

Stay or Go?

Introduction	Students write a letter advising a friend whether or not they should come to work in Lowell's mills. This lesson is a suggested follow-up for the Tsongas Industrial History Center's Bale to Bolt program.
Time	One 45-minute lesson
Lesson Preparation	None
Background Information	For those who left their family farms to work in the Lowell mills, there was both opportunity and hardship. Mill work was dangerous, and the air was filled with cotton dust which the workers breathed in daily. The days were long, and standing at machines was tiresome. Evenings and Sundays, however, offered outings, shopping, lectures and time to socialize with friends. For many, the best part about working in the mills was pay day. The workers might send home some of their earnings, save the money in a bank, or use it to purchase something special.
Vocabulary	<p>Advantage: Anything that places one in an improved position.</p> <p>Disadvantage: Something that puts one in an unfavorable position or condition.</p> <p>Opinion: A personal view.</p>
Anticipated Student Preconceptions/ Misconceptions	Students may think that there were no advantages to coming to Lowell, or that the biggest disadvantage was that the workers were not treated well by their employers. The purpose of this activity is to get students to think beyond this.
Frameworks	<p>Common Core for ELA</p> <p>Grade 3,4,5: Text, Types and Purposes: Writing Standard</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. <p>Grade 6,7,8: Text, Types and Purposes: Writing Standard</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
Guiding Question	What were the advantages and disadvantages of working in a mill versus working on a farm?

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Objectives	<p>After completing this activity, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• List three advantages or disadvantages of working in the mills.• Articulate an opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of mill life and farm life.
Activity	<p>Explain to the students that they will imagine that they are mill workers in Lowell in the 1840s. A friend has asked if he/she should leave the family farm to come to work in Lowell's mills.</p> <p>Each student will form their own opinion of whether or not the friend should come to Lowell, using specific examples to support their opinion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. As a class, or in small groups, have students brainstorm a list of advantages and disadvantages of working in one of Lowell's mills in the 1840s.2. Next to each item, students write information that they learned on their field trip to Lowell supporting these opinions.3. Students can then use this list to write their letter.
Assessment	<p>Imagine you are a mill work in Lowell in the 1840s. Your friend from back home has written asking you whether or not you think he/she should leave the family farm and join you in the mills. Write a letter to you friend, sharing with them your opinion on whether he/she should come to Lowell or stay on the farm.</p> <p>Your letter should provide at least three specific examples, that you learned during your visit to the Tsongas Industrial History Center, to back up your come to Lowell/stay on the farm opinion.</p> <p>See rubric.</p>
Differentiated Suggestions	<p>For students who are English Language Learners or who have different learning styles or challenges, this activity can be done in pairs.</p>
Adapting the Activity for Other Grades	<p>For older students, skip the group brainstorm. Students draw on their own recollections to write their letters.</p> <p>Student projects should reflect the appropriate grade level, with older students giving more detailed and persuasive arguments.</p>
Bibliography	<p>Grade 3-5: <i>The Bobbin Girl</i>, Emily Arnold McCully. Grade 5+: <i>Lyddie</i>, Katherine Patterson</p>

PERSUASIVE LETTER RUBRIC

	3	2	1
Goals/Thesis	Strongly and clearly states a personal opinion.	Personal opinion is not clearly stated.	Personal opinion is not easily understood.
Reasons and Support	Three or more excellent points are made with good support. It is evident the writer put much thought into this assignment.	Two points are made; shows some preparation, but weak arguments. The writer doesn't persuade completely.	Preparation is weak; arguments are weak or missing; and less than two points are made.
Conclusion	Summarizes personal opinion in a strong concluding statement.	Concluding statement is a weak summary of personal opinion.	Concluding statement makes no reference to personal opinion.
Organization	Sentences and paragraphs are complete, well written, and varied.	Sentence and paragraph structure is generally correct.	Sentence and paragraph structure is inconsistent.
Word Choice/Tone	Choice of words is clear, descriptive, and accurate. Maintains consistent persuasive tone throughout letter.	Choice of some words that are clear and descriptive. Lacks consistent persuasive tone.	Language and tone of letter is unclear and lacks description.
Mechanics and Grammar	Contains few, if any punctuation, spelling, or grammatical errors.	Contains several errors in punctuation, spelling, or grammar that do not interfere with meaning.	Contains many punctuation, spelling, and/or grammatical errors that interfere with meaning.