

WORDS TO THE WISE

Grade Level: Third Grade

Presented by: Cathy Barge, The School at Mission Springs, San Antonio, TX

Length of Unit: Five Lessons

I. ABSTRACT

This third grade unit focuses on two very similar stories told in different lands.

The first is “Three Words of Wisdom” taken from the book, What Your Third Grader Needs To Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. The second is Three Gold Pieces: A Greek Folk Tale, retold and illustrated by Aliki. Students will demonstrate comprehension of the stories by summarizing and retelling the stories, comparing and contrasting the stories using Venn diagrams, and by using the Venn diagrams to construct organized paragraphs.

II. OVERVIEW

A. Concept Objectives

1. The students will understand the text’s structure or progression of ideas.
2. The students will understand that literature reflects customs, regions, and cultures.

B. Content

1. “Three Words of Wisdom”

C. Skills

1. The students will predict the meaning of new words in isolation, redefine their predictions after a context is given, and finally, check their predictions using a dictionary.
2. The students will write and illustrate a smooth, clear, and concise retelling of Three Words of Wisdom in his/her own words.
3. The students will write a summary that will include a beginning, middle, and end of the Greek folk tale, Three Gold Pieces.
4. The students will compare and contrast a penny and a nickel, compare and contrast Three Words of Wisdom and Three Gold Pieces, organize information into Venn diagrams, and construct organized paragraphs based on the Venn diagrams.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

A. For the teacher

1. What Your Third Grader Needs To Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.
2. Three Gold Pieces: A Greek Folk Tale, retold and illustrated by Aliki
3. Big Book of Books and Activities, by Dinah Zike, M.Ed.

B. For the students

1. Three Words of Wisdom and Three Gold Pieces are folktales from Mexico and Greece, respectively. Students should have some familiarity with the two settings due to the geographical study of both countries in second grade. A quick review of the geography of both regions would be recommended in this unit.
2. In reading, students should have a prior background of simply retelling familiar and unfamiliar stories orally. They should not be concerned with the minute details, but be more concerned with “getting the main idea”, connecting the events into a meaningful sequence, and having a beginning, middle and end to their oral summaries.

IV. RESOURCES

- A. What Your Third Grader Needs To Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.
- B. Three Gold Pieces: A Greek Folk Tale, retold and illustrated by Aliki

C. Big Book of Books and Activities, by Dinah Zike, M.Ed.

V. LESSONS

Lesson One

A. Daily objectives

1. Lesson content
 - a. Vocabulary building for reading comprehension of Three Words of Wisdom
2. Concept objectives
 - a. The students will understand the text's structure or progression of ideas.
3. Skill objectives
 - a. The students will predict the meaning of new words in isolation, redefine their predictions after a context is given, and finally, check their predictions using a dictionary.

B. Materials

1. Chart paper
2. Markers
3. Pencils
4. Dictionaries

C. Key Vocabulary

1. wisdom: accumulated learning
2. heap: a bunch
3. conclusion: the end
4. scold: to angrily find fault
5. plunge: to dive
6. glisten: to sparkle
7. chandelier: a fancy light that hangs from the ceiling
8. wise: smart

D. Procedures/Activities

1. In a web-type format, the teacher will put an unfamiliar word such as "wisdom" on chart paper and circle it.
2. Students then give predictions as to what they think the word means. The teacher writes their predictions around the word to form a word web (See Appendix A).
3. The teacher then writes the vocabulary word in the context of a sentence under the word web (See Appendix B for sentences in context for all vocabulary words.).
4. Students are then given another opportunity to refine their predictions by creating another word web just below the first word web.
5. Learners use a dictionary to verify their predictions.
6. Finally, the students put the word and appropriate definition in an eight-word vocabulary flip book (Adapted from *Big Book of Books*, Dinah Zike) (See Appendix C).
7. The teacher and students continue in the same manner until all words are covered.
8. The teacher and students review the procedure and discuss how much easier it is to define words in context, rather than define words in isolation.

E. Evaluation/Assessment

1. The vocabulary book should include all eight words and the definitions to match its appropriate context.

F. Standardized Test Connections

1. The student will determine the meaning of words in a variety of written texts.

Lesson Two

A. Daily objectives

1. Lesson Content
 - a. Reading comprehension of Three Words of Wisdom
2. Concept objectives
 - a. The students will understand the text's structure or progression of ideas.
3. Skill objectives
 - a. The students will write and illustrate a smooth, clear, and concise retelling of Three Words of Wisdom in his/her own words.

B. Materials

1. Student copies of Three Words of Wisdom, most easily found in What Your Third Grader Needs To Know, by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.
2. One blank book per student made out of one 9" x 18" piece of manila paper each.

Directions for making book:

- a. Cut one long piece of manila paper in half length-wise.
 - b. Layer the two halves one on top of the other.
 - c. Fold in half again, making a book.
 - d. Staple at the crease using a long-arm stapler.
3. Pencil
 4. Map pencils or crayons

C. Background Notes

D. Key Vocabulary

(All new vocabulary was covered in Lesson One. However, it is necessary to define and discuss the three words of wisdom found in this story.)

1. Don't take shortcuts. (Discuss different situations where one might take a shortcut: walking home from school, shortcuts on schoolwork, etc. Also, discuss possible problems with taking shortcuts.)
2. Don't ask what does not concern you. (Mind you own business or M.Y.O.B.)
3. Don't jump to conclusions. (Don't assume anything. Then give examples of other characters from books or television that got into trouble because one "jumped to conclusions.")

E. Procedures/Activities

1. Discuss the background of folktales and then tell the class that they are going to read a Mexican folktale entitled Three Words of Wisdom. Tell them to pay very close attention to the book because they will write a retelling of the story. Allow them to take any notes they want to, but they should not be allowed to look back at the text.
2. Read the story together and discuss it as the students read.
3. Questions to ask students while reading:
 - a. In the beginning, an old man offers the three poor farmers a choice of golden coins or golden wisdom. Which one would you choose? Why?
 - b. Why does the rich rancher (the one who serves the traveler a feast and allows him to spend the night) share his riches with the traveler?
 - c. Who is the priest?
 - d. Does the traveler "jump to conclusions"? Why or why not?
4. Using the blank booklet, the students write a retelling of the story, and illustrate their texts. Again, the purpose of a retelling is to get the "main idea" of the story, connect ideas in a logical way, and create a smooth beginning, middle, and end to the story.

F. Evaluation/Assessment

1. The retelling/summaries can be evaluated in two ways. First, one could

evaluate them using a rubric (Appendix D). If your school uses grades, the retelling/summaries could be evaluated using a type of grading rubric (Appendix E).

G. Standardized Test Connections

1. The student will summarize a variety of written texts.

Lesson Three

A. Daily objectives

1. Lesson Content
 - a. Vocabulary building for reading comprehension of Three Gold Pieces: A Greek Folk Tale, by Alik
2. Concept objectives
 - a. The students will understand the text's structure or progression of ideas.
3. Skill objectives
 - a. The students will predict the meaning of new words in isolation, redefine their predictions after a context is given, and check their predictions using a dictionary.

B. Materials

1. Two large pieces of chart paper per cooperative group of three to five learners
2. One black Sharpie marker per group
3. Three to four large (5" x 7") index cards per group – The teacher should write a vocabulary word on each card. On the opposite side of each card, the teacher should write the vocabulary word in the context of a sentence (See appendix F).
4. Long-arm stapler
5. One sixteen-section vocabulary flip book for each student (See Appendix C).

C. Background Notes

D. Key Vocabulary

1. hasten: to move quickly
2. lodging: a place to stay
3. sum: an amount
4. toil: to work hard and long
5. advice: recommendation
6. obedient: to obey
7. hesitate: to pause
8. reluctant: unsure
9. suppress: to keep from doing something
10. furrow: to make wrinkles or lines in
11. burden: something to be carried; a load
12. abandon: to leave alone
13. gaze: a fixed look
14. rage: uncontrolled anger
15. gasp: to catch one's breath (as if in shock)
16. content: happy

E. Procedures/Activities

1. The teacher reviews with the students the basic steps to contextual redefinition:
 - a. Write down the word and circle it.
 - b. Predict possible meanings and circle them.
 - c. Review the word used in the context of a sentence.
 - d. Predict again just below the original word web.
 - e. Verify the meanings using a dictionary.

- f. Write the word and definition in a vocabulary flip book.
 2. This time, the students in each group will work together to independently go through all the steps in contextual redefinition. The vocabulary cards list the words in isolation. On the back of the cards, the words are used in the context of a sentence.
 3. The learners will use the chart paper to make their word webs for predicting and redefining.
 4. As learners verify their predictions using a dictionary, they will write the word and its appropriate definition in their flip books.
 5. When all groups have completed this task, a reporter from each group will share their findings with the whole class. The class in turn will add other groups' words and definitions to their vocabulary flip books.
- E. Evaluation/Assessment
1. The vocabulary book should include all sixteen words. The definitions should match the appropriate context for each given word.
- F. Standardized Test Connections
1. The students will determine the meaning of words in a variety of written texts.

Lesson Four

- A. Daily Objectives
1. Lesson content
 - a. Reading comprehension
 2. Concept objectives
 - a. The students will understand the text's structure and progression of ideas.
 3. Skill objectives
 - a. The students will write a summary that will include a beginning, middle, and end of the Greek folk tale, Three Gold Pieces.
- B. Materials
1. Individual student copies of Three Gold Pieces: A Greek fold Tale, retold and illustrated by Alik
 2. Individual layered books labeled, "beginning", "middle", and "end" (Students can follow the directions in Appendix G to make one.)
 3. Black marker or black crayon
 4. Pencil
- C. Background Notes
- D. Key Vocabulary (Covered in Lesson Three)
- E. Procedures/Activities
1. Tell the students to pay close attention to reading the story because they will be expected to write a retelling of Three Gold Pieces.
 2. Read Three Gold Pieces together, and ask comprehension and thinking questions as you go.
 3. Possible questions to ask while reading:
 - a. What does the piece of advice, "Never ask about something that is not your concern," mean? (Mind your own business or M.Y.O.B.)
 - b. How does this piece of advice compare with the first piece of wisdom found in Three Words of Wisdom? ("Never ask about something that is not your concern" and "Don't ask what does not concern you" mean the same thing.)
 - c. How does the piece of advice, "Never leave a path you have taken" compare with the second piece of wisdom, "Don't take shortcuts"? (They both have the same meaning.)

- d. What does the piece of advice, “Suppress your evening anger until morning” mean? (Go to sleep so you won’t say or do something that you did not mean to say or do.)
 - e. How does the piece of advice, “Suppress your evening anger until morning” compare to the words of wisdom, “Don’t jump to conclusions”? (They are both very similar, but may not be exactly the same).
4. After reading and discussing the text, students will write their retelling in the “beginning, middle, and end” booklet. Rather than concerning themselves with picky details, students should concentrate on retelling the main ideas of the text. They should strive for a smooth transition between the beginning, middle, and end of the story.
- F. Evaluation/Assessment
1. Students could be evaluated using the rubrics for retelling/summaries. (Appendices D and E)
- G. Standardized Test Connections
1. The student will summarize a variety of written texts.

Lesson Five

- A. Daily objectives
1. Lesson content
 - a. writing/reading comprehension
 2. Concept objectives
 - a. The students will understand that literature reflects customs, regions, and cultures.
 3. Skill objectives
 - a. The students will compare and contrast a penny and a nickel, compare and contrast Three Words of Wisdom and Three Gold Pieces, organize information into Venn diagrams, and construct organized paragraphs based on the Venn diagrams.
- B. Materials
1. Per student:
 - a. one penny
 - b. one nickel
 - c. two copies of Venn diagram (Appendix H)
 - d. notebook paper
 - e. student copies of Three Words of Wisdom
 - f. student copies of Three Gold Pieces
 2. For the teacher:
 - a. one transparency of Venn diagram (Appendix H)
 - b. various colors of overhead marking pens
- C. Background Notes
- D. Key Vocabulary
1. compare: To tell how two or more things are similar or alike.
 2. contrast: To tell how two or more things are different.
 3. indent: To space over about two fingers’ width at the beginning of a paragraph.
 4. topic sentence: Usually the first sentence in a paragraph. It gives a general idea of what the paragraph will be about.
 5. Sequence words used in paragraph writing:
 - a. First
 - b. Second
 - c. Third
 - d. Next
 - e. Then

- f. In addition
 - g. Also
 - h. Finally
6. Words to signal a comparison:
 - a. Similarly
 - b. In the same way
 - c. They are both alike in that...
 - d. By the same token
 7. Words to signal a contrast:
 - a. However
 - b. But
 - c. Conversely
 - d. On the flip side
 - e. On the other hand
 - f. While
- E. Procedures/Activities
1. Tell the students that they will compare and contrast nickels and pennies. When you compare two or more things, you tell how they are similar or alike. When you contrast two things, you tell how they are different.
 2. Students are then asked to compare and contrast a nickel and a penny. The teacher guides them to make appropriate generalizations such as:
 - a. value – A penny is worth one cent. A nickel is worth five cents.
 - b. color – A penny is bronze. A nickel is silver.
 - c. dates – “This penny is dated 1991. This nickel is dated 1995.”
 3. The students respond by putting those generalizations in the correct place on the overhead Venn diagram (Example found in Appendix I).
 4. When the overhead Venn diagram is finished, the teacher then moves into the modeling of the writing of the paragraphs. The first paragraph is a comparison paragraph.
 5. The teacher reminds the students that we always indent when we begin a paragraph. The first sentence is the topic sentence. The topic sentence tells what the paragraph is mostly about. An example of a topic sentence for a comparison paragraph might be “A penny and a nickel are alike in many ways.” The modeling of the paragraph writing continues using sequence words and words that signal a comparison. (Modeled paragraph found in (Appendix J).
 6. In the same way, the teacher models a contrasting paragraph. (See Appendix J.)
 7. The teacher then goes back and underlines the sequence words in one color of overhead marker. Then the teacher underlines all of the comparison signal words in another color. Finally, the teacher underlines all of the contrast signal words in a third color. The modeled paragraphs are displayed for future student reference.
 8. The students then use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast Three Words Of Wisdom and Three Gold Pieces.
 9. From the Venn diagram, the students construct one comparison paragraph and one contrasting paragraph.
- E. Evaluation/assessment
1. Three products will be evaluated: The Venn diagram, the comparison paragraph, and the contrasting paragraph. (See rubric in Appendix K)
- F. Standardized Test Connection
1. The student will respond appropriately in a written composition to the purpose/audience specified in a given topic.

VI. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A: Steps to contextual redefinition
- B. Appendix B: Examples of vocabulary in context from Three Words of Wisdom
- C. Appendix C: Directions for making eight-section vocabulary book
- D. Appendix D: Rubric for retelling/summary
- E. Appendix E: Retelling/summary
- F. Appendix F: Examples of vocabulary in context from Three Gold Pieces
- G. Appendix G: Directions for making layered book
- H. Appendix H: Venn diagram
- I. Appendix I: Venn diagram (completed)
- J. Appendix J: Examples of comparison/contrast paragraphs constructed from Venn diagram
- K. Appendix K: Rubric for comparison/contrast paragraphs

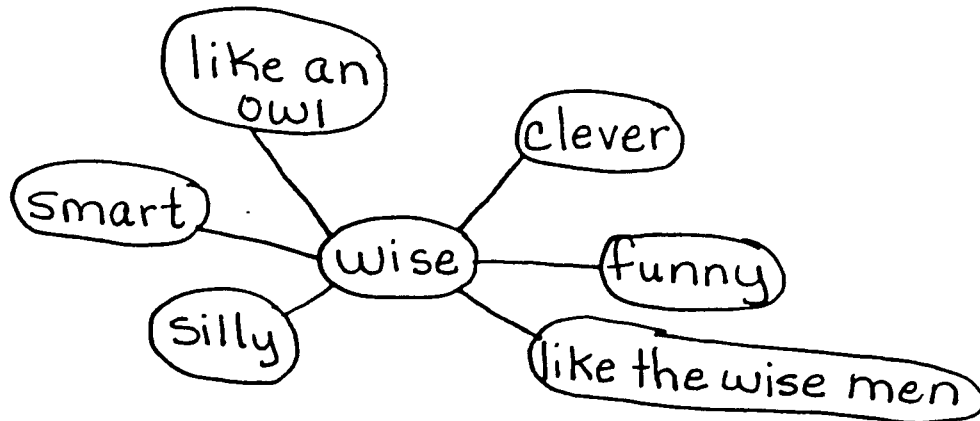
VII. Bibliography

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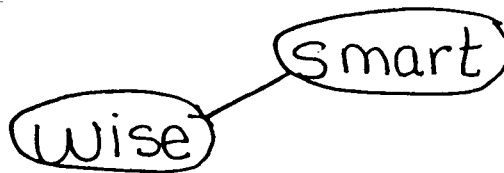
APPENDIX A

Steps to Contextual Redefinition

1. Students predict the meaning of the word in isolation. The vocabulary word “wise” is used in this example.



2. The teacher presents the word in the context of a sentence by writing it under the word web.
Example: You are wise not to ask me how I gained my riches.
3. The students predict the meaning of the word again. Their predictions should be narrower in scope and closer to the actual meaning.



4. The students verify their second prediction by looking it up in the dictionary.

(Adapted from *Reading Strategies and Practices: A Compendium* by Robert J. Tierney, John E. Readence, and Ernest K. Dishner)

APPENDIX B

Examples of vocabulary in context from *Three Words of Wisdom*

*Some examples from the text do not have enough context to determine the word meaning. In that case, a different example sentence is given. Direct sentences from the story are enclosed with quotation marks.

1. The boy displayed wisdom by not waiting until the last minute to complete his Homework
2. "In my lifetime, I have gathered heaps of gold and much wisdom."
3. "Don't jump to conclusions."
4. "When the old man walked on, the two men scolded their friend for his stupidity.
5. "But the two men ignored him and plunged into the woods.
6. "The candles glistened in the overhead chandeliers.
7. "You are wise not to ask me how I gained my riches.

APPENDIX C

(Adapted from Dinah Zikes' *Big Book of Books and Activities*)

Directions for making eight-section vocabulary book

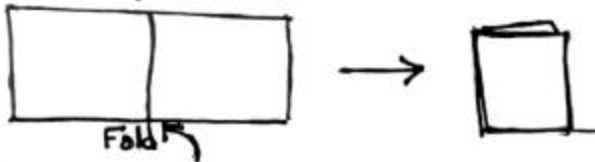
Materials needed:

1 9" x 18" piece of manila paper

Scissors

(Long arm stapler - use to add more pages. Staple more books together at center fold.)

① Fold paper in half.



② Fold paper in half again.

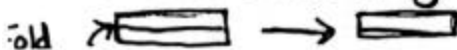


③ Fold paper again in the same way

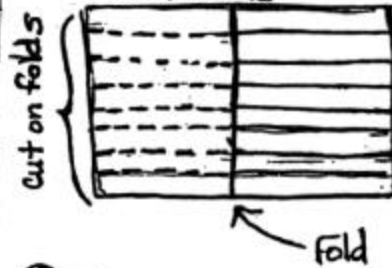


Fold

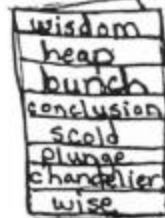
④ Fold the paper again in the same way.



⑤ Unfold the book. Then cut the folds on the left side to the middle.



⑥ When the book is closed, it should look like this:



⑦ Vocabulary is written on outside sections. Definitions are written on inside flap.



APPENDIX D

Rubric For Retelling/Summary

4=Excellent, 3=Good, 2=Fair, 1=Poor, 0=No Attempt

	4	3	2	1	0
Significant events included					
Well defined beginning, middle, and end					
Smooth transitions within story					

Comments:

APPENDIX E

Name _____

Date _____

Retelling/Summary

0 – No attempt

70 – Copied from book / Did not use own words

80 – Some significant events included / Some significant events excluded

90 – Significant events included

--Well defined beginning, middle, and end

--Choppy in some places

95 – Significant events included

--Well defined beginning, middle, and end

--Smooth transitions within story

100 – Significant events included

--Well defined beginning, middle, and end

--Smooth transitions within story

--Extra effort

COMMENTS:

APPENDIX F

Examples of vocabulary in context from *Three Gold Coins*

*Some examples from the text do not have enough context to determine word meaning. In that case, a different example sentence is given. Sentences taken directly from the story are enclosed in quotation marks.

1. The man hastened to get out of the way of the cement truck.
2. "He was given lodging and food, but his master kept his pay."
3. "He said he would give it to Yannis someday, in one large sum."
4. "So little money for ten years' toil!"
5. "Give me a gold piece, Yannis, and I will give you a good piece of advice."
6. "Although Yannis wanted to refuse, he obediently returned one coin."
7. "At this, Yannis hesitated, wondering how he could return home with only one piece of gold."
8. "He reluctantly gave the coin to his master."
9. "Suppress your evening anger until morning."
10. "He left the house with nothing to show for all those years but a furrowed brow.
11. The mules were burdened with many things to carry.
12. "Yannis took the abandoned mules and proceeded on his journey."
13. "Happily he gazed at the familiar roads and houses."
14. "His joy turned to rage."
15. "Yannis gasped when he saw that his own son had grown into manhood."
16. "There they found enough to keep them content for the rest of their lives."

APPENDIX G

(Adapted from Dinah Zikes' *Big Book of Books and Activities*)

Directions For Making Layered Book

1. Stack two sheets of manila paper (9" x 18"), and place the back sheet approximately one inch higher than the front sheet.



2. Bring the bottom of both sheets upward and align the edges so that all of the layers are the same distance apart.



3. When all the layers are the same distance apart, fold the papers and crease well.

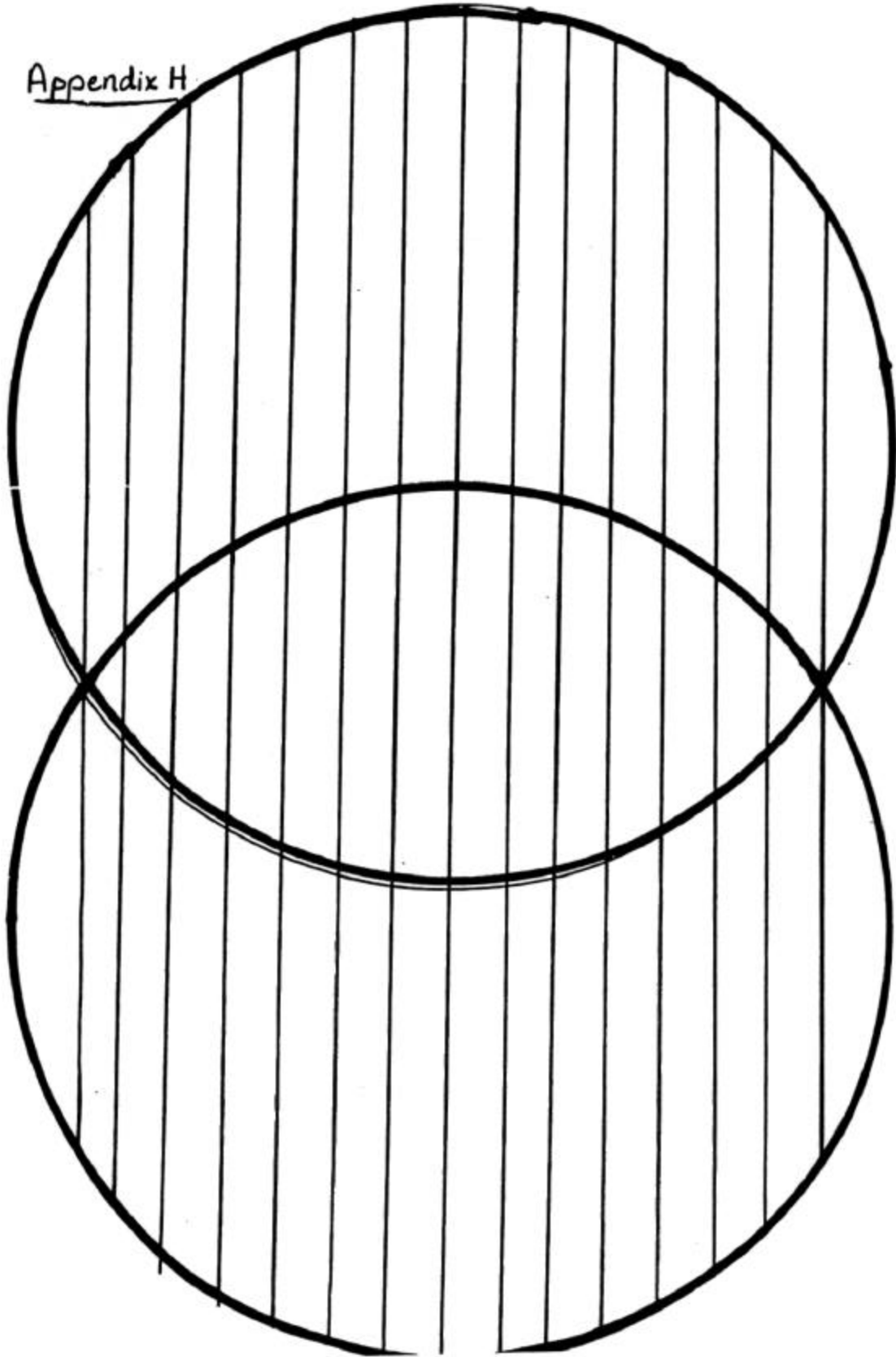


4. Open the papers and staple them together at the crease using a long-arm stapler

Students will write, "Three Gold Coins Retold and Illustrated by (Your student's name)" on the front. The other three sections will be labeled "beginning", "middle", and "end" with a black crayon or black marker.



Appendix H



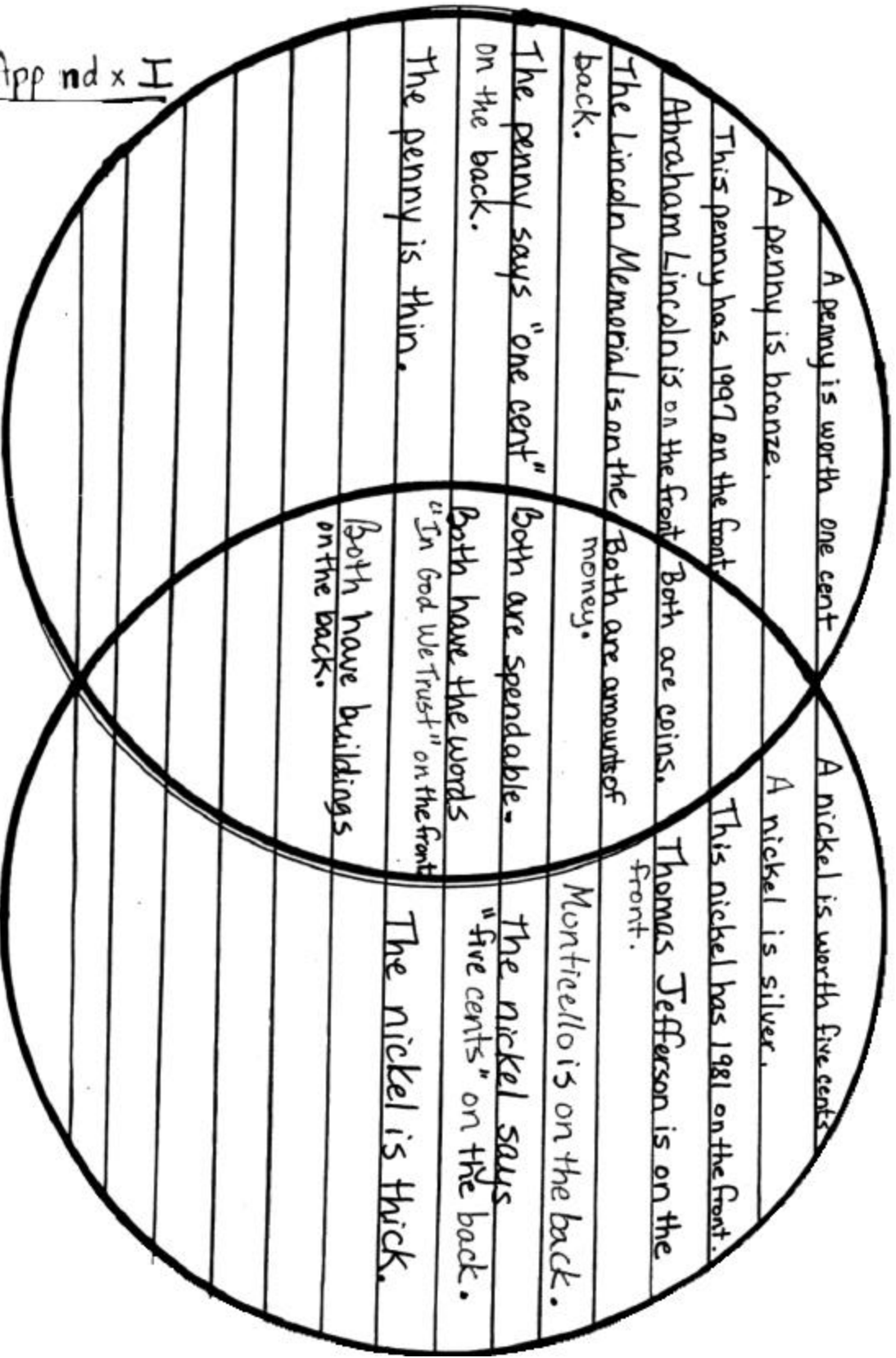
DATE _____

NAME _____

DATE _____

Penny _____

Nickel _____



Appendix I

APPENDIX J

Examples of Comparison/Contrast paragraphs constructed from Venn diagram

Comparison Paragraph

A penny and a nickel are alike in many ways. First, they are both coins. Second, they are both spendable. Next, they both have the words, "In God We Trust" on them. Finally, they both have buildings on the back of the coins.

Contrasting Paragraph

A penny and a nickel are very different from each other. First, a penny is worth one cent. However, a nickel is worth five cents. Second, a penny is bronze, while a nickel is silver. Third, they have different dates on them. Next, Abraham Lincoln is on the front of a penny. Conversely, Thomas Jefferson is on the front of a nickel. Finally, a penny is thin. On the other hand, a nickel is thick

APPENDIX K

Rubric for comparison/contrast paragraphs

4 = Excellent, 3 = Good, 2 = Fair, 1=Poor

	4	3	2	1
Topic sentence tells what the paragraph will be about.				
Sequence words are used in appropriate way (First, second, third, next, etc.)				
Comparison and/or contrast words are used in appropriate way.				
Sentences are connected in logical manner.				
Sentences are well constructed.				
Correct capitalization and punctuation are used.				

COMMENTS: