

Title: Thank a Farmer or Rancher

Grades: 2-3

Common Core Standards:

- RI.2.6. Identify the main purpose of a text, including what the author wants to answer, explain, or describe.
- RI.2.9. Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic. *(With extension activity)*
- RI.3.2. Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
- RI.3.9. Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic. *(With extension activity)*
- W.2.2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- W.2.5. With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.
- W.2.7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations). *(With the extension activity)*
- W.3.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.

Objectives: In this lesson, students will:

- Identify the main idea in a text and find details that support the main idea.
- Write a letter to a farmer or rancher thanking them for providing us with food and clothing.

Vocabulary: agriculture, beef, grain, kid, ranch, steer, swine, wrangler

Materials:

Cowgirl Up! Let's Go Ranching by Twins Rianna and Sheridan Chaney

United States Map

Main Idea Organizer

Introduction:

1. Show students the book, Flat Stanley: His Original Adventure and explain the Flat Stanley project to students.
2. Show students a map of the United States. Show them the state of Nebraska. Explain that the authors of Cowgirl Up! Let's Go Ranching participated in the Flat Stanley project and decided to take a trip to Nebraska to experience life on a ranch.
3. Ask students to predict some of the activities that Rianna and Sheridan Chaney did while on a Nebraska ranch.
4. Explain that today they are going to read the book about a ranch and their purpose is to determine the subject and the main idea of the text so that they can write a letter about the main idea.

Procedures:

1. Preview the book, Cowgirl Up! Let's Go Ranching with the students by showing them the front and back cover. Read the first page to students and the back cover with information about the Chaney's. Ask students to share some of the things they know about the authors from the preview.
2. As a class, do a picture walk and point out some of the things happening in the pictures. Ask students to define a **ranch**- land used for raising livestock under range or grazing conditions.
3. Before reading, ask students to use information from the preview to share what they believe the subject of the text is. Students may say farming, but lead them to use the word agriculture. Ask students to define **agriculture**- farming and raising plants and animals. Discuss how important agriculture is to provide us with food and clothing.
4. Explain that during reading, students will be trying to find the main idea of the text or what the author is saying about agriculture.
5. Read Cowgirl Up! Let's Go Ranching aloud. Stop after reading about the first morning and ask students to use context clues to define **swine**- the scientific term for pigs. Discuss the term litter of piglets with students. Ask, "How are swine important in agriculture?"
6. Continue reading aloud to students. Stop after reading the question, "Did you know that raising beef cattle is the largest agricultural segment in the United

States?" Discuss how raising beef cattle is another important part of agriculture. Finish reading the text to students. Emphasize the last part of the text, "Whether we are ranchers or farmers, we are blessed to help produce safe and nutritious food for America." Ask students, "what are the authors trying to tell us about agriculture in this text?" Guide students to identifying the main idea of the text which is that Agriculture is important for providing us food and clothing.

7. Distribute copies of the Main Idea graphic organizer. Have students work in pairs to record the subject and main idea of the text and list 3 important details about agriculture.
8. Have a class discussion to share some of the details students found in the text. Explain that today they are going to use these facts to write a friendly letter to a local farmer or rancher thanking them for their efforts.
9. Review the parts of a friendly letter (the heading, the greeting, the body, and the closing). Discuss how a farmer or rancher may be someone we do not know, so students should include all parts and use an appropriate closing for the audience.
10. After students have produced an initial draft, have them revise and edit with a friend.

Assessment/Closure:

Invite students to share their letters with the class. Using the internet or a local agricultural organization, have them research farmers or ranchers within their area to whom they could send their letters. Local agricultural organizations could include the Farm Bureau, Grange, Cattleman's Association, or the Cattlemen's Association. For additional information you could also contact the local Extension Service in your area. Have a few students share letters with their classmates. Review the subject and main idea of the text one last time.

Extension Activities:

- Read the other books written by The Chaney's: Little Star...Raising Our First Calf, Mini Milk Maids on the Moove, and Star Becomes a Mother. Have students compare similar ideas and information found in the books using a graphic organizer. Have students use the information collected to write an informative paragraph about agriculture.

- Research local plants and animals raised in your area. Create a paper Flat Stanley that students could send to other areas of the country asking students in other schools to record local plants and animals raised in their area. Using a large United States Map, students can draw or illustrate what is produced in other areas of the country.

