



**Literacy Design
Collaborative**

Rich Enough To Give Us All A Farm: The Homestead Act of 1862

by Justin R. Bailey, Rachel McCormick, Chris Crouch, and Susan Weston

Students take on the 1,400 words of the Homestead Act of 1862, figure out its main requirements by reading closely, and test their understanding against Charles Ingalls' successful homestead claim, using history-oriented websites to fill in needed background. (Yes, the primary documents come from that Charles Ingalls: father of Laura Ingalls Wilder and the model for Pa in the "Little House" books. This module could be used with or without readings from the Little House books.)

The Homestead Act became law in the middle of the Civil War, with implementation at the exact moment of Reconstruction, so the module may also be suited to middle school use in states that, like Kentucky, teach the first half of U.S. history in grade 8 or earlier.

This module is designed for a deep dive into a seminal text and selected primary documents on the process by which huge sections of the United States were settled for farming. It is organized to take roughly seven hours or eight fifty-minute periods. It was created as part of the Summer 2013 Social Studies Design Jam and is shared with special thanks to the Kentucky Education Association for the use of their Lexington facilities.


GRADES

9 - 10

DISCIPLINE

 **Social Studies**

COURSE

 **U.S. History or
Geography**

Section 1: What Task?

Teaching Task

Task Template 16 - Informational or Explanatory

How did Charles Ingalls become a landowner? After reading The Homestead Act of 1862, the Ingalls homestead application, and selected secondary sources,) on The Homestead Act, write an essay in which you relate how the Homestead Act allowed people like the Ingalls' family to become farm owners. . Support your discussion with evidence from the text(s).

Standards

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

CCR.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCR.R.8

Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCR.R.9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCR.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCR.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCR.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCR.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

CCR.W.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCR.W.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCR.W.5

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

CCR.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCR.W.10

Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Texts

 **The Homestead Act**

 **Documents Homestead Proof of Charles P. Ingalls, 1886**

 **“The lasting heritage of the Homestead Act,” Harvest Public Media,**

 **“Homestead Act National Monument of America: History and Culture,” National Park Service**

 **“Shaping America's History: Commemorating 150 Years of The Homestead Act,” from the Bureau of Land Management,**

LDC Student Work Rubric - Informational or Explanatory

	Not Yet	Approaches Expectations	Meets Expectations	Advanced
	1	2	3	4
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but lacks focus or is off-task.	Addresses prompt appropriately, but with a weak or uneven focus.	Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. D: Addresses additional demands sufficiently.	Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately and maintains a strongly developed focus. D: Addresses additional demands with thoroughness and makes a connection to controlling idea.
Controlling Idea	Attempts to establish a claim, but lacks a clear purpose.	Establishes a controlling idea with a general purpose.	Establishes a controlling idea with a clear purpose maintained throughout the response.	Establishes a strong controlling idea with a clear purpose maintained throughout the response.
Reading/Research	Attempts to present information in response to the prompt, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.	Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.	Presents information from reading materials relevant to the prompt with accuracy and sufficient detail.	Accurately presents information relevant to all parts of the prompt with effective selection of sources and details from reading materials.
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, including retelling, but lacks sufficient development or relevancy.	Presents appropriate details to support the focus and controlling idea.	Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support the focus and controlling idea.	Presents thorough and detailed information to strongly support the focus and controlling idea.
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.	Uses an appropriate organizational structure to address the specific requirements of the prompt, with some lapses in coherence or awkward use of the organizational structure.	Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address the specific requirements of the prompt.	Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt.
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.	Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion. Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.	Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using an appropriate format with only minor errors.	Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose, and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using an appropriate format.
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content in explanations, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.	Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.	Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.	Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.

Background for Students

“Oh, come to this country, And don’t you feel alarm, For Uncle Sam is rich enough To give us all a farm!”

The Homestead Act allowed millions of people to start family farms, and that song comes from a novel written by Laura Ingalls Wilder. If you’ve read any of her “Little House” books, you know that Wilder wrote about her own family’s homesteading experience. We’re going to figure out how the Homestead Act worked by reading the actual law voted on by the U.S. Congress, looking at the documents her father used to get final ownership of his farm, and researching how other families were affected by the law.

Extension

In any area of the country that was settled by homesteading, field trips to relevant parks or museums could be a huge asset to this study.

Section 2: What Skills?

Preparing for the Task

TASK AND RUBRIC ANALYSIS > TASK ANALYSIS: Ability to understand and explain the task's prompt and rubric.

SCORING EXPECTATIONS: Ability to understand and explain what will count as a strong response to the teaching task prompt.

Reading Process

CITING EVIDENCE: Ability to cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to features like date and origin of the information.

ANALYZING SOURCES: Ability to compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

GATHERING INFORMATION: Ability to gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively and assessing usefulness of each source in answering the research question.

Transition to Writing

CONNECTING IDEAS: Ability to begin linking what has been learned in reading to what will be shared in writing.

Writing Process

ORGANIZATION: Ability to organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions.



INTRODUCTION: Ability to introduce a topic.


DEVELOPMENT: Ability to develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

CONCLUSION: Ability to provide a concluding statement that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented

REWRITING: Ability to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

Section 3: What Instruction?

PACING	SKILL AND DEFINITION	PRODUCT AND PROMPT	SCORING GUIDE	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
Preparing for the Task				
15 mins	TASK AND RUBRIC ANALYSIS > TASK ANALYSIS: Ability to understand and explain the task's prompt and rubric.	QUICK WRITE After looking over the "Intent To Make Proof" document (original and transcribed) and the teaching task, write down your first reactions and questions.	None	After students generate individual questions, create a class list and discuss. Where possible, allow students to generate the answers. Where needed, share what you have planned
15 mins	SCORING EXPECTATIONS: Ability to understand and explain what will count as a strong response to the teaching task prompt.	RUBRIC TRANSLATION Complete the "What Will Count as a Strong Answer? Handout (attached)"	Student work meets expectations if it includes a reasonable set of words for each descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the handout, demonstrate how you would restate the first descriptor, and ask students for suggestions on how to restate the second one. Have students fill in the others individually. Discuss as a class. Ask students to revise their answers before turning them in.
Additional Attachments:  What Will Count as a Strong Answer?				
Reading Process				
1 hr and 10 mins	CITING EVIDENCE: Ability to cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to features like date and origin of the information.	BREAK IT DOWN ORGANIZER Read through section 1 of the Homestead slowly and then work with the teacher to fill in the front side of the organizer. Then read Section 2, and work in small groups to fill in the back side of the organizer.	Meets expectations if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies language specifying who is eligible to take advantage of the Homestead Act. Identifies how key steps under the Act need to be taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin by allowing students to skim the Act (attached) and vent their concerns. Explain that you are looking them to be as tough as American settlers and beat back the challenge of a demanding text, starting small with the first section. Share the "Breaking It Down" organizer, and have a student read Section 1 out loud, with everyone listening for "who" can use the act but not taking notes yet. Stopping at the word "Provided" discuss who is eligible, and then model taking notes on that. Repeat for the "how" question about the same section: read out loud, listen, discuss, and fill in. Continue with the rest of Section 1, letting students tell you the steps. For Section 2, assign small groups to develop their own answers on the back side, and then discuss as a class to compare answers and talk through any differing interpretations. Close this activity by confirming that tough, texts can be figured out if you find a way to break them apart and figure out for yourself how they fit together.
Additional Attachments:  Breaking It Down, Sections 1 and 2				

PACING	SKILL AND DEFINITION	PRODUCT AND PROMPT	SCORING GUIDE	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
50 mins	CITING EVIDENCE: Ability to cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to features like date and origin of the information.	BREAK IT DOWN ORGANIZER (CONTINUED) Summaries Read the remaining sections of the Act, making your own “who/how” notes, and then compare with a classmate to see if you agree.	Meets expectations if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies language specifying who is eligible to take advantage of the Homestead Act. Identifies how key steps under the Act need to be taken 	Have students work through sections 3 and as directed and then check in with the whole class. Continue with the rest of the text.
Additional Attachments:  Breaking It Down, Sections 1 and 2				
50 mins	ANALYZING SOURCES: Ability to compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.	NOTES With a partner, compare your assigned Ingalls document to the Homestead Act. Make a chart showing how the words of the form carry out what the law requires.	Meets expectations if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes identify several appropriate connections. 	Before students begin, use the “Intention” document to demonstrate. Ask why the form lists possible witnesses, and have students check the law for reasons (If needed, cue them to check Section 2). Assign several pairs to look at each of the other three documents, and circulate to coach any groups that struggle. Have all the pairs that looked at the same document pool their ideas and report out.
50 mins	GATHERING INFORMATION: Ability to gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively and assessing usefulness of each source in answering the research question.	NOTES As you study the recommended websites, make notes on things that help you understand how the Act affected the people involved. Look especially for information on people who tried to homestead but did not succeed.	Meets expectations if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes add useful information. Notes include numbers or descriptions of failed homestead claims. 	Begin by this step with some added information: Charles Ingalls actually tried for three homesteads. In Kansas (Little House on the Prairie), the land he chose was determined to belong to an Indian tribe. In Minnesota (On the Banks of Plum Creek), a plague of grasshoppers made it impossible for the family to spend the full five years in residence. North Dakota (By the Shores of Silver Lake) was their third attempt. Share the prompt assignment and suggested websites and turn the students loose to gather information. At the end of the period, allow students to form groups and compare notes.
Transition to Writing				
50 mins	CONNECTING IDEAS: Ability to begin linking what has been learned in reading to what will be shared in writing.	ELEVATOR SPEECH With a partner and some kind of timer, practice explaining how the Homestead Act worked, aiming to do it in one minute or less. You have 20 minutes to practice together, and you may use all your notes.	Meets expectations if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech gives hit main points Other students identify issues that might be added. 	After students have prepared their speeches, draw five or six names from a hat, have those students give their speeches, and have the other students take notes on what else could have been included. (Alternative: if you can recruit several volunteer adults, each can listen to speeches in a different corner of the room, giving every student an audience.)
Writing Process				

PACING	SKILL AND DEFINITION	PRODUCT AND PROMPT	SCORING GUIDE	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
20 mins	ORGANIZATION: Ability to organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions.	OUTLINE Make a list of three to five major issues that would make good paragraph topics. Number them.	Work meets expectations if paragraph topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect to teaching task. Relate to the evidence students have studied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invite students to compare their lists in small groups/ Assure students that they can change their topics if they have an Aha! As they talk with classmates.
30 mins	ORGANIZATION: Ability to organize ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions.	ANNOTATED NOTES Hunt through your notes, finding the three to five best pieces of evidence for each of your paragraphs.	Work meets expectations if annotations identify support for each paragraph.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As needed, invite individual students to change paragraph ideas if they find that a first idea lacks evidence. Let the whole class hear you congratulate the first student who switches on spotting the problem and then share the solution.
10 mins	INTRODUCTION: Ability to introduce a topic.	OPENING PARAGRAPH Write an opening paragraph that includes a controlling idea and sequences the key points you plan to make in your composition	Work meets expectations if it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides direct answer to main prompt requirements. Establishes a controlling idea. Identifies key points that will shape be developed later in the piece. 	In pairs, students share their opening paragraphs and discuss ways to improve.
40 mins	DEVELOPMENT: Ability to develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.	BODY PARAGRAPHS Working from your notes, create a paragraph in which you have one topic sentence that shares your main point and multiple other sentences that use evidence from your notes.	Work meets expectations if each paragraph: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects the student's plan for topics Includes information from students' notes. 	Not Provided
10 mins	CONCLUSION: Ability to provide a concluding statement that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented	CONCLUSION Write a final paragraph that sums up your essay.	Work meets expectations if conclusion provides a fresh, short summary of the main thinking of the piece.	Not Provided

PACING	SKILL AND DEFINITION	PRODUCT AND PROMPT	SCORING GUIDE	INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES
30 mins	REWRITING: Ability to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach	FEEDBACK FOR A CLASSMATE Read a classmate's essay, noting five strong points and three ways you think could be stronger. Be helpful!	Work meets expectations if feedback is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly stated Helpfully stated. 	Before students begin their reviews, have some discussion about what kinds of feedback is most helpful to the person who receives it.
20 mins	REWRITING: Ability to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach	FINAL DRAFT After considering the feedback, revise your essay	None/Scoring with LDC Rubric.	Not Provided

Instructional Resources

No resources specified

Section 4: What Results?

Student Work Samples

No resources specified

Teacher Reflection

Not provided

All Attachments

 **The Homestead Act : <https://s ldc.org/u/6vg3ufmsxttmczsuyuyoae ev0>**

 **Documents Homestead Proof of Charles P. Ingalls, 1886 : <https://s ldc.org/u/ahs4a835udy6plujnahdps9iq>**

 **“The lasting heritage of the Homestead Act,” Harvest Public Media, : <https://s ldc.org/u/1hmb38dpioano1972ljpyicfs>**

 **“Homestead Act National Monument of America: History and Culture,” National Park Service : <https://s ldc.org/u/8fnh7txurb4ke11lrazuwqomu>**

 **“Shaping America's History: Commemorating 150 Years of The Homestead Act,” from the Bureau of Land Management, : <https://s ldc.org/u/4vnejxd8ey2897uvqqtg2i3m2>**