

# English Language Arts

## Resource Guide

### PART II.F

Community-Based Research.....7

**NOTE:** This document is a work in progress. Parts II and III, in particular, are in need of further development, and we invite the submission of additional learning experiences and local performance tasks for these sections. Inquiries regarding submission of materials should be directed to: English Language Arts Resource Guide, Room 681 EBA, New York State Education Department, Albany, NY 12234 (tel. 518-474-5922).

# Community-Based Research

ELEMENTARY

## Standards & Performance

ELA

1

### LISTENING AND READING – students will

- ▲ gather/interpret information
- ▲ select information
- ▲ select/use strategies
- ▲ ask specific questions

### SPEAKING AND WRITING – students will

- ▲ present information clearly
- ▲ use traditional structures
- ▲ use details, examples, anecdotes
- ▲ include relevant information
- ▲ use process of pre-writing

ELA

4

### LISTENING AND SPEAKING – students will

- ▲ listen attentively/recognize
- ▲ recognize kind of interaction appropriate

### READING AND WRITING – students will

- ▲ exchange friendly notes
- ▲ adjust vocabulary/style

SS

1

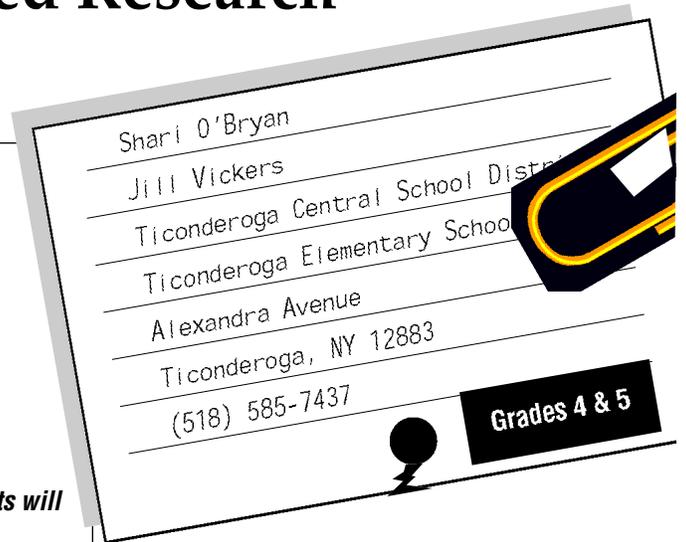
### RESEARCH LOCAL COMMUNITY – students will

- ▲ explore different experiences, beliefs, motives, traditions
- ▲ visit historic sites/museums

ARTS

1

- ▲ actively engage in creation/performance in the arts



### To modify the project:

**K-2:** have students interview one or two grandparents at a time; focus on family research; or look at one topic at a time such as food, recreation, school, transportation, or medicine.

**7-8:** extend the research project by comparing and contrasting the stories collected to one another and to a famous figure of the period; focus the study on one aspect of social studies, for example economics, politics, or geography.

**For other geographical areas try researching a factory, railroad, members of a senior citizen center, an ethnic neighborhood, or a hamlet.**

Students develop and use research and writing skills to the extent that they are part of a community. Community develops when the classroom models collaboration and creates many opportunities for student collaboration. This project built upon the many connections among students fostered in the classroom and as able to connect students with the families or classmates, the residents they interviewed and with the community at large. The best help, the best motivation, the best audience and the most lasting learning came from the circles or community formed around the Trout Brook project.

*An inquiry fueled by interviewing brought out the stories of the people who had lived along a brook in the community. These young researchers took responsibility for their own learning and for sharing the unique material such inquiry yielded. They struggled with the real challenges of research, recording and organizing the information gathered and keeping track of that information as they revisited it over extended time to develop it. During the project and at the culminating activity students used the arts to enhance their understanding of the experiences they had researching the area under study.*



*Clifton West, Hagetown historian, 90 plus years of age.*

Ticonderoga Elementary School  
Ticonderoga, NY 12883  
June 8, 1995

Dear Darlene,

Thanks for your help with Trout Brook history. My class stories are going to be published in a book! Most of us will be in 5th grade together with the same teachers, so we'll finish this next fall. I'll need your help again. Would you read and edit my writing? People all over New York State will be reading it, so it must be our best. We will celebrate Trout Brook History Day when the book is ready. Of course, I want you to come and bring any artifacts you have. I can't wait to see you. Bye.

From,  
Crystal

The authenticity of the project promoted responsibility. Students took responsibility for their interview and for their resident by making the arrangements to meet, by being prepared to ask questions and record information, by keeping track of the materials and by keeping in touch with the resident. They showed responsibility for the integrity of the project by struggling to get the story "right."

The project extended the teachers' thinking. They developed new appreciation for the area researched. They saw how modeling collaboration for students provided a scaffold for students' partners to use in dividing up the work and getting along. They learned what powerful support for student learning exists right around the school in the form of parents, resource people, and public and private collections of artifacts. They learned how independent and responsible young students can be given a strong sense of belonging to a community they helped to create.

#### STUDENTS NEED TO BE ABLE TO:

- ✓ work independently with an adult unknown to them before the project began
- ✓ generate questions related to a topic
- ✓ record answers to those questions
- ✓ ask follow-up questions to get more information
- ✓ express interest in someone's personal story
- ✓ use notes and transcripts to organize a report
- ✓ compose and revise their version of what someone said
- ✓ verify the accuracy of dates, names, places and events
- ✓ reflect on their work

**THE STUDENTS:**

- ✓ choose a person to interview from the “people available” list
- ✓ contact the person about the project to set up an interview
- ✓ conduct an interview
- ✓ outline and/or draft a report and write follow-up questions
- ✓ write reports, revise and correct
- ✓ *Celebration Day*—plan activities to celebrate the project (music, skits, community service etc.)



Partners sharing photographs with person interviewed.



Student interviewing his grandmother.

**THE TEACHERS:**

- ✓ establish list of people willing to be interviewed including possible topics
- ✓ coordinate interviews
- ✓ provide written histories from some unable to be interviewed for those students who could not arrange for or conduct an interview
- ✓ establish time and place for follow-up interviews
- ✓ edit pieces and give mini-lessons based on needs of the group
- ✓ arrange guests for whole class to interview to give broader view of area under study
- ✓ procure Moines or other resources for publishing the students’ reports
- ✓ work with production people on booklet
- ✓ *Celebration Day*—arrange time, place and transportation for celebration of the project

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONS ABOUT TROUT BROOK HISTORY PROJECT

You had to learn about the history of Trout Brook from real people. Here are some questions to help us understand your thoughts and feelings about this project.

BE HONEST

1. How do you feel about having to do an interview?  
*At first I was nervous. But after awhile I got used to it and had a lot of fun.*
2. Was the interview harder or easier than you thought it would be? Harder.  
*why? Because we were taped and we would have to stop and speak up.*
3. What helped you most when you had to write the first draft?  
(Your notes, your partner, your teacher, your tape, something else?) *Our notes. How did it help? Well, I'd write something I remembered then I'd look at my notes and find something more interesting.*
4. Did follow-up questions help you add to your report? Yes or No. Tell why?  
*Yes. I couldn't understand what I wrote. Then when I got them back I could understand them.*
5. What shall we do on TROUT BROOK HISTORY DAY in the school this springs?  
*I think we should have the people who we interviewed and share our report with them.*

## Interview Questions

Person being interviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Student(s) doing the interview \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was life like when you were a child?  
(What did you play? What were your chores?  
What was school like? What holidays do you  
remember the best? Why?)

2. Can you tell me some stories that took  
place in Trout Brook?

3. What do you notice right now that's dif-  
ferent from when you were little? (Maybe  
traffic, the way people spend their free  
time, where people shop, children's lives)

4. What changes have you noticed in Trout Brook,  
the land around it, the air and pollution?

## Options:

- letters from residents who could not be interviewed provided for students dependent on such
- facts from an interview done by the teacher provided for students with severe cognitive disabilities
- additional adult (parents and assistant) support provided at interview time for students who need the supervision and/or assistance
- first-round interviews could be set up at school so students do not have to find transportation to the home of the resident
- follow-up interviews arranged close to where most of the residents live (a community center) at a time when teachers, parents and an assistant would be in the same large room with students to help as needed

## Resources:

- tape recorders and tapes for students who do not have these items
- directory of residents' addresses and phone numbers developed by the teacher
- mini-lessons—interviewing, organizing information, elaborating, checking accuracy, social uses of language for notes, phone calls and other lessons as needed
- publishing—typist, printer, photograph collecting, labeling and storing

## Implementation:

- twenty-five class periods
- 5 week unit spread out over a school year to allow for:
  - ✓ letters to go out and come back
  - ✓ interviews to occur
  - ✓ follow-up contacts to be made
  - ✓ publication to take place

## PROJECT SUPPORT AREAS:

- art instruction in sketching from nature and still lifes
- photographs of the area from private collections on long-term loan
- processing of writing, revising and editing
- examples of local history texts done by other groups of students
- more time spent on sharing completed interviews to help others prepare to learn as much as possible in the limited interview time
- more time asking individuals to share what was working and what was not to help students make more thoughtful choices about how and when to interview, organize, write and rewrite
- time to compare and contrast the stories gathered and make connections among them

## Assessment:

- checklists used to see that students are completing the steps in the process
- observations of mock interviewing
- drafts done from mock interviewing
- worksheet asking for follow-up questions
- tape recording of interviews
- informal sharing of stories from the first interviews
- elementary rubrics established for drafts
- participation in *Celebration Day*
- class discussion as to what should be included, how much is needed

**RESEARCH REPORT RUBRIC**

**A - excellent**

Have a lot of information put in writing so the reader can "see" what you are writing about.

Write at least 150 words and have at least two (2) paragraphs.

Stay on the topic.

Be easy to understand, be clear.

**B - good**

Have quite a bit of information put in writing so the reader can usually "see" what you are writing about.

Write at least 120 words.

Stay on the topic.

Most of the report will be easy to understand.

**C - fair**

Have some information to share.

Write at least 100 words.

Stay on the topic most of the time.

The report makes sense for the most part.

**D - poor**

Have little information to share.

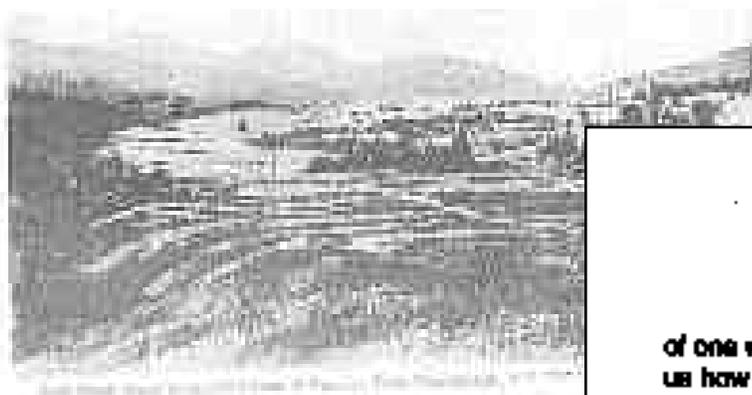
Write under 100 words.

Not staying on the topic most of the time.

The report is hard to understand and it frequently does not make sense.

# TROUT BROOK:

## TRUTH AND TALES



### Foreword

"Trout Brook: Truth and Tales" began as the study of one waterway in the Champlain Basin that might teach us how valued and valuable this natural resource is and show us ways we might preserve it. As fourth graders in Mrs. O'Bryan's and Ms. Vickers' room, these students linked up with students in Longueuil, Quebec and Charlotte, Vermont to climb Mt. Phila, Vermont, hear Abenaki stories, travel on the St. Lawrence River and tour water-tasting labs in Montreal. Back in Ticonderoga students both learned of the area's 18th century history and climbed Mt. Defiance under the leadership of Mr. Nicholas Westbrook from Fort Ticonderoga. They also studied water cycles, wetlands, pond life, and most intensely the story of one brook.

As fifth graders, they continued the Trout Brook project by working with historian Gilton West and again meeting with residents and re-visiting the brook. Through speaking with dozens of long-term residents with the time and patience to give to the project, students recorded recollections to relate here.

Trout Brook made a strong impression among those who lived along its banks. Many mentioned the days when Trout Brook was deeper and cleaner, the fish bigger and more plentiful. Students saw for themselves the way roadside trash mars the beauty of Trout Brook's banks.

The hope is that these stories, photographs and drawings will remind all who created and all who see them what a treasure Trout Brook has been and is. Together may we preserve this irreplaceable treasure.



Class of 1896-97.

## Memories of Mrs. Vedna Armstrong shared with Michelle Perron & Kendra Fuller

When Mrs. Armstrong was little, she went to South TI School. The teacher was Mazie Bell. When she went to TI Central School, she had Miss Stanton, Mrs. Gallant, Miss Irene Hall, and Miss Hayes. Miss Hayes was very strict. Vedna and her classmates didn't even dare whisper. Some subjects Vedna had were arithmetic, history, geography, English, and spelling.

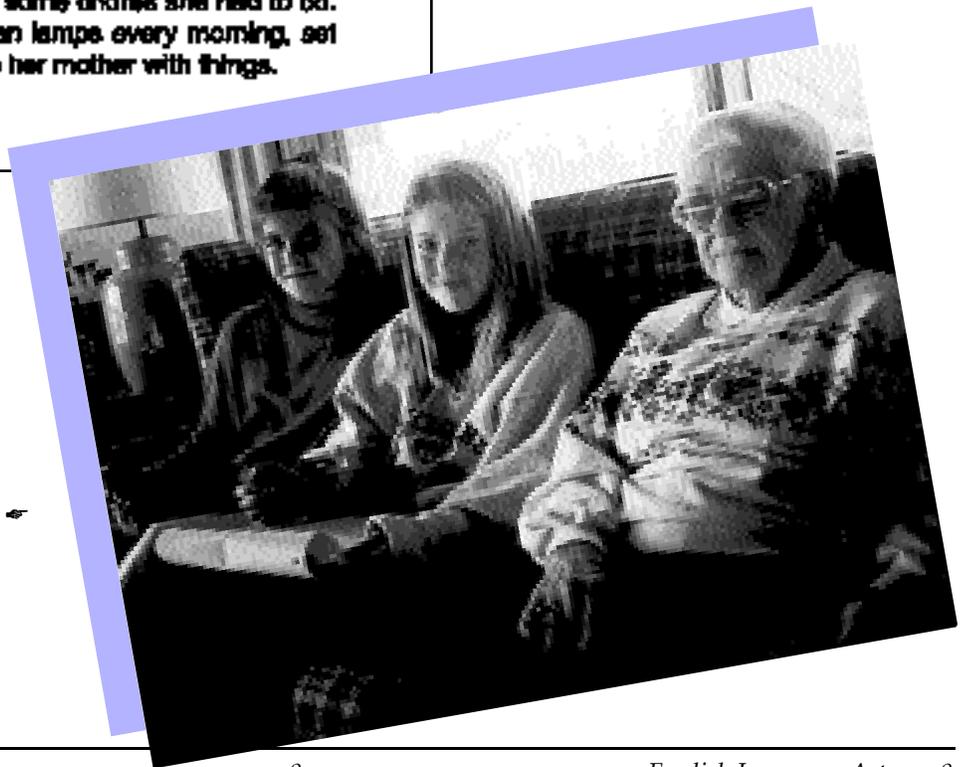
When it was time to go to high school, Vedna had to take Regents. The Regents had all the subjects they had in class. In high school she took all the business subjects.

She had several different teachers. Her history teacher was Mr. George Burroughs. He was very strict. If you didn't have your homework done, he did not mind calling you down in front of everybody. When he yelled, everyone came to attention. They were rather afraid of him.

In March of 1933 there was a fire at the high school. Mrs. Armstrong doesn't recall how it was started. After a day or two, they were allowed to go back to the school and pick up any books that weren't damaged. After a few days their classes were held in the Central School which is now the Ticonderoga Civic Center. Because of the fire, they could not have their graduation in the school. They had to have their graduation exercises in the theater downtown.

At home Vedna had some chores she had to do. She had to make beds, clean lamps every morning, set the table for meals, and help her mother with things.

*First page of Vedna Armstrong's Memories.*



*Students interviewing Vedna Armstrong.*