

Unit 2/Week 3

Title: Boss of the Plains

Suggested Time: 4 Days (60 minutes per day)

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, RL.4.4; RF.4.3, RF.4.4; W.4.4, W.4.9; SL.4.1, SL.4.2, L.4.4, L.4.6

Teacher Instructions

Refer to the Introduction for further details.

Before Teaching

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers, about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

John Stetson was innovative and determined to succeed. Through his perseverance, problem solving, and creativity, he invented the most used and the most useful hat to the people of the West; the Boss of the Plains.

Synopsis

“Boss of the Plains” is a biography that tells the story of John Batterson Stetson, who worked with his father as a hatter, until he was diagnosed with tuberculosis and decides goes to explore the American West. Through his time with the people of the West, he invents a better hat for them to wear than the ones they were wearing. The hat achieved instant popularity and was named the “Boss of the Plains” to become the first real cowboy hat.

2. Read entire main selection text, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
3. Re-read the main selection text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Vocabulary.

During Teaching

1. Students read the entire main selection text independently.
2. Teacher reads the main selection text aloud with students following along.
(Depending on how complex the text is and the amount of support needed by students, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.)
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions and returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e.: whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text-Dependent Questions

Text Under Consideration	Text-Dependent Questions	Answer
Pg. 220 and 221	What types of hats did settlers and travelers wear? Why was a hat important protection for settlers and travelers in the American West?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knit caps, wool derbies, straw sombreros, old sea captain’s caps, army hats, calico sunbonnets, homburgs, slouch hats, silk high hats. The hats used in the lands they came from. • A hat was important protection from burning sunshine, drenching rain, whipping wind, swirling snow
P. 222	When does the story take place?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1840’s
P. 223	What do we know about the main	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve years old

	character, John Batterson Stetson?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with his father in the family’s hat maker shop in Orange, New Jersey • Has eleven brothers and sisters • Daydreamed of going to the West • At this point in the story, we do not know he later becomes sick with tuberculosis
P. 223 form	<p>The Stetsons made hats the same way hatters had done it for years: by pressing felt, made from wet fur and wool, over a wooden <i>form</i> to shape it.</p> <p>What does the word form mean?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Form</i> can be used as a verb - to make or produce. In the picture, the men are forming hats on frames. • <i>Form</i> is also a noun as in something that gives the shape, as in this sentence • What does the shape of the wooden form look like in the picture? (cowboy hat)
P. 224	What makes John decide to head West himself?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He became sick with tuberculosis • If he wanted to see the West, he couldn’t wait
Pgs. 228-229 felt	What is <i>felt</i> made out of? What are the reasons felt is better than a piece of cloth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal fur • Thick, warmer, and stronger
P. 229	How did John help his fellow travelers at Pikes Peak, Colorado with the problem they faced?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He used his hat making skills to make a felt tent for them. • On the 750-mile trip they had no tent but did have rabbit skins that they believed would “shrink up and get hard unless they are properly tanned.” The illustration shows and the text confirms, the men were huddled around the campfire. A tent would be much more comfortable. • Stetson showed them how to make fur into cloth without tanning, “thick, warm and stronger than a piece of cloth” and from this felt he constructed a tent. They were then “warm and snug.”

<p>P. 230</p>	<p>When John was in Pikes Peak, Colorado digging for gold, why did he decide to make a better hat for himself? In what ways was the hat he made useful?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For better protection from the weather; the scorching sun blistered his face and the whipping wind blinded him. • The brim kept the sun out of his eyes and the rain off his back. The felt could be brushed or thumped to throw the dust off.
<p>Pgs. 236-238</p>	<p>In what ways did his new hat help the cowboys of the West?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It shielded a cowpoke’s eye from blinding sun and caught the rain before it trickled down his back • It could wave a cow into a corral • Fan the flames of a campfire • Used to carry oats to feed the horse • Scoop water for a drink from a mountain stream • It could impress a lady at a Saturday dance • Come in handy when picking huckleberries • It was a perfect decoy when a cowboy was in trouble • Made a soft cushion for a cowboy’s head at the end of the day
<p>P. 239</p>	<p><i>What are some characteristics of John Stetson? How do they contribute to his success?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Culminating Activity for ideas

Vocabulary

	KEY WORDS ESSENTIAL TO UNDERSTANDING Words addressed with a question or task	WORDS WORTH KNOWING General teaching suggestions are provided in the Introduction
TEACHER PROVIDES DEFINITION not enough contextual clues provided in the text	Page 224- Tuberculosis	Page 231 - Trade
STUDENTS FIGURE OUT THE MEANING sufficient context clues are provided in the text	Page 223 – Form (noun and verb) Page 224- Fortunes Page 226 – Skins Page 228- Hide Page 229- Felt	Page 233- Wranglers

Possible Culminating Task

- Reread, Think, Discuss, Write

What are some characteristics of John Stetson and how did they contribute to his success?

Possible ideas:

Brave & adventurous: When he was diagnosed with tuberculosis he decides it might be his last chance to follow his dream of seeing the West, so he heads to St. Joseph, MI. This contributes to his success because without it, he would not have spent time with the people of the West to know they needed a better hat to protect them from the weather, and for much more as well.

An Inventor (p. 228): He wanted to show his friends that fur could be made into cloth, so he made a tent made out of felt.

Dedicated, hardworking (p. 233): He was “determined to succeed”. He spent what little money he had to make a hat for the wranglers and cowboys of the West and called it the Boss of the Plains. At first he did not get sales, but then the money came pouring in. (P. 234)

Innovative: The Boss of the Plains hat was designed to help the cowboys in many ways (can give examples to support).