

GRAPHIC FLASH

T E A C H E R ' S G U I D E

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Edited by Jerry Ruff, Editorial Group Manager, Red Brick® Learning
Cover design by Gene Bentdahl, Design Group Manager, Red Brick® Learning
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Teachers using *Graphic Flash Teacher's Guide* may reproduce the blackline master sheets in quantities for classroom use.

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INTRODUCTION



WELCOME TO GRAPHIC FLASH

This engaging series of historical fiction books makes important historical events accessible to all your students. Whether your students are reading above, on, or below grade level, Graphic Flash novels harness students' natural interest in historical characters and events and their love of graphic illustration to provide an appealing way to learn about and better understand history, while also developing reading, writing, and research skills.

Why Use Historical Fiction In Your Classroom?

Historical fiction uses artful storytelling to entice students to learn about, appreciate, and reflect upon historical events. Using a reader-friendly, narrative structure, historical fiction presents characters, setting, and conflict based on historical facts and events. The drama of character and conflict engages students emotionally, as they identify with historical characters and the struggles, triumphs, and failures they faced. Students evaluate positive and negative character traits, examining them in the light of their own behaviors and beliefs. Once engaged, students more easily grasp and remember historical events. They become more attentive to aspects of geography, government, social values, and social class and how these affect the lives of people, past and present.

Once immersed in a compelling story, students also naturally begin to utilize critical and strategic reading skills. They use their prior knowledge and newly acquired information to sort and group historical details and to compare and contrast them. Students make generalizations and inferences, as well as draw conclusions. They learn to decide what is fact and fiction and to recognize bias and propaganda. Students begin to consider, discover, and discuss the importance of history. Through historical fiction, they more easily understand history as a means to understanding themselves.

Why the Graphic Novel Approach?

Graphic Flash provides compelling historical narratives through a graphic novel approach. Illustrations and dialogue boxes that accompany the text provide students with yet another means of engagement. To read and interpret Graphic Flash, students must pay attention to the usual literary elements of character, setting, plot, and dialogue. They also must consider visual elements such as color, shading, panel layout, perspective, and characterization. Each illustration or set of illustrations provides visual, organizational, and other cues to help readers understand and interpret the text. Readers of the Graphic Flash books will use and learn sophisticated literacy skills, while enjoying a great story in the process!

Graphically illustrated historical fiction can be an invaluable resource for struggling readers or English language learners. Too often, students either are provided watered-down text with no conceptual complexity, or given text that is far beyond their ability to read and comprehend. Neither choice is motivating, appealing, or effective. Graphic historical fiction provides struggling or inexperienced readers with another way of understanding history. This highly inviting and motivating format reduces the cognitive demand of reading, without neglecting content, including academic vocabulary.

Support for No Child Left Behind

The No Child Left Behind Act identifies five essential components for reading instruction at the primary level. These are phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension strategies. Many struggling intermediate and middle grade readers continue to need instruction and practice in one or more of these areas. The Graphic Flash books, combined with the teaching support provided here, give valuable support in addressing these needs.

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Following, then, are tips and resources for getting the most out of the Graphic Flash books in your classroom. These include mini-lessons in the areas of comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and writing. We begin with reciprocal teaching, an instructional approach that utilizes dialogue to teach four main comprehension strategies: summarizing, predicting, generating questions, and clarifying.

RECIPROCAL TEACHING

RECIPROCAL TEACHING FACILITATES DIALOGUE

between teachers and students, with the ultimate goal of providing students with comprehension strategies to make them more effective readers. The activity is *reciprocal* because it takes the form of a dialogue between teacher and students, as they play a mutually active role in bringing meaning to a text. Ultimately, the goal is for students to become self-sufficient in the comprehension strategies that reciprocal teaching employs, i.e., summarizing, predicting, questioning, and clarifying. Model these strategies with your entire class first, to prepare students to next exercise them in small groups, and ultimately internalize them as skilled and effective readers.

Summarizing

Summarizing involves identifying and integrating the most important information in a text. Text can be summarized across sentences, paragraphs, and a passage as a whole. Begin by modeling and having students practice summarizing at the sentence and paragraph levels. As they become more skilled, they can summarize at the passage level.

Predicting

Predicting occurs when students hypothesize “what’s next” in a text. In order to do this successfully, students first tap any relevant background knowledge they have regarding the subject at hand. Predicting also adds a layer of purpose for reading—to confirm or disprove one’s predictions. After reading, students forge a new link between what they already knew (background knowledge) and what they have since learned. This linking of old and new knowledge encourages strong recall as well as an active involvement and connection with the text. Predicting also encourages use of text structure, as students learn that chapter titles, headings, subheadings, and questions imbedded in the text are useful means of anticipating what might occur next.

Questioning

As they read, students are encouraged to ask themselves questions about what they have just read. In order to ask questions, a general understanding of the text is useful—this reinforces the value of summarizing while leading the reader to deeper comprehension. Students also must identify what is significant in the text to provide the substance for a valuable question. Periodically self-testing through questioning builds a more reflective and involved reader.

Clarifying

Clarifying is particularly important when working with students who have a history of comprehension difficulty. When clarifying, students identify roadblocks to their understanding of a text, such as new vocabulary, unclear references, or unfamiliar or particularly difficult concepts. Some students need to be made aware that reading is more than simply pronouncing words correctly, that true comprehension is the goal. Students then are taught how—having identified roadblocks to their understanding of a particular text—they can take measures to restore or clarify meaning. Such measures include rereading, using a dictionary, or asking for help.

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There are four important instructional practices embedded in reciprocal teaching:

- direct teaching of strategies, rather than reliance solely on teacher questioning;
- student practice of reading strategies with real reading;
- scaffolding of instruction;
- and peer support for learning.

Modeled first by the teacher, then practiced more and more independently by students, reciprocal teaching involves positive social interaction and collaboration as a means to the construction of knowledge.

IMPLEMENTING RECIPROCAL TEACHING IN THE CLASSROOM



Before reciprocal teaching can be used successfully by your students, you will need to explicitly teach the four comprehension strategies and provide time for students to practice them. At first you will lead the discussion, but as students gain confidence and become more adept, allow them to assume the leadership role. It is important that students understand that skilled readers employ these strategies every time they read.

Getting Started—Model for the Class

Begin modeling the four comprehension strategies by asking students about the weather forecast for that day or how they expect a favorite sports team to do in an upcoming game. After students have offered some ideas, ask them, “What are you doing when you say what you think the weather will be like or how well a team will do in a game, when you can’t really know for sure?” Guide students to respond that they are predicting.

Discuss with the class things we use to make predictions such as what we know already, what we’ve seen happen before, and so on. Then ask students, “How do you know if you are making a good prediction, though?” Discuss with students that predictions are made and then revised based on new learning.

Next, read a short book to the class. Start by looking at the title and the illustrations on the cover and making a prediction based on them. Then page through the book, scanning short phrases and illustrations to make more predictions. Begin reading the book. Several times in the story, stop and make changes to your predictions or point out that your predictions were correct based on what you’ve read so far. Ask questions to help clarify your understanding of the text, especially when you come across a difficult word or passage. Periodically, summarize what you’ve learned so far. Indicate what else you would like to know.

After you've finished the story, discuss with students which predictions were correct, which you needed to change based on what you were learning, and which were simply incorrect. Also revisit the text to clarify those difficult words or passages. Explain to students how you might answer your additional questions or resolve areas that remain unclear. Finally, summarize what you think the author is trying to say. If appropriate, relate that message to your own experiences to demonstrate how to connect personally with the text, as well as go beyond the text for deeper meaning.

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Guided Practice

Next, tell students they will try using these strategies in groups. Ahead of time, select a short passage from a Graphic Flash book that you are or will be reading. Put students in groups of four. Distribute a copy of the blackline master "Notes for Group Discussion" (page 16) to each member of the group and assign each member one of the following tasks:

- Summarizing
- Predicting
- Questioning
- Clarifying

Briefly discuss these four roles. Then, put the predictor right to work, asking students with this task to predict for their group what the passage will be about. The predictor should also record his or her predictions. Then have students read the passage. Encourage them to write notes on the blackline master as they read to help them better prepare for their role in the discussion.

At a given stopping point, have the summarizer highlight the key ideas up to now in the reading. The questioner will then pose questions about the selection, such as character motivation or the reason for a turn of events. The clarifier will call out points of confusion, such as difficult vocabulary or unclear or confusing concepts. The predictor will return to the discussion, this time offering guesses about what the author will tell the group next or suggestions about what the next events in the story will be.

Now, rotate roles one person to the right and read the next selection, repeating the process just followed. This continues until the students have practiced each of the four reciprocal teaching roles. Observe and circulate among the groups as they work, in part to ensure that certain students do not dominate in the groups and either ignore or assume the roles of less assertive students.

After students are comfortable using the comprehension strategies, continue to follow the reciprocal teaching procedure as you proceed through the remainder of the book.

MINI-LESSONS



While doing reciprocal teaching with your class, you may find it necessary to re-teach, reinforce, or extend certain reading skills and strategies with students. The following activities may prove useful in this regard. They are divided into the key areas of comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, and writing.

COMPREHENSION

Prevoke

Prevoke is a prediction activity based on key vocabulary in a text. Begin by selecting 10 to 15 important words from a chapter of a Graphic Flash book to be read by students. Write these words in the top box on “Prevoke” (page 17). Copy and distribute this blackline master to each student.

Review the words with students to make sure they understand their meanings. Next, ask students to sort the words into the following categories: Characters, Setting, Problem, and Resolution, and to write the words in the appropriate category on the “Prevoke” page. For example, you might choose the following words from *Blackbeard’s Sword: The Pirate King of the Carolinas*—*pirate, anchored, inlet, hunt, shallow, Blackbeard, father, sandbank, Lieutenant, groaned, betrayal, mistake, escape, stuck, cannons*. Students might categorize these words in the following way:

Characters: Blackbeard, pirate, father, Lieutenant

Setting: inlet, anchored, shallow, sandbank

Problem: hunt, groaned, betrayal, mistake, stuck

Resolution: escape, cannons

Once students have been introduced to and have categorized the words, encourage the class to work in pairs or groups to come up with a prediction or possible scenario based on these word categories. It is unlikely that students will be able to make a prediction that matches the actual content of the book itself. However, the goal is not to find the right answer, only to make reasonable predictions or to surmise a story.

Once students create a hypothetical scenario or prediction, they are more likely to stay engaged in the process of reading and understanding the text. They will be comparing their predictions or scenarios with the story told by the author.

Story Map

A story map is a visual depiction of the overall plot and major events in a story. Story maps enable students to visually see story structure and sequence of events. Story maps can be used as frameworks or outlines for storytelling or retelling.

Distribute a copy of “Story Map” (page 18) to students. Then assign a Graphic Flash book or read one together with the class. As you read or after finishing the book, discuss and map out the story using “Story Map.” To complete the map, begin by focusing students’ attention on the overall plot (beginning, middle, end). Emphasize what happened first, next, and so on. As students agree upon the order of events, record these in sequence in the story map.

When maps are complete, have students retell the story to a partner, to a small group, or to the class. For assessment, observe students’ retellings in order to gauge their ability to identify the plotline and sequence of events in the story.

Plot and Conflict Resolution

This strategy employs a graphic organizer to help students identify and understand a story’s plot development and resolution. The organizer lists story elements—setting, characters, problem(s), event(s), and resolution. Students complete the organizer using information from the story.

Reproduce “Plot and Conflict Resolution” (page 19) and distribute it to students. Discuss the organizer, reviewing together the story elements listed and what each means. Then assign a Graphic Flash book for students to read, reminding them to keep these story elements in mind as they read. Afterward, discuss the setting, characters, problem(s), event(s), and resolution with the class. Have each student record the discussion in the organizer.

Encourage students to create illustrations depicting each story element on another sheet of paper to complement the written information in their charts.

Character and Plot Chart

This graphic organizer will also help students identify character, conflict, and resolution. After reading a Graphic Flash book, distribute “Character and Plot Chart” (page 20) to each student. Explain that the chart asks readers to identify important characters, what they want, what prevents them from getting what they want, and how they resolve the conflict. For example, you might model doing this after reading *Blackbeard’s Sword: The Pirate King of the Carolinas*.

Somebody:
the narrator

Wanted:
to save Blackbeard from capture

But:
the narrator realized he was wrong when Blackbeard attacked his ship

So:
he helped to defeat Blackbeard in the battle

Storyboard

This graphic organizer will help students sequence the events of each chapter in the Graphic Flash books. Duplicate a copy of “Storyboard” (page 21) for each chapter of the book and distribute to students. As students read each chapter, have them record important events on the storyboard, illustrating the event in the box and writing important details about the event below the box. If a flashback occurs in the book, discuss with students how this might best be represented on the storyboard.

MINI-LESSONS

FLUENCY

Reader's Theater

Graphic Flash provides an excellent opportunity for students to build fluency by performing reader's theater. Using only their voices, facial expressions, and bodies, students can interpret the emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motives of the characters in the Graphic Flash books. Students will also increase their sight-word vocabulary, improve reading comprehension, learn to interpret dialogue and communicate meaning, and increase awareness and appreciation of literature.

Reader's theater brings drama to literacy as it transforms the classroom into a stage. Students must delve into the Graphic Flash books to bring the characters to life. Reading is an interpretive act, they will come to discover, as they experiment with volume, pitch, stress, and intonation. Practicing their roles, students also have the opportunity to reflect on the text, and to evaluate and revise how they understand it. For children used to feelings of failure, reader's theater provides a wonderful opportunity to gain expertise while entertaining others.

To perform reader's theater using Graphic Flash books, simply assign each character to a student. In addition, assign one student to be the narrator who will convey the story's setting and action, as well as provide the commentary necessary for transition between scenes. (Note: you may want to assign several students to serve as narrator, maybe allotting this role by chapter, due to the amount of narration in these books. Also, you may want to supply typed scripts, as these can be easier for students to handle than holding the book.)

Encourage students to read and practice their parts by themselves, at home or in a quiet area of the classroom. You might meet with students individually to discuss their character's traits, emotions, motives, and so on, and how to communicate these through voice and expression.

When students are comfortable reading their parts, bring them together for the first "dress rehearsal." You may want to include simple costumes and props. Be sure students perform as many rehearsals as time allows, as repeated reading is a key to building reading fluency and comprehension. Finally, provide an opportunity for students to perform to a group of other classmates or students in the school.

MINI-LESSONS

VOCABULARY

Preview the glossary at the back of each book prior to reading. Students may still encounter words they do not know as they read, however. For these, rather than asking students to interrupt the flow of the text to look words up, have them keep a vocabulary notebook as they read. If students have sticky notes, they may simply mark unfamiliar words with these to return to later. The following exercise may also prove useful.

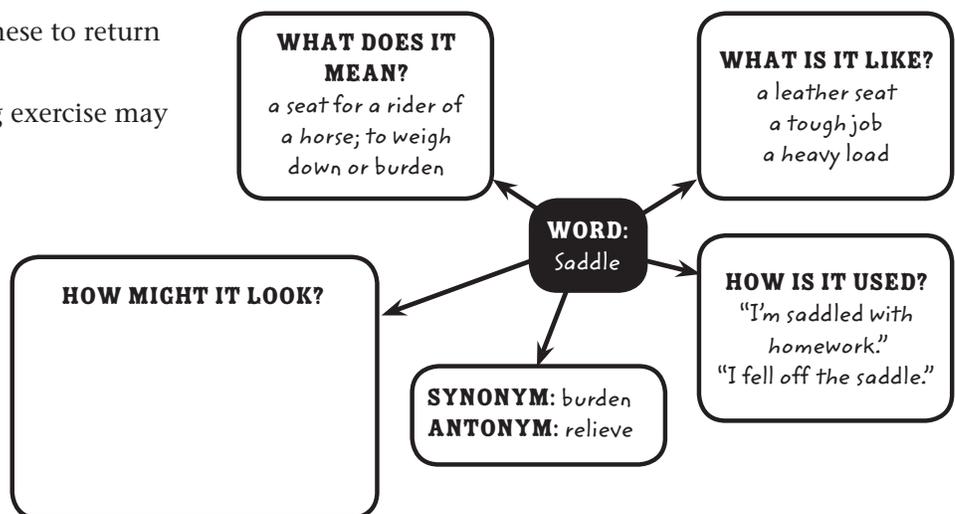
Word Map

While Graphic Flash is carefully written between a second- and third-grade reading level, students will still encounter unknown words. Completing a word map is a good way for students to analyze those words.

Prior to reading a Graphic Flash book, distribute copies of “Word Map” (page 22). Have students write unknown words in the center of the map. Discuss ways in which students then can find the meaning of the word, for example, using context clues or using the glossary or a dictionary. Then tell students to:

- Define the word under “What does it mean?”
- Describe the word under “What is it like?”
- Give a synonym and antonym for the word (if there are any) following those labels
- Provide samples of the word in context under “How is it used?”
- Draw or illustrate something to suggest the word’s meaning under “How might it look?”

For example, consider the word *saddle* from *The Last Rider: The Final Days of the Pony Express*.



MINI-LESSONS

WRITING

Prequels and Sequels

Graphic Flash books provide an excellent launching point for students to write their own historical fiction novel. Through reading and discussing, students learn about the story elements of character, setting, plot, climax, and resolution. They can then apply these narrative elements to their own historical fiction novels.

Group students of varying reading ability, then have each group brainstorm ideas for an historic event. (Depending on your students, this exercise may work best as an individual activity.) Ideas might include a prequel or sequel to the Graphic Flash book just read, or a completely new story based on this historical event. After students have agreed to a basic story idea, distribute copies of “Story Map” (page 18). Encourage students to map out their story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Next, students can further complete their “Story Map” by brainstorming key events.

After stories have been developed, distribute an appropriate number of the “Create Your Own Historical Fiction” blackline masters (pages 23, 24). Students might want to divide the work at this time, with some acting as page designers and illustrators, and others as scriptwriters. Working from the “Story Maps” already created, students must sketch and script their group story. Scriptwriters may create dialogue and narration, while visual artists may illustrate each panel. Narration and dialogue must be tightly written, and illustrations highly supportive of the text, for this group novel to work using the “Create Your Own” pages provided. Groups may want to assign one student to be publisher, providing leadership to the group and making final decisions.

When each group’s historical fiction novel is complete, have students create a cover and title page for their book, as well as a glossary to put in the back. Make sufficient copies for each member of the group, then assemble the pages to form books.

Now, have groups exchange their historical fiction novels. Tell each group that they will perform a reader’s theater of another group’s historical fiction novel. Provide time for students to read the novel they will perform, as well as time for an author’s corner where students can ask the “author group” questions about their novel’s story and characters. Groups should then perform ample dress rehearsals of the novel they will read. When groups are reading with sufficient fluency, stage performances to celebrate. You might consider inviting guests to class to enjoy these performances.

FURTHER READING

The Graphic Flash books are historical fiction. As such, they invite use with nonfiction titles to enrich their historical content. Following are titles from Coughlan Publishing that make good companions to the Graphic Flash books in this set.

Ordering information, as well as a complete listing of titles from Coughlan Publishing, is available at: <http://www.coughlanpublishing.com/>

- **Blackbeard's Sword: The Pirate King of the Carolinas**

Lassieur, Alison. *The History of Pirates: From Privateers to Outlaws*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2007.

Lassieur, Alison. *Pirate Hideouts: Secret Spots and Shelters*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2007.

O'Donnell, Liam. *The Pirate Code: Life of a Pirate*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2007.

O'Donnell, Liam. *Pirate Gear: Cannons, Swords, and the Jolly Roger*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2007.

O'Donnell, Liam. *Pirate Ships: Sailing the High Seas*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2007.

O'Donnell, Liam. *Pirate Treasure: Stolen Riches*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2007.

- **The Last Rider: The Final Days of the Pony Express**

Glaser, Jason. *The Buffalo Soldiers and the American West*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2006.

Gunderson, Jessica. *Young Riders of the Pony Express*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2006.

Williams, Jean Kinney. *The Pony Express*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Compass Point Books, 2003.

- **Hot Iron: The Adventures of a Civil War Powder Boy**

Burgan, Michael. *The Battle of Gettysburg*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2006.

Burgan, Michael. *Battle of the Ironclads*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Compass Point Books, 2006.

Burgan, Michael. *Fort Sumter*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Compass Point Books, 2006.

Sateren, Shelly Swanson (ed). *A Civil War Drummer Boy: The Diary of William Bircher, 1861–1865*. Mankato, Minn.: Blue Earth Books, 2000.

- **Fire and Snow: A Tale of the Alaskan Gold Rush**

Doeden, Matt. *John Sutter and the California Gold Rush*. Mankato, Minn.: Capstone Press, 2006.

Heinrichs, Ann. *Alaska*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Compass Point Books, 2004.

Nobleman, Marc Tyler. *The Klondike Gold Rush*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Compass Point Books, 2006.



NOTES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Directions: You have been assigned one of the four tasks below. Write notes under your task and then share these notes with your group.

Name:

Date:

Title of book:

SUMMARIZING

PREDICTING

QUESTIONING

CLARIFYING



PREVOKE

Name:

Date:

Title of book:

Directions: Look at the words in the Words box. Categorize these words by writing them in the appropriate box below.

WORDS

CHARACTERS

SETTING

PROBLEM

RESOLUTION



STORY MAP

Directions: As you read or after you have finished the book, map out the plot and six main events in the order they occur.

Name:

Date:

Title of book:

# 1 EVENT _____ _____	BEGINNING _____ _____ _____ _____	# 2 EVENT _____ _____
# 3 EVENT _____ _____	MIDDLE _____ _____ _____ _____	# 4 EVENT _____ _____
# 5 EVENT _____ _____	END _____ _____ _____ _____	# 6 EVENT _____ _____



PLOT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Name:

Date:

Title of book:

Directions: Complete the chart by writing about each story element.

SETTING

CHARACTERS

PROBLEM(S)

EVENT(S)

RESOLUTION



CHARACTER AND PLOT CHART

Name:

Date:

Title of book:

Directions: Complete this chart to summarize the story you read.

SOMEBODY

WANTED

BUT

SO



STORYBOARD

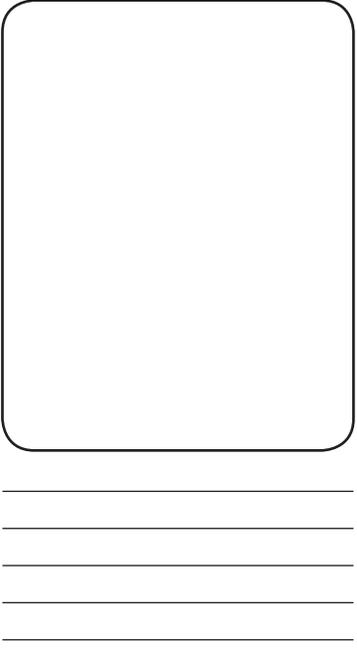
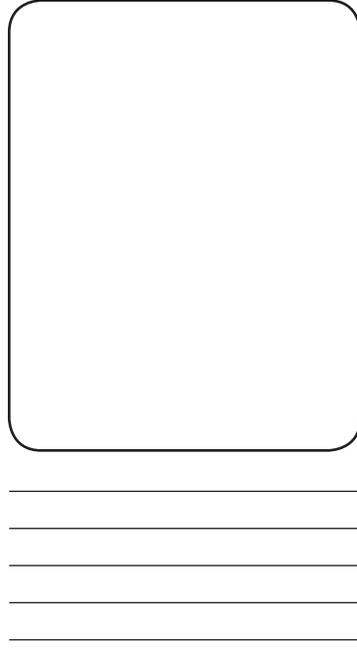
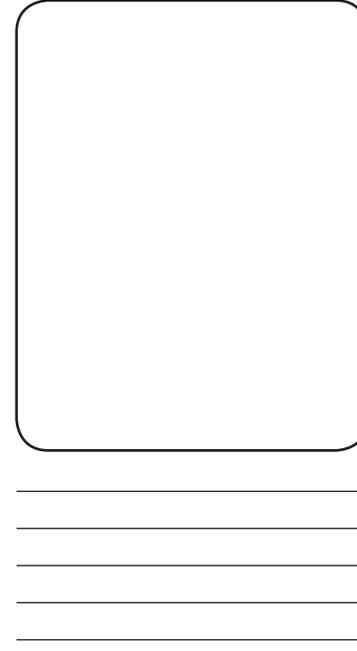
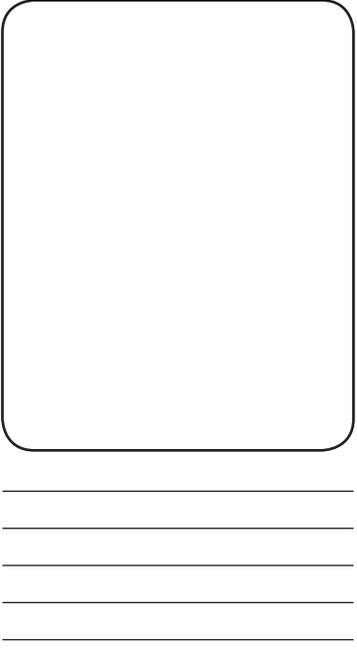
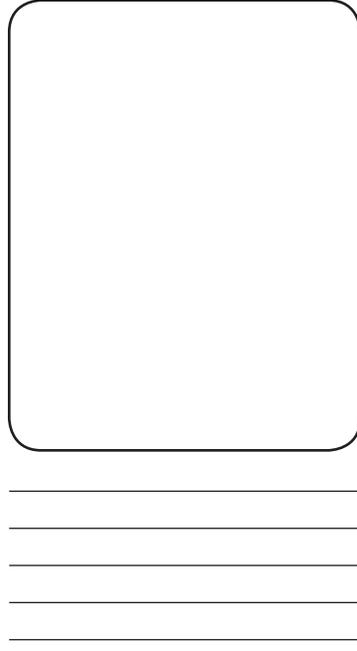
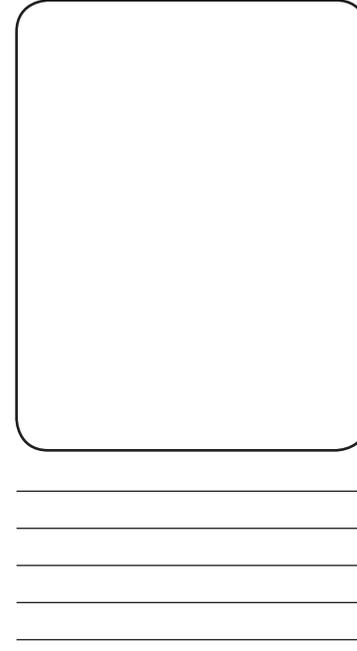
Directions: Complete the storyboard by illustrating the key events from the chapter in the boxes and writing important details about those events on the lines below. You may not fill the boxes for each chapter.

Name:

Date:

Title of book:

Chapter:



WORD MAP

Name: _____

Date: _____

Title of book: _____

Directions: Write a challenging word from your book in the center of the map. Then, learn what you can about this word to complete the Word Map.

