Owney travelled so much and visited so many post offices that the press claimed he’d been to more of them than any single postal worker.

**TEACHER RESOURCES**

**Books**

- A Lucky Dog: Owney, U.S. Rail Mail Mascot by Dirk Wales
- Animals at Work by Liz Palika and Katherine A. Miller
- Delivering Your Mail: A book about mail carriers by Ann Owen
- The Post Office Book: The Mail and how it moves by Gail Gibbons
- The Tortilla Factory by Gary and Ruth Paulsen
- Tales from the Rails e-Book by Jerry Rees and Stephen Michael Schwartz
Lesson Duration: 60 minute lesson. Two 30 minute lessons are suggested.

Objective
Students will be able to understand that workers are human resources used to produce goods and services. Students will identify specialized workers, like postal workers, within a community.

Key points
- People have jobs throughout a community.
- Postal workers have a variety of jobs.

Assessment
- Students will discuss specialized workers within the community and create a list of their duties.
- Before and after the read aloud, students will describe some jobs humans do and goods/services they provide.
- Students will complete the Learn portion of the KWL on different responsibilities of postal workers.

Opening
- Create a list of community workers with students on chart paper or electronic whiteboard.
- After creating a list of community workers, begin to talk about jobs of postal workers. Pose questions regarding the Postal Service to get an idea of students’ prior knowledge.
Guided Practice

• KWL chart: about postal jobs. Create the K/W sections.
• Read aloud The Post Office Book.
• Ask comprehension questions as you see fit.

Independent Practice

• After the read aloud, have students give information they learned and fill in the L portion of the KWL.
• Ask questions as you see fit.

Differentiation: During the independent practice portion of this lesson provide the students a copy of the KWL chart with the K and W completed. This will help them fill out the L portion in a timelier manner. The book by Gail Gibbons should be available to the students to check for what they learned.

Closing

Compare and contrast the jobs of postal workers with that of the other community workers on the list.
How are they the same?
How are they different?

Materials

• The Post Office Book: The Mail and how it moves by Gibbons
• Chart paper/ electronic white board
• Writing utensil
• KWL worksheet www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheet
Lesson Duration: 45 minutes.

Objective
Students will be able to understand that animals contribute to society and have jobs. Students will be able to compare and contrast the jobs Owney did with that of human postal workers.

Key points
Animals have jobs in the community and contribute, just as humans do.

Assessment
• Through group discussion, students will be able to name jobs animals have in society.
• After the read aloud students will compare and contrast Owney’s work vs. a human worker by completing a Venn diagram.

Opening
• Ask questions regarding animals, pets, and jobs animals might have. List jobs named by the students name on board.
• Explain that the class will be reading about a special dog that helped the postal system protect the mail. Explain that his name was Owney and he lived over 100 years ago.
Guided Practice
- Read aloud A Lucky Dog: Owney, U.S. Rail Mail Mascot or Tales from the Rails e-Book
- Ask comprehension questions as needed.

Independent Practice
After the read aloud create a Venn Diagram to list the jobs Owney did in comparison with the jobs of human postal workers. Include in the center the overlapping jobs such as: guarding the mail, travelling with the mail, and being a team player.

Differentiation: During guided practice, check with students to keep their interest and check on their understanding. Having the students make connections between The Post Office Book and A Lucky Dog will help them fill out the Venn Diagram. Provide a Venn Diagram that has been labeled with “Owney the Dog” and “Postal Worker.”

Closing
- Discuss the similarities and differences of Owney’s work and the work of human postal workers.
- What might Owney be doing for the Postal Service if he were working today?

Materials
- A Lucky Dog: Owney, U.S. Rail Mail Mascot by Wales
- Tales from the Rails e-Book by Rees and Schwartz
- Venn Diagram worksheet www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets
- chart paper/electronic white board
LESSON DURATION

LESSON 3 :: ANIMALS’ JOBS

Lesson Duration: Two 45 minute lessons.

Objective
Students will be able to name things all animals need to survive and explain and illustrate a job an animal can do. Students will compare and contrast Owney’s needs and jobs with those of other animals.

Key points
• To identify the things animals need to do to survive.
• To further understand and explore different jobs that animals can have.

Assessment
• Students will discuss the items all living things need.
• Using a Venn Diagram, students will identify the similarities and differences listed between companion animals and working animals.
• After learning more about working animals, students will have the opportunity to write and illustrate a job they think an animal should or could have.

Opening
• Explain that you will be reading more about animals who have special jobs. Have students name some things that all animals need whether they are a companion animal or a working animal.
• List items students name on chart paper or electronic whiteboard.
• Discuss pet ownership/responsibilities such as caring for a pet.
• List items the students name.
Guided Practice
Read aloud Animals at Work.

Independent Practice
- After the read aloud create a Venn Diagram to compare the jobs Owney did with the jobs of different animal workers.
- Explain that now it’s the student’s task to think of an animal and come up with a job for it. It could be a pet or another type of animal. Take some time, think about it and then draw a picture of the animal doing its job and write five to ten sentences describing the job and how the animal does it.

Differentiation: During the guided practice create a Venn Diagram with the labels Owney and Real Work Dog already written on the sheet. During Independent practice provide books at the appropriate reading level that have several examples of real working dogs. Have the students select an animal that has a job and draw a picture. Depending on the writing skills of your student reduce the required sentences or provide a graphic organizer to aid in writing the paragraph.

Materials
- Animals at Work by Palika and Miller
- Chart paper/electronic white board
- White paper and writing utensils: crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Venn Diagram worksheet
  www/npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets

Closing
Bring students back together to pair/share illustrations and explanations of the job.
LESSON 4 :: CITY AND COUNTRY COMMUNITY WORKERS

Lesson Duration: 2 hours broken up over 4 class periods—30 min for read aloud, two 30 min periods to work on project, 30 min for a short explanation from each pair. Please note, this project aligns closely with maps, Lesson 4 (p.16).

Objective
Students will understand differences between city and country life and will be able to compare and contrast characteristics of rural and urban settings.

Key points
To understand that places can be classified as urban and rural.

Assessment
• Creating a T-chart will help students visually see the differences between urban and rural life.
• Students will work with a partner to create a collage or computer presentation that uses images. The collage will illustrate the job of working for the Postal Service in the city or the country.

Opening
• In this lesson students will learn about the differences and similarities between rural and urban settings.
• Introduce the book: The U.S. Mail
• Ask questions to gauge student knowledge of rural vs. urban settings
• Use students’ answers to create a T-chart to compare the similarities and differences students think of between the city and the country.
Guided Practice

- Read excerpts from *The U.S. Mail* by Elaine A. Kule
- Chapter 2 “The Mail Trail”
- Chapter 5 “Rural Free Delivery and Air Mail”
- For more information on rural mail read excerpts (chapters 1, 2 and 4) from the story *Snowshoe Thompson* or use during guided reading.
- After reading the story pose questions dealing with . . .
  - How Postal workers’ jobs are different in rural and urban areas?
  - What are some of the duties?
  - How does the place change the jobs?

Independent Practice

- After the read aloud students will be partnered up to complete an activity.
- Partners will be given a location from Owney’s travels (See Owney’s Online map: www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/#maps): urban or rural. From that location the partners must create a collage from newspapers and magazines representing what it would be like to work as a postal worker in the city or in the country.
- Students should include information such as neighborhoods, terrain, transportation and inhabitants (human and animal). Give at least two days for partners to complete the collage.

Differentiation: Provide a checklist that lists all the information that needs to be included in the collage and examples the students can easily refer to during this project. A set script for the presentation portion is very helpful for some students.

Closing

Once partners are finished each pair will have the opportunity to explain to the class which location they created and their reasoning for what was included in the collage. Students will explain the importance of the items they included and some pros and cons of working in that particular location.

Materials

- *The U.S. Mail* by Kule
- *Snowshoe Thompson* by Levinson
- Owney’s Online Map www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/
- Chart paper/electronic whiteboard
- T-chart worksheet www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/
- Art paper, scissors, glue
- Magazines and newspapers or internet access and printer
- Computers with presentation software
- U.S. Collage Rubric www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/rubrics.pdf
LESSON 5 :: RESOURCES FOR WORK

Lesson Duration: Two 30 minute sessions.

Objective
Students will be able to define three types of resources (natural, human, and capital) and identify how they are used in the U.S. Postal Service today and mail systems of the past. Students will be able to classify, sort, and graph the resources.

Key points
• Resources can be natural, human and capital.
• Each of these types of resources can be used by the Postal Service to provide services in either rural or urban settings.

Assessment
• Students will be able to distinguish among the three types of resources and give a definition of each.
• Students will be able to sort the different resources used in the Postal Service.
• In groups, students will take the knowledge they have gained to sort and group the different types of resources and then put them in graph format.
Opening

• Have an example of each type of resource either on the board or physically in the front of the room. Prompt interpretive dialogue and give definitions.

• A natural resource is something that comes directly from the earth, such as soil, water, and sunlight. They are present without human intervention.

• A human resource is a person who produces goods or services—teachers, cooks, bakers, farmers, mechanics, and custodians.

• Capital resources are the tools or equipment used to create goods or services—computers, desks, chairs, hammers, and nails.

Guided Practice

• Read aloud a book, which covers natural resources such as *The Tortilla Factory*.

• Ask comprehension questions regarding the three types of resources and their use in the Postal Service.

• Have students come up with ideas of how the three types of resources are important to jobs of the Postal Service. Examples include trees for paper/envelopes and oil/coal to run trucks, planes and trains: natural resources; postal workers: human resources and mail trucks, and sorting machines: capital resources.

Independent Practice

After the read aloud and discussion students will be grouped together (groups of four) and will be given an envelope with pictures of different resources used in the Postal Service. It will be the job of the group to work together and sort the pictures into the proper groups: human, natural or capital resources. Give groups 10–15 minutes to sort the pictures.

Differentiation: Provide a chart listing human, capital and natural resources with a definition for each type. Depending on the type of learners participating, visual pictures to go with the definitions are often very effective.

Closing

Once groups are finished, reconvene as a class to discuss results and create a bar graph to represent the different resources used in the Postal Service.

Materials

• *Tortilla Factory* by Paulsen and Paulson

• Chart paper/electronic whiteboard to create graph

• Envelope with 12 different pictures: four human resources, four capital resources and four natural resources.
INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT

This unit focuses on Owney and the tags he received travelling around the world. Knowledge of Owney and his story are assumed. Review the booklist in the reading comprehension section if this is the first or only unit on Owney. This interdisciplinary unit supports second grade teaching and includes the areas of language arts, math, science and social studies, with opportunities for artistic and technological enrichment. Students will be assessed during and at the end of the unit through journaling/blogging, math centers, primary sources research, a written assignment, and an art project with a gallery walk.

TAGS :: LESSONS

1. students will use knowledge of Owney to write an original story or journal entry about an adventure he has to better understand the importance of his tags.

2. students will use their knowledge of Owney to complete math center activities.

3. students will be introduced to and use primary sources (newspapers and artifacts) as tools for researching.

4. students will be able to write a story given a setting and a primary source artifact.

5. students will compare and contrast how things were documented in the past and now in the present.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. To what did Owney’s tags connect him?
2. How do Owney’s tags help us learn about him today?
3. How can using primary sources help develop skills in researching/learning about the past?
4. What historical information do Owney’s tags provide and how do they compare and contrast with things we collect on trips?
5. Supporting Standards of Learning are available at: www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/SOLs.pdf

DID YOU KNOW!

Over 200 of Owney’s tags are now at the National Postal Museum, many are on display with Owney the Dog himself.

TEACHER RESOURCES

- A Lucky Dog: Owney, U.S. Rail Mail Mascot by Dirk Wales
- Tales from the Rails e-Book by Jerry Rees and Stephen Michael Schwartz
- The U.S. Mail, by Elaine A. Kule
- Owney AR app www.npm.si.edu/owneyapp
- Classroom paper journal or online blog
LESSON 1 :: OWNEY’S TRIP HOME

Lesson Duration: 45 minutes for the in-class lesson. Each student will take Owney home and create a tag and stories so the time frame will depend on the number of students in a class.

Objective
- Students will create a tag and journal entry to mark Owney’s journey to their home.
- Students will use exciting language and imagery and practice steps in the writing process.

Key points
- Using knowledge of Owney to write an original story/journal entry about an adventure he has and establishing a better understanding of the importance of Owney’s tags.
- Creating tags is a way of documenting Owney’s trips.

Assessment
- Students will create a tag for Owney that is similar to Owney’s original tags. The students’ tags will represent their home/family etc.
- Students will produce an original piece of writing from Owney’s point of view (diary entry, story, poem, song, etc.)

Opening
- Establish intro level knowledge of Owney’s story (through a previous unit or story) and introduce a stuffed or paper cut-out of Owney.
- Have students pick a picture of an animal and pair/share with a partner and answer: If this animal could go anywhere in the world, where would it go? What would it do once it got to its destination?
- Encourage students to make the stories exciting and to use dynamic language.
Guided Practice

- Review the 5 step writing process, using a fiction model. Create a chart using student input to expand on each step.
- Create a class story, poem, or song about Owney by playing the round-robin writing game.
- Have students brainstorm what they want the adventure to be about. Choose one topic from class ideas.
- Each student contributes a sentence to create one story written by the whole class. Review and revise the students’ contributions to make sure the plot makes sense. Proofread the final product and make changes where you need to.
- Publish the final copy in a classroom space near the cut-out or stuffed animal and his tags also reside.
- Each student will get the opportunity to take Owney home for one night, create a tag for him and write a story about his adventures out of the classroom.

Independent Practice

- When a student takes Owney home he/she must create an Owney-centric creative writing piece and a tag marking his visit. The writing can be in a paper journal or a class blog. It should include adventurous language and can be fiction-based.
- Just as Owney received tags on his journeys around the world, it is the students’ job to create a tag for Owney to represent his/her home. Students should select supplies from Owney’s Tag Bag to create a token of his trip to their house.

Differentiation: This activity can easily be adapted to all types of learners within the general education classroom. It is important that each student is given the background knowledge on Owney prior to starting this lesson. If needed the students can be provided extra support to participate in the class story. When a student takes Owney home, provide a written description of the task, a copy of the class story, a graphic organizer, editing checklist and spelling aid to each student. Depending on the student’s needs he/she may need time at school to work on this task.

Materials

- 5 step writing process guide for students www.npm.si.edu/owney curriculum/worksheets
- Chart paper and markers
- Stuffed Owney or large cutout
- Tag Bag filled with card stock, pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, glue and magazines to create Owney’s tag.
- Class Blog or paper journal

Closing

- Every morning after a student brings Owney back, that student will have an opportunity to read his/her journal entry/blog and give a description of the tag he/she made for Owney.
- Journal entries, tags, and Owney can stay near the posted class story during the day.
LESSON 2 :: OWNEY’S MATH STATIONS

Lesson Duration: two 60 minute periods.

Objective
Students will be able to count by 5s. Students will be able to measure using standard and non-standard units. Students will be able to organize and represent information using graphs.

Key points
• Using knowledge of Owney to complete math activities from different units.
• Stations include review lessons from units on geometry, number sense, and graphs

Assessment
• Students will create word problems using tags counted in 5s.
• Students will have differentiation statements for tag measuring units.
• Students will write an explanation of their reasoning for tag organization.

Opening
Use this lesson in conjunction with Jobs, Lesson 2 (pg. 24) and after reading A Lucky Dog: Owney, U.S. Rail Mail Mascot. Copies of Owney’s tags are needed to complete the centers. Print and cut out Owney’s tags worksheet.
Guided Practice
• Explain to students that they will be using the information about Owney they received earlier to complete math centers.
• Go over each center with students prior to beginning centers.

Independent Practice
Have cut out tags for student use at each center

Center 1: Counting Owney’s Tags
Have students count the tags by 5s and create word problems for a partner to solve.

Center 2: Measuring Owney’s Tags
• Have students choose four tags to measure length and width using standard and non-standard units.
• After measuring the length and width, have students trace the tags onto graph paper and estimate the square centimeters.
• Compare the lengths of two different tags and explain the difference in length in a word problem.

Center 3: Graphing
• Have students choose one way to organize/classify tags. Ask them to represent their grouping in a graph, picture graph, or bar graph.
• Have students explain in five sentences how they organized the tags and why.

DIFFERENTIATION: Have all of the students who require support in the same group.

Center 1 Provide the students with a hundreds chart so they can reference the fives. Provide a graphic organizer and a word bank of math terms used when creating word problems.

Center 2 Provide a sample showing how to measure length and width for reference. Have them decide as a group what attribute they are going to measure and establish guidelines on comparing the tags.

Center 3 Provide suggestions for sorting the tags and help them choose what type of graph they would like to make. Have the students make a key for their graph as the written portion of this task.

Closing
• Have math centers available for students for two days to complete all activities.
• Reconvene with students to go over results.

Materials
• A Lucky Dog: Owney, U.S. Rail Mail Mascot by Wales
• Owney’s tags worksheets www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/workheets
• Rulers (standard)
• Unifix cubes (non-standard)
• Graph paper
• Pencils, markers, crayons (for graphing)
LESSON 3 :: LINKING TO THE PAST

Lesson Duration: 45 minute introduction to primary sources, and an additional three 30 minute sessions for research and presentations.

Objective
Students will be able to understand the significance of primary sources to history and research. Students will be able to research and identify important aspects of Owney’s life.

Key Points
Introduce/familiarize students with primary sources (newspapers and artifacts) when researching.

Assessment
Students will present the results of their research in a presentation in the format of a news report or interview.

Opening
• In this lesson students will learn about primary sources and how using them for research gives us a glimpse into the past and an opportunity to learn about our nation’s history.

• Mini-lesson on primary sources. Have examples of primary sources (newspapers, Owney’s tags, etc.) to introduce the idea of this type of research. A primary source is a document, speech, or other sort of evidence written, created or produced during the time under study. Primary sources offer an inside view of a particular event. Newspaper articles and Owney’s tags are both primary sources because they were created/produced during this period in time that we are studying.
Guided Practice

Explain to students that they have learned a good deal about Owney, but there are ways to learn more. Pair students up and give each pair one of the topics below. Then tell students once they have learned more about Owney they will present their findings in a short news report/interview, just like reporters do on TV. One student can be the reporter and the other can be interviewed.

- Owney’s travels: how did he move from one city to another?
- Who did Owney work with?
- Regions: places Owney visited in the U.S.—North, South, East and West.
- Regions: places Owney visited around the world.
- Owney’s impact on the postal system and the people he worked with.
- How and why we remember Owney.

Independent Practice

- Students will work in pairs to research their topic using newspaper articles and images of the tags.
- Allow 3 or 4 class periods for students to complete research.

After researching the Owney topic, students will work together to present their findings to the class in a short news report or interview.

Differentiation: During the guided practice, have the class use an electronic whiteboard or a flip chart to list what they already know and what they would like to learn using a KWL chart. Show an example of format for the news interview. Provide a format that guides the student through the research phase. After the research is done, model how that data can be put into an interview format. It is important that this format clearly shows the data so that the students can easily present it to the class.

Closing

After research is finished give students an opportunity to inform the class of their findings and how they interpreted their findings during class news reports.

Materials

- Presentation tools and supplies for students’ news reports
- KWL worksheet www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets
- Online Owney map with links to primary sources from Owney’s time www.npm.si.edu/owney/#map
Lesson Duration: 45 minutes for the introduction. Allow students to work on writing for three more sessions. Story sharing will take a final 45 minute session. This lesson pairs well with Maps, Lesson 4 (p. 16)

Objective
Students will be able to write a story given a setting and a primary source artifact.

Key points
• Establishing a setting is important to students' writing.
• Primary sources help us learn about the past.
• Good writing is the result of using the 5 step writing process

Assessment
Students should be graded using a standard writing rubric.

Opening
• Ask students to share a place they like to go (such as the playground, the movies, or a cousin’s house). Have students pair/share a story based about that particular place.
• Explain to students that authors get inspiration for their writing from different sources. Discuss where authors can get ideas for their stories.
• Review the definition of setting. Introduce (or review) primary source artifacts. Explain that these are real items that tell you about a specific time and place.
Guided Practice

- Choose a city on Owney’s map. Explain to students that this city will be the setting for the story.
- Use Owney’s interactive map to find the tag associated with this city. Explain that this tag is a primary source artifact because it is a real item that tells us about Owney’s visit in that city. Give an example of how to interpret clues about Owney’s visit from the tag. For example, “This tag shows that Owney met postal workers when he visited this city. What kind of things might he have seen the postal workers doing?”
- Show students how to write a paragraph about Owney including the city and primary source artifact. The story can be fiction but the setting and the artifact (tag) should be a part of the story.

Independent Practice

Students will select their own cities and find their tags using Owney’s interactive map. Students then will write a paragraph using the setting and artifact.

Differentiation:
During the guided practice use one of the Owney books that you have read and ask the students to identify the setting and the primary source artifacts that can be found in the book. During the independent practice provide a graphic organizer, editing checklist and spelling aids.

Closing

- Students may share their stories with the class. Students should identify their setting and show their tag before reading their story.
- Stories can be compiled into a book or added to an Owney map bulletin board with the stories and pictures of tags pinned to each corresponding city.

Materials

- Computer with internet access
- Owney’s online map www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/#map
- Owney’s tag worksheet www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets
- Chart paper, markers
LESSON 5 :: KEEPSAKES AND MEMORIES

Lesson Duration: 45 minute lesson – allow for two class periods to create artwork. The gallery walk will last about an hour.

Objective
Students will compare and contrast similar primary sources from the past and the present. Students will draw conclusions about Owney’s significance to the U.S. and the postal system and postal workers.

Key points
To compare and contrast how things were documented in the past and in the present.

Assessment
• Students will discuss Owney’s tags’ similarities and differences vs. the items people buy or collect today when going on trips.
• Students will create their own souvenir for Owney that he might receive today if he traveled to the student’s hometown. Students will then write a paragraph explaining their reasoning.

Opening
• Students will be introduced to Owney’s stamp and app and the e-Book, Owney: Tales from the Rails.
• Have students take a good look at the stamp and discuss why they think the artist included tags in the stamp. Why are the tags important?
Guided Practice

- Have students pair/share things they have collected when they visited a new place.
- Make a list of things students named. Items could include: t-shirts, key chains, passport stamps.
- After pair/share explain to students that they are going to create an item (primary source) that represents their city/town that they would give to Owney if he were going to visit.

Independent Practice

- Have students create a collage, diorama or picture of an item (key chain, t-shirt, passport stamp) that would represent their city/town.
- The item can have the city name on it and the year.
- After students create the item, they will write a paragraph about what the item represents and why they chose the items they did.

Differentiation: This lesson could be integrated with the art curriculum with support from the art teacher. Providing two or three choices such as a tag, stamp or collage makes it more suited to an integrated activity. Once the art project is completed, each student can write a short paragraph on how their art project represents their city/town. Writing tools such as a graphic organizer should be available as needed.

Closing

- After students have finished set up a place for them to display their art and have a gallery walk to exhibit the different items students created.
- Give students an opportunity to explain their item during the gallery walk.

Materials

- Owney postage stamp
- Computer or smartphone with webcam to show Owney App www.npm.si.edu/owneyapp
- Tails from the Rails e-Book by Rees and Schwartz
- Supplies for project: paper, pencils, crayons, markers, glue, scissors, magazines, paint.
INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT

In this sequential lesson series, students can be guided through the process of writing an autobiography and will use personal photographs to shape their stories. This lesson is framed around Owney the postal dog, whose story is illustrated through the teacher’s modeling and optional monitoring of Owney Facebook and Twitter posts. This unit plan provides personal photographs and “first-hand accounts” of Owney’s adventures for the teacher to use as a tool for modeling Owney’s stories for the students. Students will be assessed during and at the end of the unit through worksheets and rubric developed by readwritethink.org.

STORIES :: LESSONS

1 students will use descriptive language to talk about photographs
students will write descriptive details about personal photography

3. students will be able to write first person sentences about personal photographs

4. students will be able to write a story centered on descriptions of personal photographs

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How can we use pictures to tell stories?

2. What can we tell other people about ourselves through writing?

3. How do we write about ourselves?

Supporting Standards of Learning are available at: www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/SOLs.pdf

TEACHER RESOURCES

- Blogs from Owney’s experiences: www.postalmuseumblog.si.edu/owney
- Historic resources from Owney www.npm.si.edu/owney
- You Have to Write by Janet S. Wong
- Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst
- Diary of a Worm by Doreen Cronin
- Owney Tweets: http://twitter.com/Owneythedog
- Owney Facebook posts: http://www.facebook.com/Owney
LESSON 1 :: CREATING YOUR STORY

Lesson Duration: 45 minute lesson with homework time for writing.

Objective
Students will be able to use descriptive language explain photographs.

Key points
• An autobiography is a story about one’s life written by that person.
• A biography is a story written about someone else’s life.
• Photographs tell us about a specific time in our lives and can help tell a bigger story.

Assessment
Students will complete “Information about My Photos” for Owney photos and photos of themselves.
Opening

Read Aloud: You Have to Write. Ask students how they would use the ideas from this book to write about themselves and other comprehension questions.

Guided Practice

• Explain that an autobiography is a story about one’s life written by that person. Ask students to share ideas about what they would write about in their own lives. Collect ideas on chart paper.

• Model for students how to gather information about a person or animal. Explain that the students are going to write about Owney. Gather artifacts from Owney’s life including pictures, tags, newspaper articles, and text from his Facebook and Twitter account. Explain to students that they can gather and then organize information about their lives in order to write an autobiography. Explain that today they will focus on what pictures can tell us about Owney’s life and their lives. Show students how to answer the following questions about pictures:

  In this photograph I am . . .

  The thing I like about this photograph is . . .

  This photograph was taken . . . (time and place)

Independent Practice

Students will choose four different photos of Owney. Students will then use the “Information about My Photos” worksheet to describe Owney’s photographs.

Differentiation: Provide a Venn Diagram that lists the features that are unique to a biography and an autobiography and what features are similar. This will provide a visual reference to the students on the difference between the two types of stories.

Closing

• Students’ photographs and descriptions will be put together in the class book about Owney.

• Explain to students that they will have to complete this process for photographs of themselves. Students should choose pictures of themselves and complete the same worksheet. This can be done in the same class period, over night for homework, or the next day.

Materials

• You Have to Write by Wong

• Pictures of students

• Chart paper, markers

• Owney pictures worksheet
  www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets

• Information about My Photos Worksheet

• Venn Diagram worksheet
LESSON 2 :: IDEAS FOR YOUR STORY

Lesson Duration: 30 minutes with homework time for writing.

Objective
Students will be able to write descriptive details about personal photography in order to build an autobiography.

Key points
• Photographs can tell a bigger story.
• Descriptive details help someone understand what is going on.

Assessment
Students will complete “Ideas for My Story” worksheet with at least three details about each photograph.

Opening
Students will pair/share with a partner their photographs and personal “Information about My Photos” from Lesson 1. Remind students that they are all contributing to a story about Owney. Explain the difference between students’ autobiographies and the class biography of Owney.
Guided Practice

• Explain to students that they will use their photographs as a starting point to write a story about their life. Use their writing to highlight details of a photograph so they can start putting together a story.

• Model for students by placing a photograph in the center and writing details about each photograph (like in a scrapbook). Use pictures of Owney to model how the story will be written (for class biography).

Independent Practice

Students will use “Ideas for My Story” worksheet to brainstorm details about each photograph.

Differentiation: Provide a manila file folder as an organization tool for the information and photos for the student’s autobiography. The folder should be labeled with the required elements on an envelope that has been glued to the manila folder. The student can take notes on index cards and place them into each envelope.

Materials

- Chart, markers
- Owney photograph worksheet
- Ideas For My Story Worksheet [website link]
- Autobiography folders for each student and Owney

Closing

Students should create an Autobiography folder to contain their photographs, “Information about My Photos,” and “Ideas for My Story” worksheets. There should be a separate folder for Owney Biography materials.
LESSON 3 :: WHOSE STORY? YOUR STORY!

Lesson Duration: 30 minutes with homework time for writing.

Objective
Students will be able to write first person sentences about personal photographs.

Key points
• First person sentences use words like “I” and “me”.
• An autobiography should give someone your personal account of what happened in a photograph.

Assessment
Students must write 2–3 descriptive sentences in first person about each photograph.
Opening

Have students form small groups and share their autobiography ideas from their “Ideas for My Story” worksheet from Lesson 2. Have students contribute details or suggestions to their peers’ work.

Guided Practice

• Remind students that an autobiography is something we write about ourselves. Explain that each sentence in their story should be in first person. Give students some examples by reading quotations from Owney’s Facebook and Twitter pages. Explain that these sites allow us to share information about ourselves and these quotations are first person from Owney. Have examples of Owney writing about pictures on these sites.

• Ask students what the quotations have in common (focusing on first person language). Have students contribute sentence starters to a class list. Model for students how these first person sentences can match photographs by using Owney as an example:

When I was a baby I liked to . . .
My favorite food is . . .
I remember when I . . .
I love to . . .
In this picture, I am . . .
I can’t believe I . . .

Independent Practice

Students will complete “An Autobiography: Planning My Story” worksheet. Students will write sentences in first person for each photograph.

Differentiation: Provide support as needed during the guided practice to the students as they brainstorm and provide feedback to each other. Graphic organizers, editing checklists and spelling aids are very effective in writing tasks.

Closing

Students should add “Planning My Story” worksheet to their autobiography folder. This is a good time to check students’ folders for complete work and enough sentences describing each picture. Offer feedback on story ideas, sentences, and work completed so far. Have students make any changes or adjustments based on your feedback.

Materials

• Owney quotations from Facebook and Twitter pages
• Chart paper, markers
• Planning My Story worksheet
Lesson 4 :: Writing Your Story

Lesson Duration: 30 minutes with homework time for writing.

Objective
Students will be able to write a story centered on descriptions of personal photographs.

Key Points
- We can tell stories about ourselves by describing personal photographs.
- People can learn more about our lives from an autobiography.

Assessment
Students will be graded using Our Stories Rubric.

Opening
Read Aloud: Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day. Ask questions about how Alexander feels and how students know that. Encourage students to use evidence from the book like the dialogue and pictures.
Guided Practice

- Review what an autobiography is with students. Explain that the book is told in first person, just like an autobiography. Review how things that Alexander says in the book support the pictures.
- Have students work as a class to write a story about Owney using previous materials (interactive writing). Highlight first person vocabulary so students can see examples. Remind students of their previous lesson where they had pre-written sentences for each picture. Show the previous work from the class’s Owney folder.

Independent Practice

Students will combine their photographs and sentences for a complete autobiography. Students should use the autobiography page to complete this project.

Differentiation: Provide a word bank with descriptive words and examples of super sentences the students can use as a guide when writing their sentences. Graphic organizers, editing checklists and spelling aids are very effective in writing tasks.

Closing

- Explain to students that they will finish their stories in the next lesson.
- They will have to choose if they will turn their story into a book or a comic book on paper or online. Show examples.

Materials

- Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Viorst
- Sample sentences for Owney story and/or chart paper and makers for interactive writing
- Our Stories Rubric www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/rubrics
LESSON 5 :: SHARING YOUR STORY

Lesson Duration: 30 minutes with additional time for publishing party

Objective
Students will create a final copy of their autobiography for a publishing party. Students will either create an autobiographical novel, comic book, on paper or online.

Key points
• We publish a story when we are completely done working on it.
• Stories about people can come in many different styles and forms.
• The style of a story affects readers’ understanding.

Assessment
Students will be graded using the Our Stories Rubric or the Our Stories Comic Book Rubric.
Opening

Read Aloud: *Diary of a Worm* by Cronin. Ask students questions about Worm. Complete a character map to record details.

Guided Practice

- Share with students a completed story about Owney (or comic book).
- Have students complete their stories so they are ready to be published. Make sure students have materials needed for each kind of story.
- Show materials for regular story book: completed Autobiography pages, dedication page, Self-Portrait Cover page
- Show materials for comic book: completed Autobiography pages, Comic Book templates, dedication page, cover page
- Show materials for webpage: completed photo layout, dedication screen, cover page.

Independent Practice

Students will choose how they want to complete their stories for publication. They will need to complete all the additional pages for their kind of story. Students who finish early may choose to read a friend’s story.

Differentiation: Using technology to create and publish a story in several different formats is a great way to differentiate for students. Using word prediction software to write stories provides great support for those students with writing weaknesses. There are comic strip templates available that are free of charge and user friendly.

Closing

Celebrate finishing your stories with a Publishing Party. Students should each have a chance to share their stories with classmates.

Materials

- *Diary of a Worm* by Cronin
- Autobiography folder (all completed pages and pictures)
- Party supplies
- Our Stories and Comic Book rubrics [www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/rubrics](http://www.npm.si.edu/owneycurriculum/rubrics)

The Our Stories unit is derived from “See the Young Children Write Autobiographies” lesson by Melissa Weimer, provided by ReadWriteThink.org, a Thinkfinity website developed by the International Reading Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and in partnership with the Verizon Foundation.
SHARE THE MANY LIVES & LESSONS OF OWNEY THE POSTAL DOG

There are many more ways in which Owney the Dog can participate in your classroom. For years, teachers have been designing their own lessons and we hope that continues! This book was meant to fuel the creation of more ideas. If Owney the Dog has inspired you to modify or create lessons, units, worksheets or rubrics, please share your ideas with the museum so that Owney can help spread the word.

Contact us through our website: www.postalmuseum.si.edu.