**INFORMATIONAL WRITING PROCEDURE: Oh! Suzanna and the mid 1800s**

In order to build background knowledge, several days can be spent on the following activities (any reasonable order is appropriate):

1. The classroom bulletin board may be decorated with flag and SSB, vocabulary words: patriotism, Star Spangled Banner, Civil War, Mary Pickersgill, Walt Whitman, carpenter, ploughboy, immigration, Ellis Island, Gold Rush, etc. Add words as they come up during the lesson and refer to the bulletin board frequently during teaching.

1. Learn or review about The Civil War, Immigration, The Gold Rush, or any combination thereof to get a feel for the people of the mid 1800s.
2. Choose several children’s books on the above topics as appropriate and review on an ongoing basis in order to inspire feelings and interest during the writing process.
3. Read together the Oh! Suzanna song lyrics.
4. Read about Mary Pickersgill; read The Flag Maker together.
5. Chant the song Oh! Suzanna with teacher’s assistance to help memorize the words. Perhaps chant while actively dancing or while standing in a circle alternately saying the words. This procedure can be practiced daily or as often as appropriate.
6. Listen to and sing other songs from the same time period and discuss similar themes like the longing for home theme.

8. Work in pairs or similar to discuss what we are learning about the people of the period. Groups should draw a picture or pictures that demonstrates the main pieces of information on poster paper.

12. Have students work in groups to add ideas to the Pre-write template. They write facts they have learned or ideas deduced from the historical information. Support all ideas with specific details.

1. The following day, teacher places some of these ideas and facts on the board and discusses the reasoning behind them.
2. Students choose, by circling, three of the important facts of the time period and prewrite additional details about these ideas. Teacher might demonstrate drawing a picture for and writing a detailed description of the facts, and then allow students to choose another and write their own individual descriptions for practice.
3. Continue to read and review the children’s books, review the lyrics, chant, dance, sing often during the writing process in order to allow students to re-evaluate and re-determine their opinion positions.
4. Remind students to include introduction, main body (probably 3 paragraphs with the 3 main ideas, well-reasoned), and conclusion in their writing. Continue to sing, discuss, refer to bulletin board, read parts of stories before each day’s writing so that students will have renewed vigor and ideas to contribute.
5. When students complete the first draft, they edit the writing with the assistance of other students as appropriate. Students take their writing to teacher, and he/she asks questions like, does this introduction really and in an orderly manner tell the reader what to expect in our essay?, could the structure of this sentence be improved?, can we add details here to help the reader understand our feelings better?, could we add an adjective here to improve the detail in our writing?, are the paragraphs appropriately placed and is each one on topic?, does each paragraph have a clearly written topic sentence?, are there any spelling, punctuation, capitalization errors?, does the conclusion concisely restate or draw conclusions about the opinions stated?. Teacher helps make

corrections improvements . Student rewrites work into final draft.

1. Throughout the school year, students may continue to sing, chant, do simple dance movements with this song and others that we have learned.
2. Students may choose “Oh! Suzanna” or another song in order to create a song about any topic of their choice, historical or present day. Students may perform the composition in front of the class. Song should include some specific historical information.