

Additional Strategies and Resources

Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)

Developed first as a way to engage students in analyzing fine art, this technique uses “open-ended questioning and student-centered facilitation techniques, including strategies for listening and paraphrasing, to create student-driven and engaging group discussion environments.” It also engages “students in discourse . . . with an emphasis on providing evidence while considering and building off the contributions and perspectives of their peers.”

This [PowerPoint](#) explains the strategy in more detail, but here’s a quick primer.

Directions for VTS

Give students time to observe the image individually and silently (1–2 minutes).

Question #1: “What is going on here?”

It is important to ask this question just as you see it written. Once a student volunteers to share what he or she sees, paraphrase his or her answer: “I hear you saying...” You can also have a student expand on what he or she sees by asking:

Question #2: “What do you see that makes you say that?”

Again, paraphrase the best you can the student’s answer before moving on to the next student. After about 5 minutes or so, if things start to become quiet, ask:

Question #3: “What more can you find?”

It is important to ask in this same way, as it doesn’t leave the observation to be only with the eyes (as in what more can you see), but opens it up to emotional and other senses also. Again, paraphrase student answers before asking (if relevant):

Question #2: “What do you see that makes you say that?” Plan on spending about 5-10 minutes

discussing an image, and understand that there will be some silence as students think of what else they can find.

Learn more about VTS at <http://vtshome.org/>.

RAFT Writing

According to Reading Rockets, “RAFT is a writing strategy that helps students understand their roles as writers, the audience they will address, the varied formats for writing, and the topic they’ll be writing about. By using this strategy, teachers encourage students to write creatively, to consider a topic from a different perspective, and to gain practice writing for different audiences.”

RAFT is an acronym that stands for **R**ole, **A**udience, **F**ormat, and **T**opic. Students need to choose (or be assigned) a role—for example a historical figure, an advocate, a teacher, a subject matter expert. They need to have an audience—a friend, their mother, a politician, other students, a customer, or the newspaper, for example. They need a format—a letter, a report, a diary entry, or a brochure, for example. Finally, they need a topic: homesteading, Northern Cheyenne history... the possibilities are endless. A classic RAFT assignment for Montana history would be to ask students to imagine themselves as a homesteader or miner writing back to family in Europe or on the East Coast (R=homesteader, A=family, F=letter, and T=life on the farm).

One benefit of RAFT writing is that it forces students to focus on **audience** and **role**. (Another way to think about role is the purpose for writing). This will help them become better writers because understanding audience and purpose are the keys to good communication.

Learn more about the RAFT Writing Strategy at [Read, Write, Think, Reading Rockets](#), and the [National Council for Special Education](#).

Reading Strategies/Differentiation

Here are a few strategies if your students are having difficulty reading from *Montana: A History of Our Home*.

Rewordify

[Rewordify](#) is a free online software you can use to simplify blocks of text by replacing more difficult vocabulary with easier words. After you paste a paragraph, section, or chapter into the yellow box at the top of the page, and click “rewordify,” a version with simpler vocabulary appears. With an account, you can also edit “ReWordified” documents to select which words ReWordify changes. Download a copy of *Montana: A History of Our Home* from the Montana Historical Society [website](#) so you can easily copy and paste passages into Rewordify.

Modified Choral Reading

Tell students that you are going to read the narrative out loud, while they follow along. Let them know that you expect them all to chime in with the next word or phrase in the sentence every time you pause.

Pause before an important word or phrase every sentence or two, so students can read those words. Ideally, the words you have them read will be the new content vocabulary. The first time these vocabulary words appear, read them aloud, so students can hear how to pronounce them. The next time the word appears, have the students read that word.

Partner Reading

Assign two-person, mixed-ability student teams and have them alternate reading aloud to one another, switching each time there is a new paragraph. Or have them read each section aloud at the same time.

Chunking

With clear heads and subheads and short sections within chapters, *Montana History of Our Home*

is designed to facilitate “chunking,” or breaking a longer text down into manageable pieces. The lesson plans that accompany each chapter also rely heavily on chunking by assigning students sections of the text rather than entire chapters.

Find more strategies from [Literacy in Focus](#), [Edutopia](#), and “[Alternatives to Round Robin Reading](#).”

Additional Resources

For All Chapters

[Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#), developed and published by Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All Unit, 2019.

This must-read document provides the background information teachers need to fulfill Montana’s constitutional mandate to teach about the culture and history of Montana Indians.

[Montana: Stories of the Land](#) Companion Website, developed by the Montana Historical Society

Teachers are encouraged to read chapters from this middle-school textbook to gain background knowledge and to use excerpts for advanced students.

[Hands-on History Footlocker Program](#), Montana Historical Society website

The Society’s Footlocker program offers thematic “traveling trunks” focused on a wide variety of topics. Each footlocker is filled with reproductions of clothing, tools, everyday objects, maps, photographs, documents, historical narratives, and lesson plans. Many of the lesson plans can be taught without ordering the footlocker, but the objects bring the topics alive. Footlockers can be borrowed for two weeks at a time.

Unit 1

[Montana State Symbols](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society's [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker provides students the opportunity to explore hands-on educational activities to gain a greater appreciation of our state's symbols and their meanings.

Videos

Great States Montana: [Geography](#) and *Great States Montana*: [Economy](#), each about three minutes long, are available through PBS Learning Media. For more Montana videos along with lesson plans, visit the [PBS Learning Media website](#).

Unit 2

[Montana's First Peoples: Essential Understandings](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society's [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker explores the Seven Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians. It includes pre-contact and contact-era trade items, a parfleche, drum, elk tooth dress, horse model, ration coupon bag, boarding school outfits, beaver pelt, bison hide, maps, illustrations, tribal flags, and more.

[Montana Indian Stories Lit Kit](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society's [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker immerses students in storytelling and the oral tradition with seven class sets of Montana Indian stories collected for the Indian Reading Series (1972) and reprinted by the Montana Historical Society Press. The lit kit includes animal puppets and User Guide. NOTE: Out of respect for the storytelling customs of many Montana Indian people, this kit is only available for use in the winter months (November through March).

[Indian Reading Series](#): Stories from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Find 140 culturally relevant stories written and illustrated by Northwest Indian authors (including tribal members from Montana), along with a teacher's manual, all available to download at no charge.

[Stones and Bones](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society's [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker explores the earliest evidence of Montana's human history through a study of casts and reproduction stone and bone tools, including replica artifacts from the Anzick collection found in Wilsall, Montana.

[Virtual Tour: Neither Empty nor Unknown: Montana at the Time of Lewis and Clark](#), created by Laura Ferguson

Based on an interactive tour given at the Montana Historical Society Museum, this virtual tour uses PowerPoints to bring the exhibit into your classroom and provides valuable background information for educators.

["The Art of Storytelling: Plains Indian Perspectives" \(K-12\)](#).

These materials are designed to provide you and your students with an exciting way to incorporate Indian Education for All into your art curriculum. The material includes grade-appropriate lesson plans that are aligned with the Essential Understandings and the Montana Art Content Standards; three PowerPoint presentations, one focused on winter counts and two about ledger art (one of which is designed for grades K-6 and the other for grades 7-12); and additional material that explores winter counts and biographical art. Part 2 features one lesson from "The Art of Storytelling," but other lesson plans are available if you want to extend this investigation.

Videos

[Ice Patch Archaeology](#)

This nine-minute video “provides a brief overview of more than a decade’s worth of investigation into the archaeology of alpine snow and ice in the Greater Yellowstone and the effects of climate change on archaeological resources.” It emphasizes that people have lived in this region for ten thousand years and talks about the importance of archaeology for understanding the region’s history.

[Blackfeet and Crow Star Stories](#), provided by the Montana Office of Public Instruction

Storytellers from the Crow and Blackfeet Nations tell traditional stories about the planets, sun, moon, Milky Way, and constellations that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Tour the Madison Buffalo Jump with Dr. Shane Doyle:

- [Welcome to the Madison Buffalo Jump](#) (2 minutes)
- [Madison Buffalo Jump Tour](#) (3 minutes)
- [Madison Buffalo Jump](#)—Viewed from the Top (2:12 minutes)

Unit 3

[Coming to Montana: Immigrants from Around the World](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society’s [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker showcases the cultures, countries, traditions, and foodways of Montana’s immigrants through reproduction clothing, toys, and activities.

[The Chinese Experience in Montana](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society’s [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker explores the lives of the Chinese who came to Montana, the customs that they

brought with them to America, how they contributed to Montana communities, and why they left.

[From Traps to Caps: The Montana Fur Trade](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society’s [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker gives students a glimpse at how fur traders lived and made their living along the creeks and valleys of Montana, 1810-1860.

[Gold, Silver, and Coal Oh My!: Mining Montana’s Wealth](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society’s [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker chronicles the discoveries that drew people to Montana in the late nineteenth century and how the mining industry developed and declined.

[Tools of the Trade](#): Montana Industry and Technology Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society’s [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker surveys the evolution of tools and technology in Montana from the late 1700s to the present.

[Riding the Range: The Sheep and Cattle Industry in Montana](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society’s [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker reveals the fascinating stories of cattle, horse, and sheep ranching in Montana, 1870 to 1920.

[Thinking Like a Historian: Using Digital Newspapers in the Classroom](#)

Have students exercise their historical imaginations as while introducing them to the research process, the richness of historic newspapers, and the social history of gold-rush era Montana.

[Montana's Charlie Russell](#)

The Montana Historical Society boasts one of the best collections of Charles M. Russell art in the world. We invite you to bring your class to tour Russell's masterpieces in person—but if you can't come to Helena, we're happy to help you bring the Cowboy Artist to your classroom with eight lessons aligned to the Montana Common Core, Art and Social Studies Standards, and images of sixteen Russell paintings, letters, and sculptures. (Note: Two of these lessons have been incorporated into Unit 6.)

[“Forest, Fields, and the Falls: Connecting Minnesota”](#)

Visit this website and select “Lumbering” to explore a cartoon depicting life in a logging camp (although the story is set in Minnesota, there are parallels to Montana logging camps).

[Overcoming Prejudice](#)

This model lesson uses material created for the Montana's African American Heritage Resources website to explore the experiences of another group (African Americans) who came to Montana in the nineteenth century.

[Profiles of African American Montanans](#)

This lesson plan and PowerPoint presentation introduces students to some of the African Americans who contributed to Montana history.

Unit 4

[Essential Understandings of Montana Hutterites: A Resource for Educators and Students](#), edited by Claudette Morton, Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2010.

[Inside and Outside the Home: Homesteading in Montana, 1900-1920](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society's [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

This footlocker focuses on the thousands of people who came to Montana's plains in the

early twentieth century in hope of make a living through dry-land farming.

[Oral History in the Classroom Mini Footlocker](#) User Guide.

The footlocker includes eight Sony IC Audio Recorders, batteries and chargers, and useful reference material. The user guide includes detailed lesson plans for creating a classroom-based oral history project.

[To Learn a New Way](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society's [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

Through a child's voice, as much as possible, this footlocker explores the late 1800s and early 1900s, a time in which Montana Indians were moved to reservations and experienced allotment and boarding schools—all of which resulted in dramatic changes in their lands, languages, and way of life.

Picture and Chapter Books

As Long as the Rivers Flow, by Larry Loyles, illustrated by Heather Holmlund (Toronto, 2002), 40 pages, and [model lesson plan](#).

Jim Thorpe's Bright Path, by Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by S. D. Nelson (New York, 2008), 40 pages, and [model lesson plan](#).

Shi-shi-etko (Toronto, 2005), 32 pages, and *Shin-chi's Canoe* (Toronto, 2008), 40 pages, by Nicola L. Campbell, illustrated by Kim LaFave.

When I Was Eight, (Toronto, 2010), 32 pages, and *Not My Girl* (Toronto, 2014), 36 pages, by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, illustrated by Gabrielle Grimard (Toronto, 2010), 32 pages.

My Name Is Seepeetza, by Shirley Sterling (Groundwood Books, 1998), 126 pages.

Unit 5

[Montana State Capitol Website](#)

Find a video tour, virtual tour, and online exhibits all focused on the capitol.

[Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#), developed and published by Montana Office of Public Instruction Indian Education for All Unit, 2019.

This must-read document will help you with every unit, but is absolutely critical reading for Unit 5.

[Montana's First Peoples: Essential Understandings](#) Footlocker and User Guide. Order the footlocker from the Montana Historical Society's [Hands-on Footlocker program](#).

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Unit 6

[Montana's Charlie Russell](#)

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[Montana Biographies](#)

Find links to online biographies of 48 Montanans, from Assiniboine/Gros Ventre educator and poet Minerva Allen, businesswoman Sarah Bickford, wilderness advocate Bob Marshall, physician Caroline McGill, and bronc rider Alice Orr to nun and advocate Sister Providencia Tolan, politician Burton K. Wheeler, and lawyer and Crow tribal chairman Robert Yellowtail.

[Gallery of Outstanding Montanans](#)

Discover the Montanans who have been honored for their contributions of state or national significance to their selected fields of endeavor.