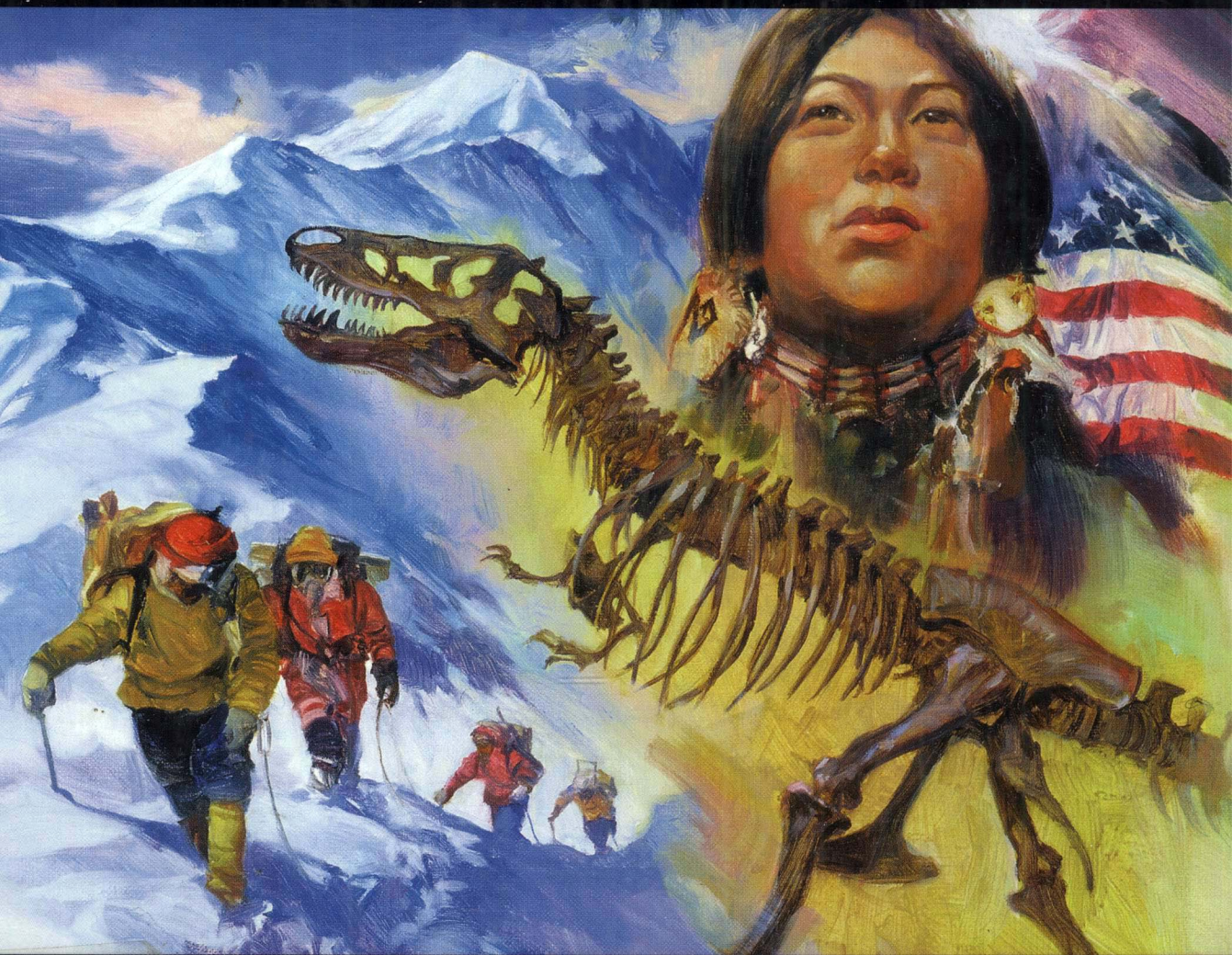


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藏书章

7 Selections for Young People

with Lessons for Teaching the Basic Elements of Nonfiction

Christine Lund Orciuch

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TO THE STUDENT

Nonfiction is literature about real people, places, and events—unlike fiction, which comes mostly from a writer’s imagination. When you read magazine or newspaper articles, history books, instructional manuals or guides, biographies and autobiographies, and diaries or journals, you are reading nonfiction. The life story of Martin Luther King, Jr.; a science article about the latest research into heart disease; or a cookbook about desserts are other examples of nonfiction. To many people good nonfiction is as interesting as, or even more interesting than, fiction.

Writers of nonfiction examine real people, events, and experiences in order to understand them. Like all writers, nonfiction writers try to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and ideas about a subject. They may want to explain the reason for certain events; to describe an interesting person, place, or incident; or to persuade an audience to follow a particular course of action. An author’s purpose in writing shapes his or her work.

People read nonfiction to gain understanding. They may be curious about a subject—the person, event, or idea—that the writer has chosen to write about. To keep the interest of their readers, writers must not only organize the information but also choose what facts to include and emphasize. In this book you will learn skills that will help you analyze how writers develop and organize their material to create lively, interesting works of nonfiction. By understanding how good writers communicate and by studying the works of good nonfiction writers, you can learn techniques to improve your own writing.

Each unit in this book contains a nonfiction selection and lessons that teach concepts and skills that will help you interpret the selection and understand the particular techniques the author uses to accomplish his or her purpose. Each unit also includes writing exercises that provide an opportunity to use what you learn in the lessons in your own writing.

UNIT FORMAT AND ACTIVITIES

- Each unit begins with a photograph or an illustration depicting someone or something connected with the selection. The photograph or illustration will help you make some predictions about the selection.
- The Introduction begins with background information about the selection and its author. Important literary concepts and skills are then presented, and you are given an opportunity to begin to develop these concepts and skills in your own writing. Finally, there are questions for you to consider as you read. These questions will help you focus on the concepts and skills presented in the unit's lessons.
- The selection makes up the next section. It may be a complete work, such as an essay or an article, or an excerpt from a biography, autobiography, or diary.
- Following each selection are questions that test your comprehension of the events and other elements of the selection as well as your critical-thinking skills. Your answers to these questions and to other exercises in the unit should be recorded in a personal literature notebook. Check your answers with your teacher.
- Your teacher may provide you with charts to record your progress in developing your comprehension skills: The Comprehension Skills Graph *records* your scores and the Comprehension Skills Profile *analyzes* your scores—providing you with information about the skills on which you need to focus. You can talk with your teacher about ways to work on those comprehension skills.
- The next section begins with a discussion of the literary concept that is the unit's focus. This is followed by three lessons, each of which illustrates a technique the author uses to develop that concept. For example, you will see how an author of a persuasive essay develops rational arguments, supports those arguments, and uses emotional appeals to persuade his audience to understand and accept his motives and actions.

- Short-answer exercises test your understanding of the author's techniques as illustrated by short excerpts from the selection. You can check your answers to the exercises with your teacher and determine what you need to review.
- Each lesson also includes a writing exercise that guides you in creating your own original nonfiction work using the techniques you have just studied.
- Discussion guides and a final writing activity round out each unit in the book. These activities will help sharpen your reading, thinking, speaking, and writing skills.

Reading the selections in this book will enable you to recognize and appreciate the skills it takes to write interesting nonfiction. When you understand what makes good nonfiction, you become a better reader. The writing exercises and assignments will help you become a better writer by giving you practice in using the authors' techniques to make your own nonfiction writing interesting.



Style, Use of Language, and Comparison



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Blue Winds Dancing



by Thomas S. Whitecloud

INTRODUCTION

BUILDING BACKGROUND

Thomas Whitecloud says, "Those are never lonely who love the snow and the pines." This photo was taken in northern Wisconsin in February. Places like this are truly "home" to Whitecloud.

Although Thomas S. Whitecloud is better known as a physician than a writer, his essay "Blue Winds Dancing" is well known for its powerful theme and its graceful, almost lyrical, style. "Blue Winds Dancing," written in Whitecloud's senior year at college, won first prize in a Phi Beta Kappa essay contest in 1938. It describes his thoughts as he travels from California to his home in Wisconsin.

In 1938, when Whitecloud wrote this essay, the United States, along with most of the world, was still in the grips of the Great Depression (1929–1939). By 1933 almost half of the banks in the United States had failed, and 25–30 percent of the work force was unemployed. The national spirit was broken. People had less to spend, and the demand for new goods dropped. As a result, production dropped and unemployment rose. The downward spiral of the economy continued.

In addition to living in these hard economic times, Native Americans were experiencing great difficulties trying to live in an America that was mostly white. In his essay Whitecloud expresses the difficulty he has assimilating the ways of the white world and still retaining his own tribal culture. His world is

closely related to nature. To Whitecloud and other Native Americans, the white world is artificial, with little connection to the natural environment or tribal beliefs.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas St. Germain Whitecloud was born in 1914 in New York City. His father was Chippewa, and his mother was white. The elder Whitecloud graduated from Yale Law School but decided not to practice. The Whiteclouds later divorced, and Thomas's father returned to the Lac du Flambeau Reservation in Wisconsin. Although the boy lived with his mother, he spent much of his childhood with his father on the reservation. During his troubled childhood he was expelled from several public schools and federal Indian schools. After settling down during high school, Whitecloud decided upon medicine as his career. He graduated from the University of Redlands in California and attended Tulane University Medical School, where he received his M.D. degree.

Whitecloud worked as a physician with the Indian Service in Montana and Minnesota before entering private practice in Texas. For more than seven years he not only ran the county hospital but also served as deputy sheriff, health officer, and county coroner. He served as a consultant to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; founded the Three Feathers Society, an Indian corresponding group; and helped establish the American Association of Indian Physicians. During his later years Whitecloud wrote and lectured extensively. At his death in 1972, he left a number of works as unfinished manuscripts.

ABOUT THE LESSONS

The lessons that follow "Blue Winds Dancing" focus on the author's style and use of language and comparison.

When you read nonfiction, you typically pay close attention to *what* the author is saying. Yet *how* the author says it may be

important as well. Whitecloud's essay is well known, not only because of its powerful theme, but also because of its elegant style and use of descriptive language. As you will see, Whitecloud creates vivid images to help express his views of the white world and his Native American roots. Whitecloud's use of comparison to help express his views will be examined also.



WRITING: DESCRIBING A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

At the end of this unit, you will write a vivid description of a personal experience you have had in your life. The suggestions below will help you get started:

- Think of two or three experiences that you have had in your life. They could be as simple as a walk in the woods or as serious as an experience that profoundly changed your life. You may have had an experience that taught you a lesson about the importance of family, honesty, or friendship. Perhaps, while taking a walk in the woods or on a beach, you came to an important decision or reflected on an important event. Perhaps you have some particular memories of your first day at junior high or senior high school.
- Copy the graphic organizer on the next page onto a sheet of paper.
- In the first column of the organizer, list the two or three experiences you've thought of. For each experience think of pictures, or images, that come to mind as you recall that experience. In the second column, list words or phrases that describe each image. Try to recall what you saw, heard, smelled, tasted, or touched.

If, for example, one experience you thought of was your first day of high school, write that down in the first column. In the second column, write down words that describe the images you have of that first day. You might write, "Huge halls, long and crowded corridors, echoing footsteps, gray lockers, smell of food from the cafeteria, my heart pounding."

- Finally, in the third column write down why that particular experience is important to you. You might write that the experience was a step toward becoming an adult, or perhaps you felt it was a new beginning.

Event or Experience	Image	Importance

AS YOU READ Think about the following questions as you read the essay. They will help you see why “Blue Winds Dancing” is well known, not only for its powerful theme, but also because of its author’s style of writing.

- How does the author help you share with him the sights and sounds of his home in Wisconsin?
- How does the author express his feelings to the reader about life in the white world and life in his Indian world?

Blue Winds Dancing



by Thomas S. Whitecloud

There is a moon out tonight. Moon and stars and clouds tipped with moonlight. And there is a fall wind blowing in my heart. Ever since this evening, when against a fading sky I saw geese wedge southward. They were going home. . . . Now I try to study, but against the pages I see them again, driving southward. Going home.

Across the valley there are heavy mountains holding up the night sky, and beyond the mountains there is home. Home, and peace, and the beat of drums, and blue winds dancing over snow fields. The Indian lodge will fill with my people, and our gods will come and sit among them. I should be there then. I should be at home.

But home is beyond the mountains, and I am here. Here where fall hides in the valleys and winter never comes down from the mountains. Here where all the trees grow in rows; the palms stand stiffly by the roadsides, and in the groves the orange trees line in military rows, and endlessly bear fruit. Beautiful, yes; there is always beauty in order, in rows of growing things! But it is the beauty of captivity. A pine fighting for existence on a windy knoll is much more beautiful.

In my Wisconsin, the leaves change before the snows come. In the air there is the smell of wild rice and venison cooking;

and when the winds come whispering through the forests, they carry the smell of rotting leaves. In the evenings, the loon calls, lonely; and birds sing their last songs before leaving. Bears dig roots and eat late fall berries, fattening for their long winter sleep. Later, when the first snows fall, one awakens in the morning to find the world white and beautiful and clean. Then one can look back over his trail and see the tracks following. In the woods there are tracks of deer and snowshoe rabbits and long streaks where partridges slide to alight. Chipmunks make tiny footprints on the limbs; and one can hear squirrels busy in hollow trees, sorting acorns. Soft lake waves wash the shores, and sunsets burst each evening over the lakes and make them look as if they were afire.

That land which is my home! Beautiful, calm—where there is no hurry to get anywhere, no driving to keep up in a race that knows no ending and no goal. No classes where men talk and talk, and then stop now and then to hear their own words come back to them from the students. No constant peering into the maelstrom¹ of one's mind; no worries about grades and honors; no hysterical preparing for life until that life is half over; no anxiety about one's place in the thing they call Society.

I hear again the ring of axes in deep woods, the crunch of snow beneath my feet. I feel again the smooth velvet of ghost-birch bark. I hear the rhythm of the drums. . . . I am tired. I am weary of trying to keep up this bluff of being civilized. Being civilized means trying to do everything you don't want to, never doing anything you want to. It means dancing to the strings of custom and tradition; it means living in houses and never knowing or caring who is next door. These civilized white men want us to be like them—always dissatisfied, getting a hill and wanting a mountain.

Then again, maybe I am not tired. Maybe I'm licked. Maybe I am just not smart enough to grasp these things that go to make up civilization. Maybe I am just too lazy to think hard enough to keep up.

Still, I know my people have many things that civilization has taken from the whites. They know how to give—how to tear

¹ a powerful, often violent, whirlpool that draws in objects around it

one's piece of meat in two and share it with one's brother. They know how to sing—how to make each man his own songs and sing them; for their music they do not have to listen to other men singing over a radio. They know how to make things with their hands—how to shape beads into design and make a thing of beauty from a piece of birch bark.

But we are inferior. It is terrible to have to feel inferior, to have to read reports of intelligence tests and learn that one's race is behind. It is terrible to sit in classes and hear men tell you that your people worship sticks of wood—that your gods are all false, that the Manitou² forgot your people and did not write them a book.

I am tired. I want to walk again among the ghost-birches. I want to see the leaves turn in autumn, the smoke rise from the lodgehouses, and to feel the blue winds. I want to hear the drums; I want to hear the drums and feel the blue whispering winds.

There is a train wailing into the night. The trains go across the mountains. It would be easy to catch a freight. They will say he has gone back to the blanket; I don't care. The dance at Christmas. . . .

A bunch of bums warming at a tiny fire talk politics and women and joke about the Relief and the WPA³ and smoke cigarettes. These men in caps and overcoats and dirty overalls living on the outskirts of civilization are free, but they pay the price of being free in civilization. They are outcasts. I remember a sociology professor lecturing on adjustment to society; hobos and prostitutes and criminals are individuals who never adjusted, he said. He could learn a lot if he came and listened to a bunch of bums talk. He would learn that work and a woman and a place to hang his hat are all the ordinary man wants. These are all he wants, but other men are not content to let him want only these. He must be taught to want radios and automobiles and a new suit every spring. Progress would stop if he did not want these things. I listen to hear if there is any talk of com-

² Great Spirit; the reference to the book not written is a comparison to the Bible

³ Works Projects Administration, a work program created in 1935 by the federal government to create jobs for the vast number of unemployed

munism or socialism in the hobo jungles. There is none. At best there is a sort of disgusted philosophy about life. They seem to think there should be a better distribution of wealth, or more work, or something. But they are not rabid about it. The radicals live in the cities.

I find a fellow headed for Albuquerque, and talk road-talk with him. "It is hard to ride fruit cars. Bums break in. Better to wait for a cattle car going back to the Middle West, and ride that." We catch the next east-bound and walk the tops until we find a cattle car. Inside, we crouch near the forward wall, huddle, and try to sleep. I feel peaceful and content at last. I am going home. The cattle car rocks. I sleep.

Morning and the desert. Noon and the Salton Sea, lying more lifeless than a mirage under a somber sun in a pale sky. Skeleton mountains rearing on the skyline, thrusting out of the desert floor, all rock and shadow and edges. Desert. Good country for an Indian reservation. . . .

Yuma and the muddy Colorado. Night again, and I wait shivering for the dawn.

Phoenix. Pima country. Mountains that look like cardboard sets on a forgotten stage. Tucson. Papago country. Giant cacti that look like petrified hitchhikers along the highways. Apache country. At El Paso my road-buddy decides to go on to Houston. I leave him and head north to the mesa country. Las Cruces and the terrible Organ Mountains, jagged peaks that instill fear and wondering. Albuquerque. Pueblos along the Rio Grande. On the boardwalk there are some Indian women in colored sashes selling bits of pottery. The stone age offering its art to the twentieth century. They hold up a piece and fix the tourists with black eyes until, embarrassed, he buys or turns away. I feel suddenly angry that my people should have to do such things for a living. . . .

Santa Fe trains are fast, and they keep them pretty clean of bums. I decide to hurry and ride passenger coal tenders. Hide in the dark, judge the speed of the train as it leaves, and then dash out, and catch it. I hug the cold steel wall of the tender and think of the roaring fire in the engine ahead and of the passengers back in the dining car reading their papers over hot coffee.