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Diverse Families Bookshelf Lesson Plans and  
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## Newsgirl, Chapters 1-8

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Diverse Families Children’s Literature Lesson Plan

Written by Jennifer Starch

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Lesson Title	<b>Book title: Newsgirl</b> <b>Author:</b> Liza Ketchum (chapters 1-8; novel has 48 chapters total)
Content Areas and Grade Levels:	English and Language Arts and Social Studies 5-8 grade range (6th grade preferred level)
Lesson Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The student will conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources.</li> <li>2. The student will use digital tools to produce writing.</li> <li>3. The student will demonstrate understanding of how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to trace the route taken to California.</li> <li>4. The student will understand physical and cultural characteristics of the Eastern United States and California.</li> <li>5. The student will understand the fundamental concepts relevant to the development of a market economy.</li> </ol>
Florida Standards:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ELA (BEST) 6.C.4.1 Conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources, and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.</li> <li>2. ELA (BEST) 6.C.5.2 Use digital tools to produce writing.</li> <li>3. SS.6.G.1 Understand how to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technology to report information.</li> <li>4. SS.6.G.2 Understand physical and cultural characteristics of places.</li> <li>5. SS.6.E.1 Understand the fundamental concepts relevant to the development of a market economy.</li> </ol>
Assessments Included:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teacher observation and talk (formative)</li> <li>● Emoji assessment (formative)</li> <li>● Think-Pair-Share (formative)</li> </ul>
Motivating Activity & Anticipatory Set/Access Prior Knowledge:	<p>The teacher will present themselves as a miner (floppy hat, flannel shirt, gold pan, etc.) and set the scene for the topic of the 1849 California Gold Rush; the teacher will identify themselves as a miner from New Hampshire that has recently moved to San Francisco to pan for gold. Project book title and cover art upon beginning this lesson so students can see it. Introduce book title and tell students that it takes place during the California Gold Rush.</p> <p>Ask students if they’ve ever heard of the California Gold Rush and what they know or think they know based on what we’ve read so far. Ask students if they’ve ever heard of the 49ers football team. Tell students about the 1849 connection (beginning of the Gold Rush)</p>



Play [this short video](#) as an introduction and attention-getter.

(10 minutes)

Procedures:

1. Provide each student with a paper map ([for example](#)) of the Western Hemisphere. Ask students: *What continents are these?* Review continents and repeat the question for ELs, as needed. Make sure students have a pencil to use for labeling throughout the lesson. Model on the projection so students can see the correct spelling.  
Universal Design for Learning Guidelines:  
1.3: Offer ways of customizing the display of information;  
2.1: Clarify vocabulary and symbols;  
3.1: Activate or supply background knowledge;  
4.2: Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies;  
5.1: Use multiple media for communication
2. Once continents are identified, ask students to choose a color to label the continents. Teacher will demonstrate on a projection of the same map.
3. Ask students: *What do you know or remember about different types of landforms?* (activating prior knowledge)
4. Ask students: *Who remembers what type of landform the state of Florida is? What other landforms can you think of?* When a student identifies a landform, repeat the name of it, and indicate on the map, or draw it out, as needed for ELs. Some student responses might be, *mountains, plateau, peninsula, island, valleys, hills, isthmus.* (SS.6.G.1)
5. Allow students to name what types of landforms they remember and describe them. If nobody comes up with it, guide students to “isthmus”.
6. Describe what an isthmus is and ask: *Do you see anything on this map that is a narrow strip of land that connects two larger areas of land with water on each side? Please label this on your map as the Isthmus of Panama.*
7. Make sure all students have identified the Isthmus of Panama; demonstrate labeling it on the teacher’s projected map.
8. The teacher will say: *In the first few chapters of Newsgirl, we read of Amelia’s journey to California. They traveled from Boston, Massachusetts, to San Francisco, California, and it took 8 weeks using the Isthmus of Panama. The first part of their trip was to take a steamship from Boston to Panama and then using canoes, small wagons, and sometimes walking, across the isthmus and then another steamship to San Francisco. Please trace this route from Boston (indicate on teacher map where Boston is) to San Francisco (indicate on teacher map where San Francisco is).*
9. Then ask: *What other ways could have gotten from Boston to San Francisco? Use your map for ideas! Now use your personal electronic device and some of these keywords to search how people can cross between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans now.* (key word examples: gold rush crossing; gold rush route), .



Teacher will demonstrate tracing out the route after the students so they can correct their work as needed. Indicate the route for ELs and repeat, as needed. (ELA (BEST) 6.C.4.1)

10. The teacher will say: *Now that you have found multiple ways (ie. around Cape Horn, through the isthmus of Panama, over land by stagecoach) a person can cross from Boston to California, type out a paragraph describing which way YOU would like to take and why.* (ELA (BEST) 6.C.5.2)

**(20 minutes)**

While students are typing, the teacher should walk the room, asking and answering questions for students, assessing their understanding so far.

11. The teacher should offer students a body and brain break: *Now that you are done writing, let's take a trip across the room (since we can't go across the country!) and stretch our legs.* (You can play some interesting music for this activity; something period appropriate such as this [YouTube video](#). This will allow students to take a short break and allow for some movement and light conversation, limit this to **5 minutes**)
12. Use your preferred choral response to call students back to your attention (for example, the teacher might say, "And we are..." and the students are prompted to reply, "Movin' ON!") .
13. *Please turn your books to page 4. Please partner read the bottom paragraph that starts with "Mother and Estelle..." .... stop at the end of the sentence that finishes with "they would make and sell".*

The teacher responds with: *When Amelia said "women could make their own way in California, earn a good living; be independent; even buy property" what do you think their lives were like when they lived in Boston? What must have been different? Possible responses could be: That women could not own property in Boston. Or That women could not be independent in Boston.* (SS.6.G.2)

14. *Please turn your books to page 19; please partner read from the bottom of page 19 starting with "Amelia snapped open her carpet bag... stopping at the top of page 20 ending with "set the shoes aside." ... When the students are done, respond with: Thank you for reading that. What do you think caused Amelia to open her back and take out the paper? What ideas do you think Amelia had? Let's take a few minutes and turn to talk to your partner about those ideas.*

**(5 minutes)**

15. The teacher should start out asking students' opinions: *Why do you think Amelia pulled the newspaper out of her shoes?* Some ideas they might reply with would be: *To sell to make money. Or, To show the others they have newer news.* The teacher would tell the students about a market economy: *A market economy is when production and products are determined by unrestricted competition. So, that would mean that prices are decided by supply and*



	<p><i>demand. If someone had something someone else wanted, and nobody else had that item, it might be considered of higher value. And then, if a lot of people wanted the one item that nobody else had, it would have an even greater value.</i> A visual source such as an anchor chart or resources from the <a href="#">iCivics market economy lesson</a> would help gain student attention. (SS.6.E.1) <b>(10 minutes)</b></p>
Assessment:	<p>Ask students to provide their feedback on the lesson via the emoji assessment. This can be done on paper and handed in or if the class has them laminated, they can use a dry-erase marker directly on them while the teacher walks the room. Ask students to share their emoji feedback with their table partners and discuss their thoughts on what they learned in this lesson.</p> <p>An example of an emoji assessment can be found at the following, for reference:</p> <p><a href="https://twitter.com/edutopia/status/681547022214762496">https://twitter.com/edutopia/status/681547022214762496</a> <a href="https://www.edutopia.org/terms-of-use">https://www.edutopia.org/terms-of-use</a></p> <p>Originally published December 28,2015 © Edutopia.org; George Lucas Educational Foundation <b>(5 minutes)</b></p>
Closure:	<p>Have students write a “two dollar summary” in their ISSN (interactive social studies notebook). A two dollar summary is a short summary where each word has a “value” of ten cents. So the summary must be equal to twenty words or more. <b>(5 minutes)</b></p>
Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● class set of <i>Newsgirl</i> by Liza Ketchum</li><li>● class set of paper maps printed</li><li>● colored pencils</li><li>● personal electronic devices for research and typing</li><li>● class set of emoji assessments printed out (or laminated, if resources allow)</li><li>● class set of dry erase markers</li><li>● computer and projection system for video</li><li>● class set of interactive social studies notebooks (for use in the \$2 summary closure)</li></ul>