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: http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/owneycurriculum/Owney_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.rpm.si.edu/owneyapp
- Classroom paper journal or online blog
LESSON DURATION
45 MINUTES

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 where 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.

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.

Materials

• 5 step writing process guide for students http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets.html

• 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
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 [Link to Owney held in the U.S. Mail Museum](http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets.html)
- 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 http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets.html
- 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.

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 http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/owneycurriculum/worksheets.html
- 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.