

ZB **Zaner-Bloser**
NEXT GENERATION ASSESSMENT PRACTICE
English Language Arts / Literacy

Student Edition

Grade 4
Narrative

Name _____

Date _____

PART I: Close Reading

Your Task

You will examine three sources about what life was like for those who hunted for whales or lived at sea in the 1800s. Then you will answer three questions about what you have learned. Later, in Part 2, you will write a personal narrative about what your life might have been like if you had been a child living on a whaleship.

Steps to Follow

In order to plan and write your narrative, you will do all of the following:

1. Examine three sources.
2. Make notes about the information from the three sources.
3. Answer three questions about the sources.

Directions for Beginning

You will have 45 minutes to complete Part I. You will now examine three sources. Take notes because you may want to refer to your notes while writing your narrative. You can re-examine any of the sources as often as you like. Answer the questions in the spaces provided after them.

“Laura’s Sea Diary”

In 1868 six-year-old Laura Jernegan, her parents, and her baby brother, Prescott, set sail from New Bedford, Massachusetts. This was no vacation cruise. Laura’s father, captain of the whaleship *Roman*, was hunting the mightiest animal on earth.

Unwilling to be separated from his family for three to four years while he roamed seas thousands of miles from home, Captain Jernegan took them with him to share in the adventure—and the danger—of life at sea. In the mid-1800s, as many as one in six American whaling captains took their families on voyages.

What was it like to live on a whaleship? The diary Laura kept while she was at sea offers a look into her unusual childhood. Only six, Laura was a keen observer and writer, but she still had to master spelling and grammar.

Laura was fascinated by her father’s job. When the ship’s lookout spotted a whale, Laura recorded it in her diary. “I hope we shale get him,” she wrote. She watched as the men rushed to their whaleboats and chased the whale to within harpooning distance. Once, they harpooned a whale so huge that his head was “as big as four whole rooms. And his boddy as long as one ship,” Laura wrote.

Hunting whales was only one part of a whaleman’s job. As soon as a whale was caught, the crew began the hard and dirty work of processing it. Laura watched their every move. First the crew “cut in” the whale by stripping away its thick blanket of blubber, or fat. The whale carcasses smelled “dredfully,” noted Laura. After tossing the chopped blubber into large pots, two men would “get in the pots and squis out the blubber,” Laura wrote. It must have been a strange sight because the sailors were “way up to there knees” in the greasy fat, she reported. (This practice of having the men get into the trypots with the blubber was highly unusual. On most whaleships, a fire burned continuously beneath the try-pots. Obviously, that was not the case on the *Roman*.)

Now came the hot, smoky, and smelly part. A brick furnace was fired up, and the blubber was tried out, or boiled into oil. The processing of the whale was finally finished when the crew ladled the cooled oil into barrels that were stored below the deck.

In her diary, Laura kept careful count of how many barrels of oil were in the ship’s hold. One huge whale produced enough oil to fill seventy-five barrels, she noted in disbelief. When the Jernegans returned home,

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the oil would be sold for the best price possible. Whale oil was important during most of the nineteenth century. It was used to light lamps and to make candles.

Whaling was both exciting and exhausting. Yet it also had its slow moments. Weeks could go by without so much as a glimpse of a whale. Then Laura filled her days with school lessons and sewing. In the small cabin she shared with Prescott and her parents, she sometimes stood on a chair and sang to an imaginary audience. For hours on end, she watched the sharks that shadowed the ship and scavenged for garbage thrown overboard. Time seemed to drag. “I can’t think of muck to write,” Laura confided in her diary. “I went to bed last night and got up this morning. . . . would you like to hear some news well I don’t know of any.”

Laura’s long months at sea were broken up by two welcomed stopovers in Hawaii. During the spring and summer of 1869 and 1870, Laura, Prescott, and their mother lived in Honolulu while Captain Jernegan hunted whales in the icy Arctic.

Honolulu was “a real pretty place,” Laura wrote. There she found something she had lacked on her father’s ship—playmates! Laura made friends with the children from other whaleships, and together they picnicked on the palm-fringed beaches and marveled at the daring surfers.

Two and a half years after she had left New Bedford, Laura’s deep-water adventure came to an abrupt end. The Jernegans were whaling in the South Pacific when several crew members mutinied. Laura, her mother, and Prescott hid below the deck while the mutineers attacked the ship’s officers. Fortunately, the mutiny was stopped before anyone got killed.

We don’t know how Laura felt about the rebellion because she didn’t write about it in her diary, but her parents were terrified. They decided that a whaleship was no place for children. Laura, Prescott, and Mrs. Jernegan headed straight back to the United States on a passenger ship, and Captain Jernegan continued his whaling voyage.

Laura never went whaling again. By the time she was grown, petroleum had replaced whale oil in the candles and lamps of America.

This era, often called the golden age of whaling, was over in the late nineteenth century. So, too, was the era of entire families going to sea on whaleships. Yet one girl’s diary has helped to ensure that this chapter in America’s seafaring history will not be forgotten.

From “Laura’s Sea Diary” by Louise Chipley Slavicek.
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Name three things you discovered from Laura Jernegan's diary.
Explain how those things help us learn about life on a whaleship.

From

Whales! Strange and Wonderful

As whales swim, they are protected from cold by blubber, a thick layer of fat beneath their skin. Blubber was once highly valued by people. They killed whales for blubber and boiled it to make oil. Whale oil was used to make candles, soap, paint, lipstick, and fuel for oil lamps that lit homes and city streets. Whale baleen was used to make brushes, corsets, buggy whips, and umbrellas.

Killing a whale was once a great challenge. Men on sailing ships searched the seas for whales. When one was seen, rowboats were launched. The whalers tried to row close enough to a whale so a man could hurl a sharp harpoon into its body.

Two similar kinds of baleen whales were favorite targets of whaling ships. One species lived in the northern half of the earth, the other in the southern half. Both whales swam slowly. Their plentiful blubber

helped keep them afloat after being killed. They became known as the right whales to hunt, and today are still called right whales.

Nine species of whale have no teeth, yet they eat well and some grow to be the biggest whales of all. They are called baleen (bay-LEEN) whales. Baleen is sometimes called whalebone, but it is not bone. It is keratin, the same strong but flexible material that your fingernails are made of. Many plates of baleen hang from a whale's upper jaws. The baleen plates look like curtains, lined up like the pages of a book.

From *Whales! Strange and Wonderful* by Laurence Pringle.
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Boyd's Mills Press, Inc. Used by permission.

Explain how the author uses evidence to support the idea that blubber and baleen were once highly valued by people. Provide four details from the text to support your answer.

From
Lightship

As the daughter of a sailor, Sarah had been on ships since before she could walk. She had always admired the graceful lines on their bows and the towering heights of their masts. But this ship . . . this ship looked more like a rusty, old bathtub than a sleek boat.

The captain was too excited to notice the frown on her face. A few crewmembers were already on board, and he hurried down the deck to greet them. Sarah trailed behind, hunching her shoulders against the cold. She forced herself to smile politely as he made introductions.

Sarah's father introduced her to Smithy, the first mate, a tall man with a red beard. Next to him stood Cookie, the cook, smiling with a round belly.

Then there was Ralph, the quartermaster—he was in charge of supplies and wore a pair of eyeglasses. And last, there was Nickel, the cabin boy, who looked no older than Sarah.

The days passed into weeks, and the weeks passed into months. Life on the lightship settled into a comfortable routine. In the early morning, everyone would gather for breakfast in the dining room. The table was always

laden with eggs, bacon, and hash brown potatoes. On Sundays, the captain's wife, Mrs. Holden, would make her mouthwatering biscuits, and Cookie would make his spicy sausage gravy. Between the three girls and the ten-member crew, not a bite would be left.

After the table was cleared, the crew would go above deck. Some would fish. Others would mop the deck. Still others would mend the sails. Everyone had a chore to do. There was never an idle hand on board Captain Holden's ship.

Mrs. Holden, in the meantime, occupied the youngsters by instructing them in the wardroom with morning studies. They learned arithmetic, geography, science, reading, and writing.

To Mrs. Holden's delight, Nickel proved to be a bright young man. He had never had any formal schooling, but he had already taught himself how to read. Within months, he was nearly at Sarah's level. This made Sarah study all the harder. Mrs. Holden often laughed to see the two children helping each other one moment and the next moment striving to outdo each other.

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While in school, the girls learned from Nickel as well as from their mother. Nickel taught them all about the sea. They learned about fish and other sea life, navigation, and nautical history.

Nickel taught them everything he had learned while working on boats. It proved to be a good mixture of book learning and real-life knowledge.

After lunch, Nickel would join the crew on deck. He could usually be spotted with his nose wrinkled as he cleaned fish. Mrs. Holden and the girls went above deck, too, in the afternoons. Mrs. Holden would stroll the deck or sit quietly, sewing. Molly liked to write in her journal. Ellen, of course, would bury her nose in a book. Sarah would don an apron and help Nickel with his chores.

One crisp fall day, Sarah and Nickel were sitting near the railing, patching small tears in the fishing nets. Nickel suddenly leapt to his feet and pointed towards the sea. A pod of dolphins was migrating past.

Everybody gathered around to watch the playful animals as they spouted water and jumped high in the air.

The dolphins came so close to the ship that Sarah could see the shiny turquoise colors on their backs. She was leaning over the railing when one leapt from the water as it raced past the boat. Sarah thought she could have reached out and touched it if it had not disappeared back into the sea so quickly. It was a day she would never forget.

In the evenings, everyone came back together for dinner. The main course was usually seafood caught by the crew. Sarah loved shrimp, fish, and crabs, but after eating seafood nearly every night of the week, she found herself longing for variety in their menu.

After dinner, the captain would lead the way into the wardroom with Mrs. Holden on his arm. There were two rocking chairs in the room, and the captain and his wife would each take one. He would settle back and rest his eyes while she raised a book in her hand. Then, the girls and the crew would all gather around to listen to her read by lantern light.

From *Lightship* by Nanette Kalis. Copyright © 2012 by Zaner-Bloser, Inc.

Was Sarah bored with her life on the lightship? Provide at least three details that support your answer.

PART 2: Writing to Multiple Sources

You will now have 70 minutes to review your notes and sources, plan, draft, and revise your narrative. You may use your notes and refer to the sources. You may also refer to the answers you wrote to questions in Part I, but you cannot change those answers. Now read your assignment and the information about how your narrative will be scored; then begin your work.

Your Assignment

Think about Laura Jernegan's experience living on a whaleship with her family and the purpose of whaleships and how they captured whales. Then recall Sarah's daily routine on the lightship. Now imagine you were a child on a whaleship. Your assignment is to write a story about your experience on the ship from a first-person point of view. Make sure you include an interesting beginning, clear sequence of events, descriptive details and words, and a conclusion for the story. Use information from the sources to make your story come alive. The audience for your story will be visitors to a school museum display about whaleships.

Narrative Scoring

Your narrative will be scored on the following criteria:

- I. **Focus and organization** How well did you engage the reader by describing a situation and introducing the narrator? How well did your ideas flow using effective transitions? How well did you provide a conclusion that follows from the experiences or events? How well did the events in the narrative unfold naturally and logically?

Continued 

Narrative Scoring (continued)

- 2. Elaboration of experiences/events** How well did you use dialogue and description to develop experiences, events, and characters?
How well did you use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely?
- 3. Conventions** How well did you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling?

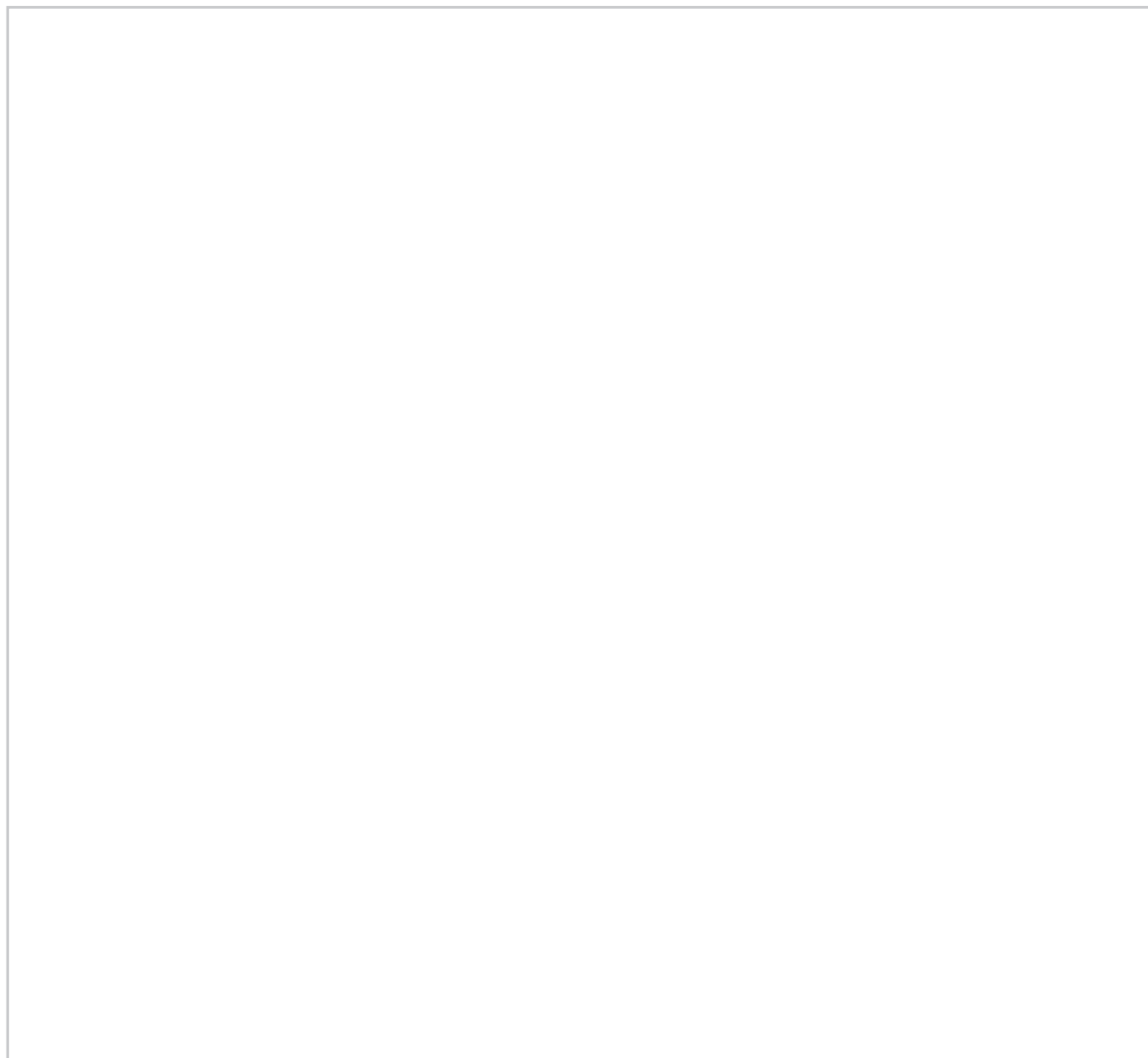
Now begin work on your narrative. Manage your time carefully so that you can:

- plan your narrative.
- write your narrative.
- revise and edit for a final draft.

Spell check is available to you.

Type your response in the space provided on the following page. Write as much as you need to fulfill the requirements of the task; you are not limited by the size of the response area on the screen.

Type your response below.



Go to the next
page if you need
more space.



Continue your response below.

