



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 4: Module 2A: Unit 3: Lesson 1

Preparing to Write Historical Fiction: Determining Characteristics of the Genre



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Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

I can explain what a text says using specific details from the text. (RL.4.1)
I can write narrative text about real or imagined experiences or events. (W.4.3)
I can choose evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. (W.4.9)
I can adjust my writing practices for different time frames, tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.4.10)

Supporting Learning Targets

- I can determine the gist of two pieces of historical fiction.
- I can determine the characteristics of historical fiction by analyzing examples.

Ongoing Assessment

- Elements of Fiction anchor chart
- Characteristics of Historical Fiction anchor chart
- Exit ticket



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Opening<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Engaging the Writer (10 minutes)B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)2. Work Time<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Guided Practice: Determining Characteristics of Historical Fiction (10 minutes)B. Shared Reading: Finding the Main Idea (20 minutes)C. Independent Practice: Determining Characteristics of Historical Fiction (10 minutes)3. Closing and Assessment<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Sharing and Debrief (5 minutes)B. Exit Ticket (15 minutes)4. Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In advance: Prepare an anchor chart titled Characteristics of Historical Fiction with graphic organizer (see example in supporting materials).• This lesson begins with an activity in which students deduce how to title the Elements of Fiction chart. Therefore, begin just with a blank piece of chart paper, rather than having the title already written out.• Throughout this unit, students read a series of mentor texts. Mentor texts are model texts written by real authors that students examine in order to see strong examples of writing craft.• In this unit, students analyze various examples of historical fiction. For more information on the use of mentor texts, read <i>Study Driven</i> by Katie Wood Ray.• Students should keep these texts in a writing folder, since students will revisit them during many lessons. This folder can be the same as their research folder from Unit 2, or students may begin a new one; organize as it suits your style and students.• Students look at two models of historical fiction in this lesson to help further clarify the characteristics of this genre. Do not just “tell” students categories or characteristics. Rather, let students notice and discover for themselves based on the inquiry structured into the lesson sequence.• All the steps in this lesson are important to building background for the rest of this unit. Depending on students’ readiness, this lesson may run a bit long, due to the amount of reading and vocabulary work.



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
determine, characteristics, historical fiction, analyzing, characters, plot, setting, problem, solution, description, and dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elements of Fiction cards (one card per student)• Elements of Fiction anchor chart (new; teacher created; please see Opening A)• Sticky notes (standard size, three per pair of students)• Characteristics of Historical Fiction anchor chart (new; teacher-created; see Supporting Materials)• “Making Candles, Colonial Style” by Rebecca S. Fisher (one per student plus one for modeling)• “Joshua’s Gold” by Mary Lois Sanders (one per student)• Writing folders (see note at the end of the lesson)• Exit ticket (one per student)



Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Engaging the Writer (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute an Elements of Fiction card to each student.• Tell students that some of the cards have vocabulary words and others have definitions.<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “Your job is to find someone who has a card with the word that matches your definition or a card with a definition that matches your word.”• Tell students that in a moment, they will stand up, mingle, and greet their peers. With each person they greet, they should discuss:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “Are our cards a match? Why or why not?”• Ask students to mingle to find their match. Assist as needed.• Post a blank piece of chart paper. (This will become the Elements of Fiction anchor chart. Leave space for the title of the chart, but do NOT write that title yet. This will be a bit of a mystery for students until they have shared their words and discuss how the words are all connected.)• Focus students’ attention whole group. Tell students that in a moment, each pair will share out their word and definition and the class will then confirm if each pair is in fact a correct match. <p><i>Note: Do not have students who have the match for fiction share now; they will share last, after a bit more class discussion.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have students share out the words <i>characters</i>, <i>plot</i>, <i>setting</i>, <i>description</i>, and <i>dialogue</i> first. Record the words and definitions on the blank chart paper. As a class, confirm the matches. Allow any mismatched pairs to repartner correctly.• Next ask the class:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “I know we have one more match to discuss. We will share that next. But first I am wondering what these things have in common so far.”• Discuss the terms and gauge students’ background knowledge about these components of fiction.• Have the students with the word <i>fiction</i> share out. Explain that the words <i>characters</i>, <i>plot</i>, <i>setting</i>, <i>description</i>, and <i>dialogue</i> are all elements, or parts, of <i>fiction</i>. Add the title Elements of Fiction to the anchor chart.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider providing nonlinguistic symbols (e.g., stick people for <i>characters</i>, a landscape for <i>setting</i>, speech bubbles for <i>dialogue</i>, etc.) to assist ELLs in making connections with vocabulary.



Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remind students that they have been working to become experts on a colonial trade so that they can become writers of a special kind of fiction, historical fiction. Post and share the supporting learning targets with students: “I can determine the gist of two pieces of historical fiction” and “I can determine the characteristics of historical fiction by analyzing examples.” Since students are familiar with reading for gist, focus on the phrase <i>historical fiction</i> in both targets. Underline the phrase and ask the class: “What is <i>historical fiction</i>?” Have students share their thoughts with a close neighbor. Next, circle the words <i>determine</i>, <i>characteristics</i>, and <i>analyzing</i>.• Ask students to think of synonyms for these words. Provide examples if necessary. (For example, you might say “<i>Determining characteristics</i> means you can pick out the qualities that make historical fiction different from other types of writing. For example, the <i>characteristics</i> of a person might be hair color, height, and personality.”) Students may notice that the word <i>characteristics</i> and <i>characters</i> are similar. Explain that these words have the same root word: <i>character</i>. As you explain these words, write synonyms above each (for example, “pick out” above <i>determine</i>).• Next, explain that <i>analyzing</i> examples means that they will look closely at different examples of writing, including historical fiction, to see what is similar and different.• Have students give a thumbs-up if they think they understand the target, a thumb-sideways if they know a little, and a thumbs-down if they don’t know. Clarify as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider providing nonlinguistic symbols (e.g., stick people for <i>characters</i>, a landscape for <i>setting</i>, speech bubbles for <i>dialogue</i>, etc.) to assist ELLs in making connections with vocabulary.



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Guided Practice: Determining Characteristics of Historical Fiction (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reiterate for the students that they have two purposes for reading. They are continuing to build expertise about colonial trades (as they did in Unit 2). As they read this text on candle-making in Colonial America, they should look for connections to research they've done in this module. But more important, they are reading as writers to learn the characteristics of historical fiction. • Post the Characteristics of Historical Fiction anchor chart (see supporting materials for an example of possible format). Partner students. Then distribute "Making Candles, Colonial Style" by Rebecca S. Fisher to each student and at least three sticky notes per partnership. • Display the text using a document camera. Tell students that this is the first example of historical fiction they will analyze to determine the characteristics of the genre. • Read the first three paragraphs of the text (stopping at the subtitle "Collecting Bayberry Wax") aloud as students follow along. Have students turn to a partner and share the gist of the text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "What is this mostly about?" • Invite a few students to share out. • Then focus them on the characteristics of historical fiction. Ask students to think then talk with a partner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "What is a characteristic of historical fiction that you noticed?" • Invite a few students to share out. As they share, ask students to say where they saw that in the text. • Model as needed, showing how to refer to the text and name the characteristic on a sticky note. For example, you may say: "As I read this first paragraph I notice the author introduces the character." (Underline: Abigail Fisher.) "I am thinking that the character Abigail Fisher is probably fictional, since there is no author's note saying she was a real person, but I'm not really sure. However, she is doing something that a real girl would do in Colonial America, making candles." Record the word <i>characters</i> on the top of your sticky note. "I am thinking that a characteristic of historical fiction is that the characters can be real or imaginary, but must be realistic for the time period." Record your thinking on a sticky note. (Characters can be real or imagined, but must be realistic for the time period.) Ask: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * "Is there other evidence from the text that tells us that this is a historical fiction narrative about colonial times? Does it have factual information that we know to be true about that time in history?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider giving students who need oral language support a sentence frame for sharing, such as: We underlined_____, because we think that _____is a characteristic of historical fiction. So we wrote _____ about characters in historical fiction.



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct them to underline this evidence and annotate in the margin what historical fact(s) this describes. Invite students to turn and tell their partners what they found.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<p>B. Partner Practice: Determining Characteristics of Historical Fiction (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask students to work with a partner:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “With your partner reread aloud the first three paragraphs, stopping at the phrase ‘ . . . before they had enough.’* With your partner identify something you notice about the setting in historical fiction and record on a sticky note.”• Have partners share and place sticky notes on the chart in the Setting category. Check for students’ understanding by examining sticky notes. Use this information to help determine who will need support during the independent practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider giving students who need oral language support a sentence frame for sharing, such as: We underlined_____, because we think that _____is a characteristic of historical fiction. So we wrote _____ about characters in historical fiction.
<p>C. Independent Practice: Determining Characteristics of Historical Fiction (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell students that they will now reread the first three paragraphs for a third time, this time looking specifically for the characteristics related to the categories of <i>description</i> and <i>plot</i>. Review these terms briefly if needed.• Tell them that this piece does not include dialogue, but the class will discuss dialogue later.• Give students 5–10 minutes to read, discuss, and record. Support students as needed based on your previous check for understanding during the earlier guided practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•



Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Sharing and Debrief (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Select students to share their sticky notes for <i>description</i> and <i>plot</i> aloud and then place their sticky notes in the appropriate categories of the Characteristics of Historical Fiction anchor chart.• For each category on the anchor chart, write a simple statement to synthesize the types of observations students offered on their sticky notes.<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Characters: Can be imaginary, but look and behave realistically for the time period* Setting: Real time and place from the past* Plot: Realistic events for the time period, including problem and solution* Description: Words to help readers visualize the time period and explain unfamiliar historical information• Tell students that this piece of historical fiction does not include <i>dialogue</i>, but many do. Ask them to infer what dialogue in historical fiction would sound like. Then record the final section of the anchor chart:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “Dialogue: Words the characters say reflect the knowledge and thoughts of people from that time period.”• Direct students to copy the new anchor chart, Characteristics of Historical Fiction, into their research notebook. Tell them they will want to refer back to this chart throughout the unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can build the rubric for the culmination project on chart paper and add criteria to it with students at the end of each lesson.• Exit ticket: You can support below-grade-level readers and ELLs by assigning them an appropriately leveled text to use for the exit ticket.
<p>B. Exit Ticket (15 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute “Joshua’s Gold” by Mary Lois Sanders. Have students read the first page of the text and answer the following question:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “Is this a piece of historical fiction? Why or why not? Use details from the text to support your answer.”• Collect the exit tickets to determine students’ understanding of the characteristics of historical fiction and the text for later use in this unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To further support below-or-above grade-level readers consider finding additional short historical fiction texts in lower and higher Lexile levels for use in the exit ticket.



Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the rest of “Making Candles, Colonial Style.” Underline at least three more examples of characteristics of historical fiction you notice in the text. <p><i>Note: Prepare students for the next lesson by having them organize their research folder from Unit 2.</i></p> <p><i>To help students keep their writing for this unit organized, have them use or create a writing folder. This can be the same folder as their Unit 2 research folder, or students could start a new folder. Students will use the writing folder to keep copies of their mentor texts, writing graphic organizers, and drafts.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•



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Supporting Materials



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Elements of Fiction Cards
(Vocabulary)

Characters	Setting
Plot	Fiction
Description	Dialogue
Characters	Setting
Plot	Fiction
Description	Dialogue

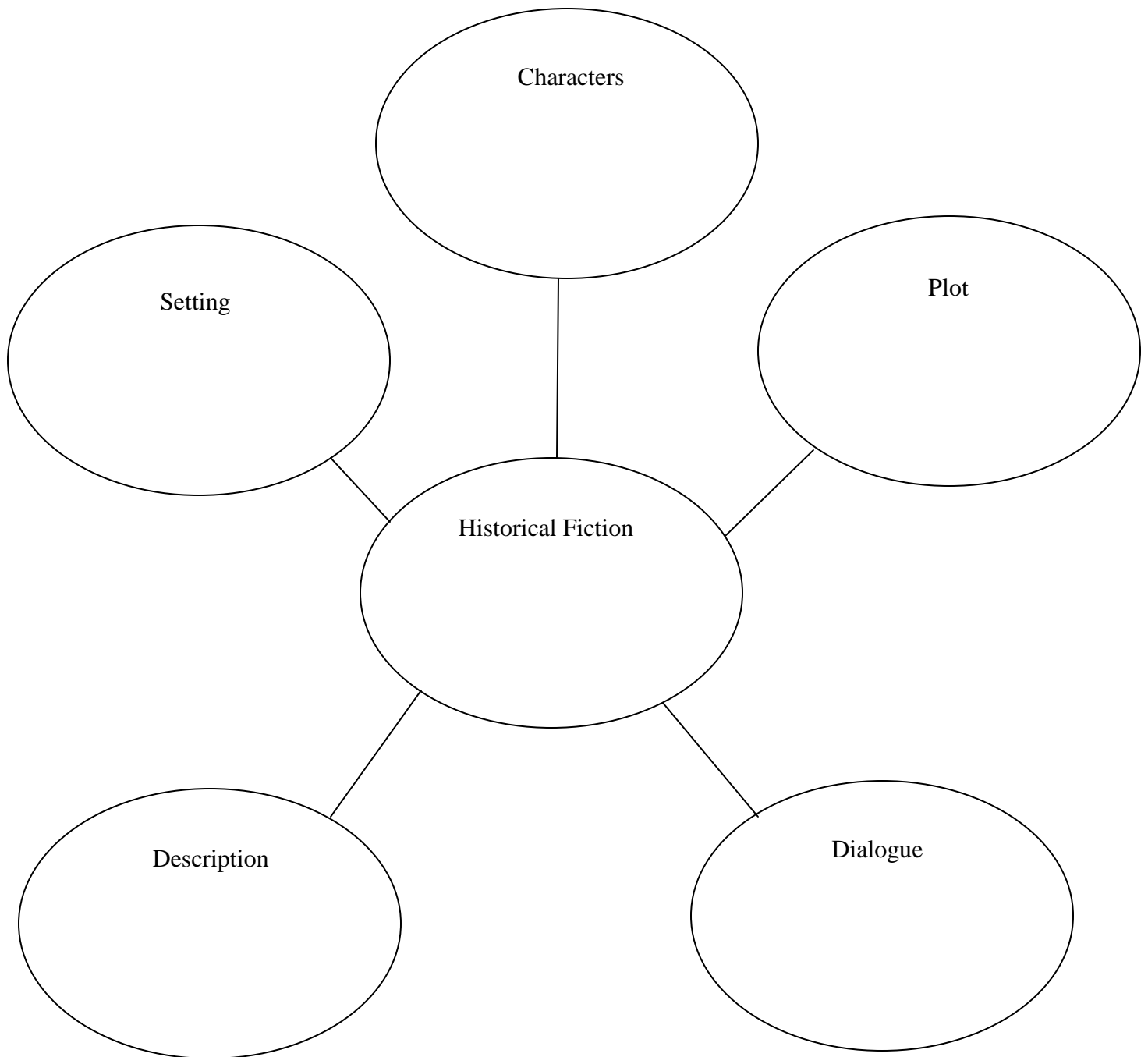


Elements of Fiction Cards
(Vocabulary)

The individuals in a story	Place and time of story
Sequence of events in a story, including a problem faced by the character and how it is solved	A novel or short story that is imagined by the author
Words authors use in a story to create mental images in their readers' minds	The speech and conversation of characters in a story
The individuals in a story	Place and time of story
Sequence of events in a story, including a problem faced by the character and how it is solved	A novel or short story that is imagined by the author
Words authors use in a story to create mental images in their readers' minds	The speech and conversation of characters in a story

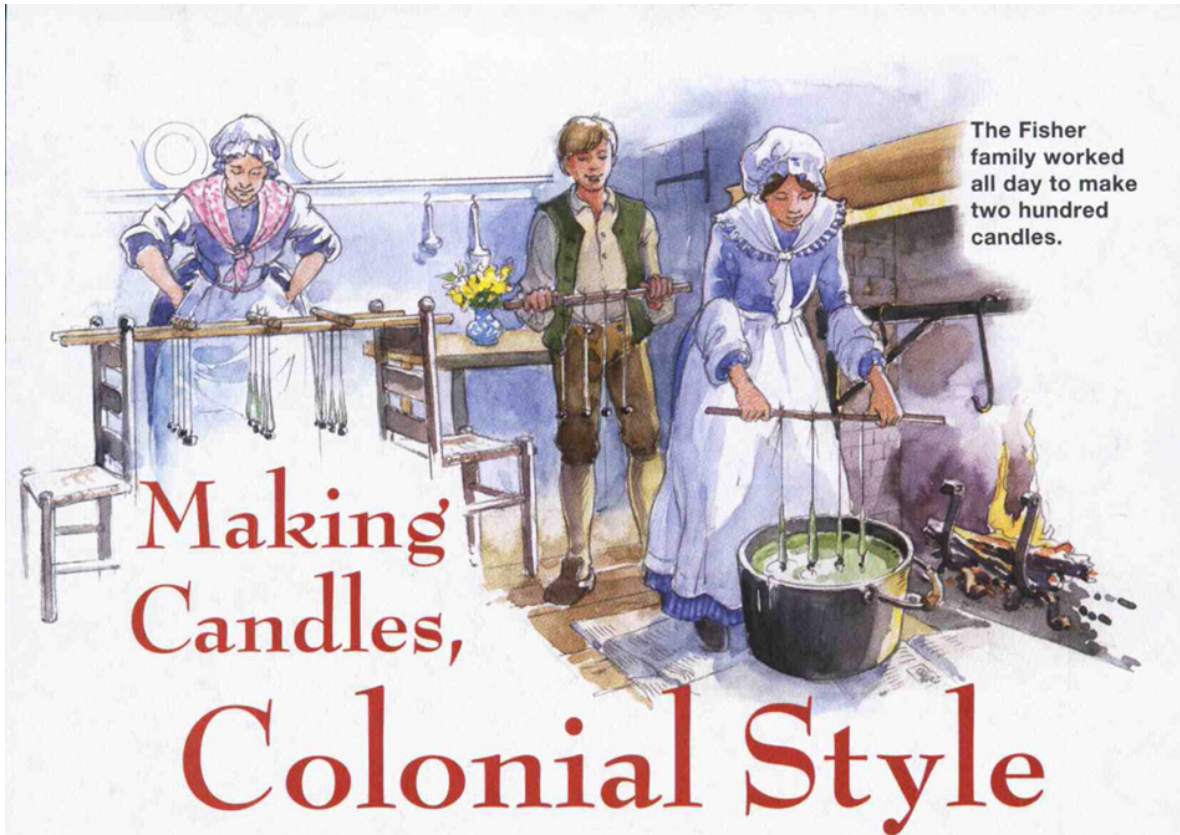


Characteristics of Historical Fiction (Sample for Teacher Reference:
Chart Should Actually be Created with Students)





“Making Candles, Colonial Style”



Making Candles, Colonial Style

By Rebecca S. Fisher



A bayberry is half the size of a pea.

Abigail Fisher plopped bayberries into her bucket. It was late summer in 1750 in the Colony of Maryland. Abigail and her brother, George, were gathering bayberries to make candles.

Many people made candles with beeswax or animal fat. People near the Maryland coast preferred bayberries. Bayberry candles burned longer, didn't smoke, and had a sweet scent.

Picking the clusters of tiny gray-green berries was long, hard work. Abigail and

George picked bayberries for weeks before they had enough.

Collecting Bayberry Wax

Mother boiled the bayberries in water. Their waxy coating floated to the surface. Mother skimmed it off and put the wax in a *starter pot*. Every day more wax was added to the starter pot.

While the berries boiled, Mother spun threads from the fibers of milkweed stems. Then she twisted the threads together to make candlewicks.

It was autumn before the starter pot was full of wax. Now the Fishers could make candles.



“Making Candles, Colonial Style”

Candle-Making Day

Early in the morning, Father took the candle poles and rods down from the beams of the kitchen ceiling. George placed two chairs in front of the fireplace, about four feet apart. He put the two candle poles across the backs of the chairs.

Mother and Abigail tied four foot-long candlewicks to the rods. Then they tied small stones to the ends of the wicks. The stone weights would keep the candles straight.

Father placed the candle rods across the poles, like the rungs of a ladder. Mother heated the starter pot until the hard wax melted into a clear, green liquid.

Candle molds were scarce because they were very expensive. Most colonial families made their candles by dipping.

A candle rod with a row of wicks was dipped in the liquid wax. Each wick would make a slender candle called a *taper*.

As Abigail slowly dipped the candle rod, wax stuck to the wicks. Then she put the rod between the candle poles to dry. George dipped the next rod.

The Fishers took turns

It took ten
quarts of
bayberries
to make
one candle!

dipping the rods. When all the rods had been dipped once, the family started over. Abigail dipped the first rod again, adding another layer of wax.

With each dip, the candles grew. After the rods had been dipped ten times, Mother cut off the stone weights. Each rod had to be dipped at least forty more times before the candles were done!

The Finished Candles

By nightfall, the Fishers had made two hundred candles. All but ten candles were packed in wooden boxes. The family put away their candle-making things until the next year.

Next summer, bayberries would once again grow along the Maryland coast. And Abigail and George would start picking them again.

How Candles Are Made Today

Computers and machines make the candles in many candle factories. Machines dip the candles in wax again and again.

Animal fat is no longer used. A type of wax called *paraffin* is often used instead.

But even today, some people still like making their candles by hand. And many people still think bayberry candles are the best.



A worker checking candles in a modern candle factory.

“Joshua’s Gold”

Joshua Carlisle, a man grown at 16, was three days on the trail and high in the Rocky Mountains when he began panning for gold. It was early January 1859 and the gold in the creeks around Denver City had played out. Mr. Schermerhorn had been right.

“Come spring,” the old store keeper had told him, “every prospector’s gonna rush up in them mountains. You want gold, Josh, you gotta be first.”

Now, at every stream, Josh filled his flat-rimmed pan with ice-cold silt and water. He stirred it, letting the lighter sand float up and wash over the rim, then looked carefully for gold. The heavier gold particles and nuggets were supposed to stick to the bottom of the pan, but Josh found nothing.

“Where are you, gold?” Josh shouted, his lonely voice echoing from snow-covered peaks. After a week he had nothing to show for his hard work but cold, chapped hands and a sore back.

A quiet snow began to fall.

“I’ll give it another day,” he told himself one night, “Then I head for Denver City and get my old job back at Schermerhorn’s.”

About noon the next day, Josh, atop his horse and pulling a pack mule, reached a mountain pass and looked into the valley beyond. A wide, shallow creek meandered through it.

“Perfect,” Josh muttered.

He rode down into the valley to the creek, dismounted and stuck his hand into the cold wet sand. As the sand trickled through his fingers it glittered.

“Gold,” he whispered, then shouted: “G-O-O-O-O-O-O-L-D!”

He heard his voice echoing around the mountains, and froze. He wanted no prospectors, outlaws or Ute Indians finding him or his gold.

“No noise,” he whispered. “From now on we stay quiet.”

Josh unloaded his pack mule and horse, rubbed them down and picketed them near water. Then he cleared snow from a patch of grass where they could graze. Chores done, Josh went back to the stream.

Each pan yielded gold in tiny grains. By evening he had half a pouch full, about \$100 or a year’s wages working at Schermerhorn’s.

The winter wind blew sharply. Josh shivered as he built a fire.

“Tomorrow I’ll find a better camp.”

Next morning Josh explored the valley and found a cave that would shelter him and the animals. He chopped wood and killed a deer for its warm hide to use as a winter blanket and for meat to feed him through the harsh season. With camp secured, he went for the gold.



“Joshua’s Gold”

The short winter days settled quickly into routine. Up before dawn, Josh built a small fire, cooked breakfast and cared for his animals. He panned all day, with only a short lunch break. After supper he measured and weighed his gold dust, storing it in small leather pouches.

Then one morning the routine changed.

“Look at that,” Josh whispered, holding a small gold nugget up to the sun. “Imagine. Twenty-five dollars in one little pebble.”

Pan after pan produced more nuggets.

“Fifty-two nuggets, boys,” he told the animals at supper. “About \$2,500. Not a bad day’s work, I’d say!”

For 34 days, Josh worked the stream and filled pouches with gold dust and nuggets. Finally, in March, with supplies about gone, he headed to Denver City. Hidden in his packs was \$27,000 in gold.

Denver City was booming. As Josh rode slowly down Main Street toward Schermerhorn’s General Store, he could hear an old piano in one tent. Raucous laughter filled the night air. A chair crashed through the swinging doors as a fistfight spilled out of one establishment. Prospectors and drifters watched as he rode by.

“They’re wonderin’ ‘bout my luck,” he thought.

Suddenly Josh realized that he couldn’t use his gold in Denver City if he wanted to keep the strike a secret. But how could he buy new supplies or ship the gold without using it? He needed a plan.

Mr. Schermerhorn came out to the porch of his store and greeted Josh as he dismounted.

“Look who finally showed up! You look a bit down on your luck, son. You’re welcome to bed down in the storeroom again, if you want.”

“Thank you, sir,” Josh said, with relief. “I’ll need a job too.”

“No gold, huh?”

Josh shrugged his shoulders, not wanting to speak a lie. “Got to eat and sleep,” he said, “and buy more supplies.” This was no lie.

“Well, come into the Honey Hut when you’re settled. We’ll talk.”

Soon Josh joined Mr. Schermerhorn in his workroom. He started helping pour honey into large gallon crocks and sealing them with wax.

“Everybody’s building, so carpenters are in demand,” Mr. Schermerhorn said as they worked. “People will remember you buildin’ this workroom onto the store last fall.

I’ll spread the word.”

“Sounds good. Thanks.”

“Joshua’s Gold”

“Yep, Denver City’s growin’, all right. It’s ‘cause of Gregory’s strike up at Clear Creek. Happened in January, just after you left, and now the gold rush is on again. We’re getting a newspaper in April and a telegraph office opened last week.”

Mr. Schermerhorn began searching his pockets. “Just plum forgetful, Josh. You got a letter. Come in February from Texas. Here she is.”

Josh opened the letter, began reading, then chuckled.

“It’s from my brother, Baker. Remember the crock of honey I sent home last fall? Baker says to send more. His wife, Sarah, is expectin’ a baby and cravin’ your honey. Says he can sell honey to the neighbors too.”

“Looks like you’re in business, Josh. Better than huntin’ for gold.” Mr. Schermerhorn looked thoughtful for a minute, then said, “Tell you what. You help me in the Honey Hut and I’ll go partners with you. We’ll ship your brother as many crocks as we can and split the cost and profits. A carpenter’s job can pay for your supplies. What do you say?”

“I say shake, partner, and thanks.”

Josh could barely believe his luck. That honey will be golden, he thought. Pure golden!

While working out his plan, however, Josh discovered two obstacles: first, keeping the gold and honey separate; second, deciding how much gold to put into each crock. If the crocks were too heavy his secret would be out.

After several nights of experimenting, the formula was set. Josh fit four small glass jars of gold, sealed with wax, into each crock, then filled the crocks with honey and sealed them.

He packed 27 crocks into hay-cushioned crates, tucked a letter explaining the gold to his brother inside one crate, then helped load them carefully onto Wells Fargo freight wagons. As he watched the wagon train pull out, he crossed his fingers. Robbery or one cracked crock could foil his plan, and he began worrying whether he should have sent all the gold at once.

Before heading back to his carpenter’s job, Josh sent a telegraph message to Baker. **27 CROCKS GOLDEN HONEY SHIPPED. SCHERMERHORN NOW PARTNER. READ LETTER FIRST. J.**

Two weeks later, Josh bought supplies, said goodbye to his partner and headed for the mountains, careful no one followed.

First day back in his valley, Josh began walking upstream, searching for clues.

“Those last nuggets I found were rough. They can’t have washed very far down stream. The source has to be close by.”

Five days into the search Josh spotted an old rock slide that had spilled into the stream. Scrambling up the slide, he found a wall of glistening quartz laced with gold.

“Joshua’s Gold”

“It’s a jewelry store,” Josh murmured. The old quartz broke apart easily, leaving only nugget-sized gold in his hands. “Could be the strike of a lifetime or just a pocket, but it will do!”

After two months Josh returned to Denver City with four times the gold as before. A telegram waited: SELLING HONEY IN SMALL JARS. JUST GOLDEN. SEND MORE. BAKER.

The gold had arrived.

Twice more Joshua went into the mountains and came out with gold. Each time his secret remained safe. Then in early October, Josh set out again. By noon he knew he was being followed.

“Three men, no pack animals,” he muttered, watching the distant riders follow his trail. “They want my gold, they’ll have to find me first!”

For a week Josh led the chase through valleys, over mountains, changing directions, marking false trails. Finally, he doubled back and watched. The riders had lost his tracks and their way. Satisfied, Josh followed an ancient trail over the next ridge and headed for his valley.

He also made a decision. With one last shipment he would go home. \$200,000 in gold was enough.

In late November, Joshua headed for Texas. He left one crock for Mr. Schermerhorn. That crock contained a jar of nuggets, a letter and a map.

In the spring, Wells Fargo delivered a crate to the now greatly expanded Carlisle Brothers Ranch Inc. Inside Josh found a crock of honey, a jar of nuggets and a note: “We’ll call it The Honey Plot Mine. Schermerhorn.”

Carlisle & Schermerhorn, a partnership based on trust and the ability to keep a secret, prospered – a sweet deal if there ever was one.



Exit Ticket

Learning Target: I can determine the characteristics of historical fiction by analyzing examples.

Directions: Read the first page of “Joshua’s Gold” by Mary Lois Sanders. Answer the following question: “Is this text a piece of historical fiction? Why or why not?” Use at least three details from the text to support your answer.

My answer: _____

My evidence:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____