



Primary Source Activity: Midwest Farm circa Late 1800s

This lesson is designed to introduce students to the time periods addressed in chapter 9 of the TCI *Social Studies Alive!*, building students' background knowledge of 1900s farm life by providing authentic and interactive primary sources. Because of the background-building nature of this lesson, it is recommended that it be used before the initiation of chapter 9.

Name of Primary Source

- Midwest Diaries and Letters written by Mary Dodge Woodward, Elizabeth Corey, and John Herbert Quick

How primary source ties into text

- Qualifies: The primary sources included: diaries, letters, lists, and photographs give this historical period of the Midwest region a face and "story" that the textbook sets up.
- Elaborates: The primary sources included provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the experiences and hardships of life on the farms of the past.
- Raises questions: Through these primary sources, the students are able to better answer such questions as:
 - Compare farms from different centuries and sources. How are the farms similar to or different from each other? (*Social Studies Alive!* Lesson Guide Unit 9.)
 - What does this picture show? How might the tools shown help the farmer?

Colorado Standards

- 1995 History 3: Understand that societies are diverse and have changed over time
- 2010 Social Studies Standard 1: History develops moral understandings, defines identity, and creates an appreciation of how things change while building skills in judgment and decision making. History enhances the ability to read varied sources and develop the skills to analyze, interpret, and communicate.
- Reading and Writing 1: Read and understand a variety of materials
- Reading and Writing 3: Write and speak using conventional grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Big Ideas

- Farm life was different (than today) a century ago, and has always and is always changing, even within a lifetime as detailed by Quick's account comparing his way of farming with that of his father's.
- Understand farm size, technologies, and farm life from 1800. (*Social Studies Alive!* Lesson Guide Unit 9.)
- Analyze images (*Social Studies Alive!* Lesson Guide Unit 9.)
- Read and respond to [primary sources] as a way to deepen comprehension and explore similarities and differences among stories, authors, and perspectives, (Literacy Planning Guide: Grade 4: Unit 5: Lesson 20.).

Mini-Lesson

Teaching

Create a KWL chart for life on a farm.

Ask the students how life on a farm might have been different than it is today.

Active Engagement

Have the students read or listen to the passages written by Mary Dodge Woodward, Elizabeth Corey, and John Herbert Quick while displaying *Social Studies Alive!* Placards 9A-9I. Discuss with them what people choose to write down in their diaries or letters to family. Compare and contrast the information that each person chose to record different events or information. Ask them to choose two authors and discuss with a partner why each person chose those particular events and information to record. Record this information on the **Venn Diagram** master.

After reading John Herbert Quick's entry, have the students complete the **Chain of Events** graphic organizer allowing the students to illustrate and describe the time and place that Mr. Quick is recording.

After reading Mary Dodge Woodward's diary entries, complete the following graphic organizers:

- **Description Planner:** records the details of the five senses that are described by Mrs. Woodward. These details should be used to write the following letter.
- **Friendly Letter Planner:** provides a tool to assist students in writing a letter chronicling the events of Mrs. Woodward. Consider having the students write the letter from the perspective of Mrs. Woodward or her husband to Mrs. Corey or her husband.
- **Friendly Letter Format:** provides a template for students to use when creating their letter.
- After reading Elizabeth Corey's letter, have students compare and contrast the information that Mrs. Corey and Mrs. Woodward chose to record in their entries. Use the **Venn Diagram** master for this. Use this information to write a letter back to Mrs. Woodward using the **Description Planner**, **Friendly Letter Planner**, and **Friendly Letter Format** organizers.

*If time is a concern, consider having half of the class complete the activity for Mrs. Woodward and the other half complete the activity for Mrs. Corey.

As a culminating activity, have the students complete the **Response Journal** organizer. This can be done in groups or individually. Take time to talk about your students' thoughts and feelings. Also, answer any questions they had.

Read chapter 9 in the *Social Studies Alive! Regions of Our Country* textbook. Have them compare their entries to sections 9.2-9.4 in the book. How did this exercise deepen their understanding of the region and the time period?

“Jack the Farm Dog” by Mary Dodge Woodward

September 19, 1884

Mr. Sleeper came and took away Jack, the shepherd dog, which he left here last spring when he was digging wells. I have become very much attached to Jack, as have all the family, but Mr. Sleeper would not let us keep him.

September 30

It was very warm tonight with little showers, just like spring. The grass and the tops of the vegetables are still green. About midnight I heard a rapping at the door, and upon looking out found Jack, the dog, asking to come in. [H]e looked tired and very hungry. I do not know how far he had come, but they had started for Minnesota.

October [date unknown]

Willie Sleeper came again for Jack. He said Jack had come back eighteen miles. The poor dog wanted some of his granny's bread - and he got it. I hated to have Mr. Sleeper take him. He didn't want to go. They are going directly home, so I presume I have seen the last of my good Jack.

October 5

There was a severe thunderstorm last night which kept me awake. About two o'clock I heard a familiar tapping at the outside door. I hurried down and there stood my poor, good Jackie, all bedraggled with mud, and so tickled to see me and get home that he nearly wagged his tail off. There was a piece of large, new rope hanging to his neck which I suppose he had gnawed off after they had left him for the night. Walter has tried in vain to buy him; but I have him yet.

This afternoon Sleeper came after Jack who was nowhere to be found. They should not have left him until he became so attached to me.

Source: Woodward, D.M. *Mary Dodge Woodward: The Checkered Years*. Cowdrey, M.B. (ed.) Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers. LTD, 1937.

“How Wheat Farming Changed” by John Herbert Quick

Most of our Iowa pioneers were farmers. They were farmers who brought with them the desire merely to make homes and livings there from. Some of the covered-wagon people were possessed of the greed of land speculation, but most of them simply desired homes of their own; that and the satisfaction of the racial urge to follow the setting sun. They found the prairie lacking in the capacity to yield the satisfaction of as many of their wants as did the forest.

There was no forest to give them logs for house, and little timber fit for lumber. Soon they had fuel to buy. There were no salt licks for salt. In a thousand ways they were forced to resort to the production of a surplus to sell for money with which to buy supplies. This impelled them into wheat growing; and Illinois and Iowa began to glut the markets with it, and with quantities of oats, barley and such other cereals as could be sold. As soon as I was able to work, I became a bond servant to wheat.

At first all grains were sowed by hand. I remember seeing my father walking across the fields of black soil, a two-bushel bag held open with his left hand and slung across his shoulder, while, as he stepped, his right swayed with perfect rhythm out to the end of his graceful gesture, back with a skillful twist of the wrist as the grain was scattered evenly, and with the same movement, went into the bag again for another handful. But the genius of inventors gave us all the time more and better tools. Soon came the seeder like a heavy two-wheeled carriage drawn by horses, which sowed the grain, covering the wheat with its shovels.

We hired men who would now be called hobos, but who were really good industrious young fellows out to make money when wages were high.

Source: Greenberg, D.B. *Land That Our Fathers Plowed. The Settlement of Our Country As Told By the Pioneers Themselves and Their Contemporaries.* Norman, Oklahoma. University of Oklahoma Press, 1969

“Home Canning” by Elizabeth Corey

Friday the 17th I went to Ft Pierre with Mr and Mrs Stone and two of the pebbles. We brought my barrel of apples out that evening. The freight was a dollar thirty seven. The next day I worked at the fruit all day.

When we got back from Sunday School young Porter was here. He helped me tie down my jars of preserves and said the sample tasted like more

I made my sweet apple pickles yesterday and that finished the apples. I took out the plums I had canned and made them up with apples. Some of the plums were in Mrs Stones jars. I now have two two gallon jars of cucumbers down in salt, two one gallon jars of plum preserves[,] two one gallon jars of plum butter and two one gal jars of plum jell [sic] beside two two quart cans of plums and two two quart cans of sweet apple pickles and some dried apples—have eight more two qt cans to fill but am going to have some beet pickles, citron preserves and sich [sic].

Mr Stone says if you are not getting more than sixty cents per bu. for your apples and have any to spare you might ship up a few barrels as a speculation and he will see to them for you. And if you are going to ship me winter apples you ought to start them by the last of October.

When you write I wish you could send me your receipt for plumpudding [sic], salad dressing chillisauce [sic] catsup and the mustard dope [sic] for onion and tomato pickles[.]

Am to have an 8x10 ft cellar boarded up so the snakes can't get in.

Source: Elizabeth Corey, *Bachelor Bess: The Homesteading Letters of Elizabeth Corey*, Gerber, Philip I, (ed.), Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1990.

“Farming in Dakota Territory” by Mary Dodge Woodward

July 10, 1884

Nobody can imagine how beautiful the wheat fields look, whole sections without a break waving in the breeze. What would the old Vermonters say of it? I wish they could see Cass County now, just as it stands, one vast ocean of wheat.

July 20

Walter took me to Mapleton this morning. I had never been there. We went past sixteen miles of wheat, going one road and coming home another past our Hayes farm. All was wheat and oats as far as the eye could reach, with a few fields of barley. Almost all the land is broken and is good, rich black graingrowing [sic] soil...

We had new potatoes today. Dakota is a fine place for vegetables, especially peas. We have great quantities of them. The men are haying, all thirteen of them, and we send their dinners to the fields. I have to rack my brains everyday to contrive meals for them.

Tonight I went out of doors and there, by the corner of the house, stood three tramps. They wanted to sleep in the barn, so Walter took them some blankets. Apparently they did not dare go up to the granary where the boys were. The country is full of men tramping about the begging at farm houses where they stop to hire out. I have fed several the past week and so have my neighbors...

August 22

Ah me, my wedding day! Thirty-seven years ago today I was married. We have fifteen in the family but the woman is a good one to work which is quite a help to me. The Pascals can stay only two or three weeks, as they want to get settled before cold weather. We had a hard shower last night which made the yard so wet that it just swam. We fear the rain will lessen the crop yield two or three bushels to the acre, for the water lodged [sic] and shelled the ripest wheat.

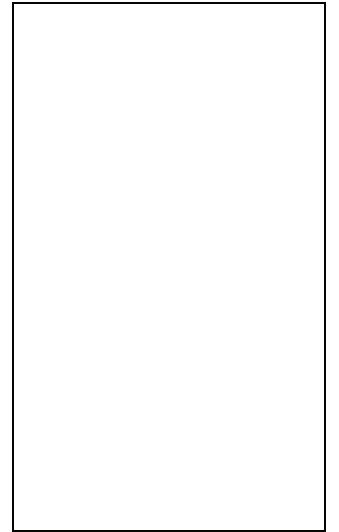
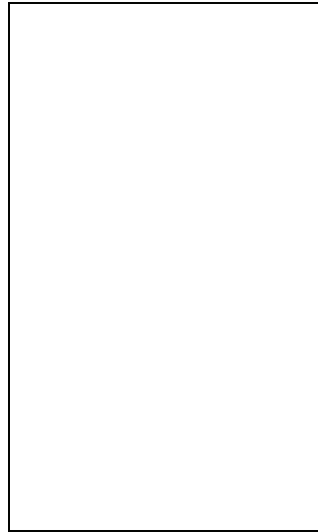
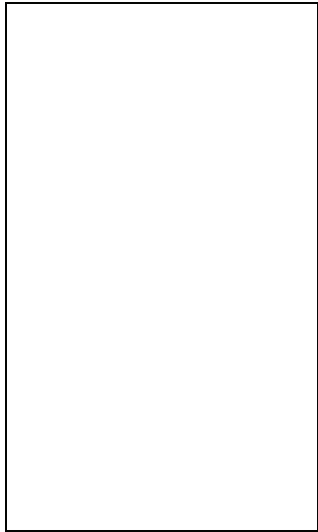
The sloughs are pink and white and purple with daisies; and there are yellow marigolds, great quantities of them, just in front of our door. Some of our men went down to the Sheyenne [sic] and brought back nearly a bushel of plums, very nice ones too, large and red and sweet. They are sold in Fargo for one dollar a bushel; while wheat is sixty cents. There is a perfect tangle of brush, vines, and trees to the water's edge where the fires have not destroyed them. Everything that can stand the cold grows luxuriantly in Dakota. Walter sowed turnips on the breaking which were the nicest ones I ever saw, just as smooth, and weighed four or five pounds on the average.

Potatoes, beets, cabbages, carrots - all vegetables grow large and smooth.

Source: Woodward, D.M. *Mary Dodge Woodward: The Checkered Years*.
Cowdrey, M.B. (ed) Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers. LTD, 1937.

Chain of Events

Illustrate the events in the order that they occurred.



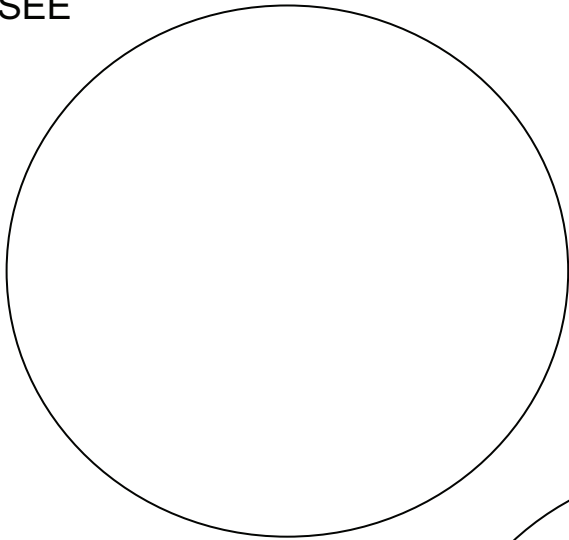
Describe each event below.

Description Planner

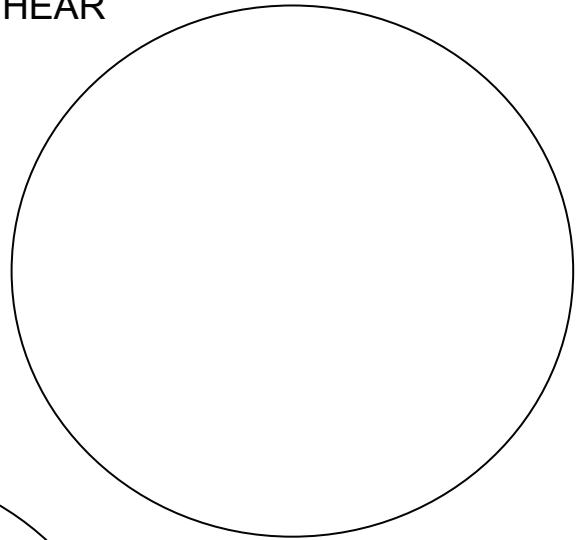
The goal for this planner is to recreate the scene for your reader. Your reader should be able to experience the events that you are describing: what can they hear, see, smell, touch, and taste? Be sure to use strong words for your description.

Event that you are describing: _____

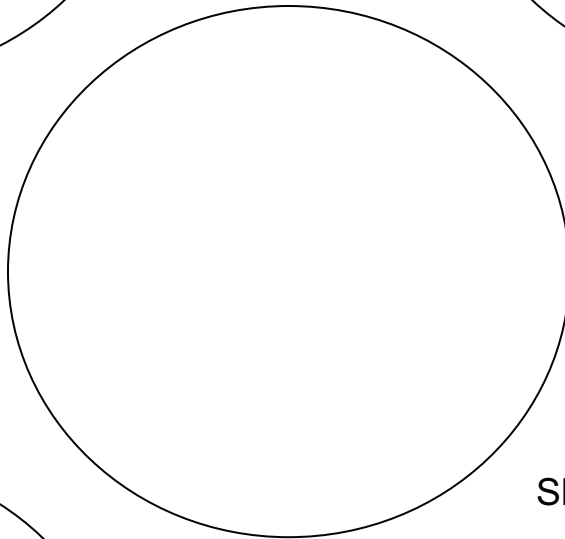
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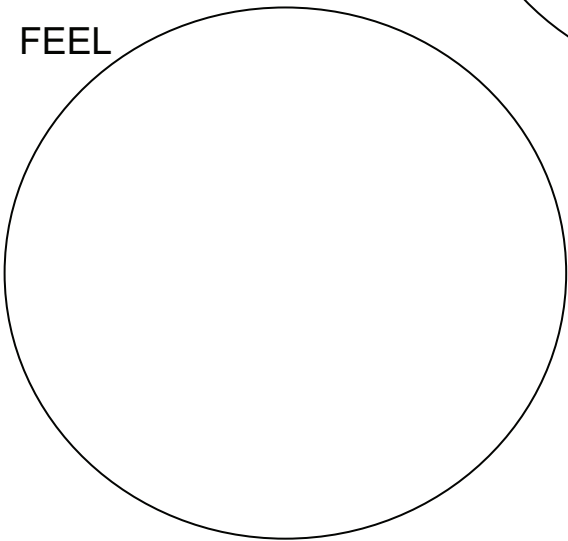
HEAR



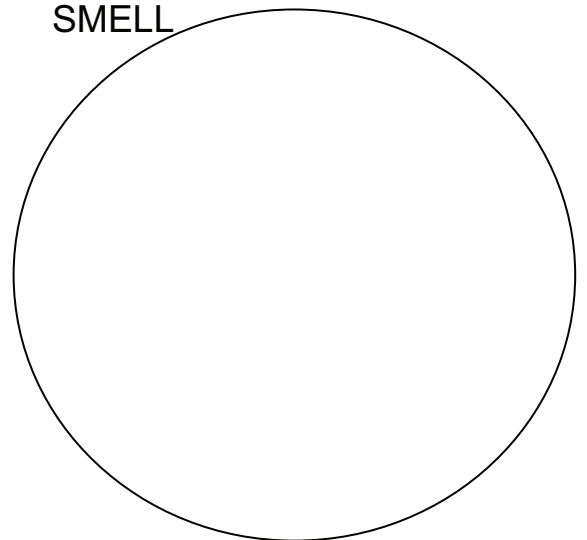
TASTE



FEEL



SMELL



Friendly Letter Format

(Heading)

Dear _____,

(Greeting)

(Closing)

Friendly Letter Planner

The letter you are writing is to a friend who has never visited a farm before. Be sure to include details about your farm, your daily chores, meals, and other events that you take part in. By including many details, your reader should feel as if he or she has visited you on your farm.

Who is your letter for?

Why are you writing the letter?

Ideas to include:

Details:

[Empty box for ideas] →

[Empty box for ideas] →

[Empty box for ideas] →

Response Journal

Use this chart to record your responses to the readings. Make sure to list any questions that you had that were not answered during the reading. This response time will deepen your understanding of the content and is an important part of reading.

Thoughts or Noticings	Feelings	Questions

Name _____

Venn Diagram

