

Writing Activities

We suggest that you choose at least one writing activity to use with your students.

Objectives: The student will exercise and develop their writing skills. They gain an insight into what life was like during periods of history. They will use their imaginations and knowledge gained from the trunk and from class readings combined to create their writing assignment.

1. Write a fable:

Before industrialization, there was no public school system in America. Children, if their parents were wealthy might be sent to boarding school or have a tutor. If the family was poor, they would often attend church-sponsored charity schools or receive no education at all. Children whether formally or informally educated were often taught fables as life lessons. After reading some fables, have your students write their own. They should choose a moral and use their creativity along with inspiration from the stories read in class. For an added component, they can read these to the class or in small groups.

We suggest reading stories from:

Aesop's Fables adaptation by Fiona Waters

Anansi and the Moss-covered Rock by Eric A. Kimmel

2. Create a newspaper:

Using an important event from the timeline in the binder, have your students create a newspaper about the event. If in a group of 3-5 people, have them create a complete newspaper (2-5 pages) with articles and photographs that fit the event and the time period. If they need inspiration for ideas like advertisements and articles, look at some of the items in the trunk and newspapers from the time period. If you want your students to work individually, have them write a newspaper article as a first-person account of the event.

The Newseum has excellent resources for archived newspapers to show your students.

<http://www.newseum.org/education/resources>

3. Before the invention of the telegraph and the telephone, the only way for people to communicate to people that were far away was by sending a letter. Using their best penmanship and the structure of writing a letter, have them write about life in colonial Virginia to an imaginary relative. They can choose a character (farmer, merchant, tradesperson, educated slave, wealthy woman) or they can write as themselves, as a child in the Colonial period, using research from the trunk and from class readings.