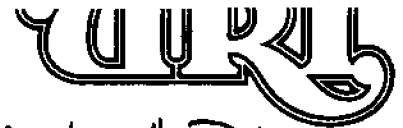


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Order # P 669

People And The Sea

Coastal Life, A Unit For 7th Grade English Classes

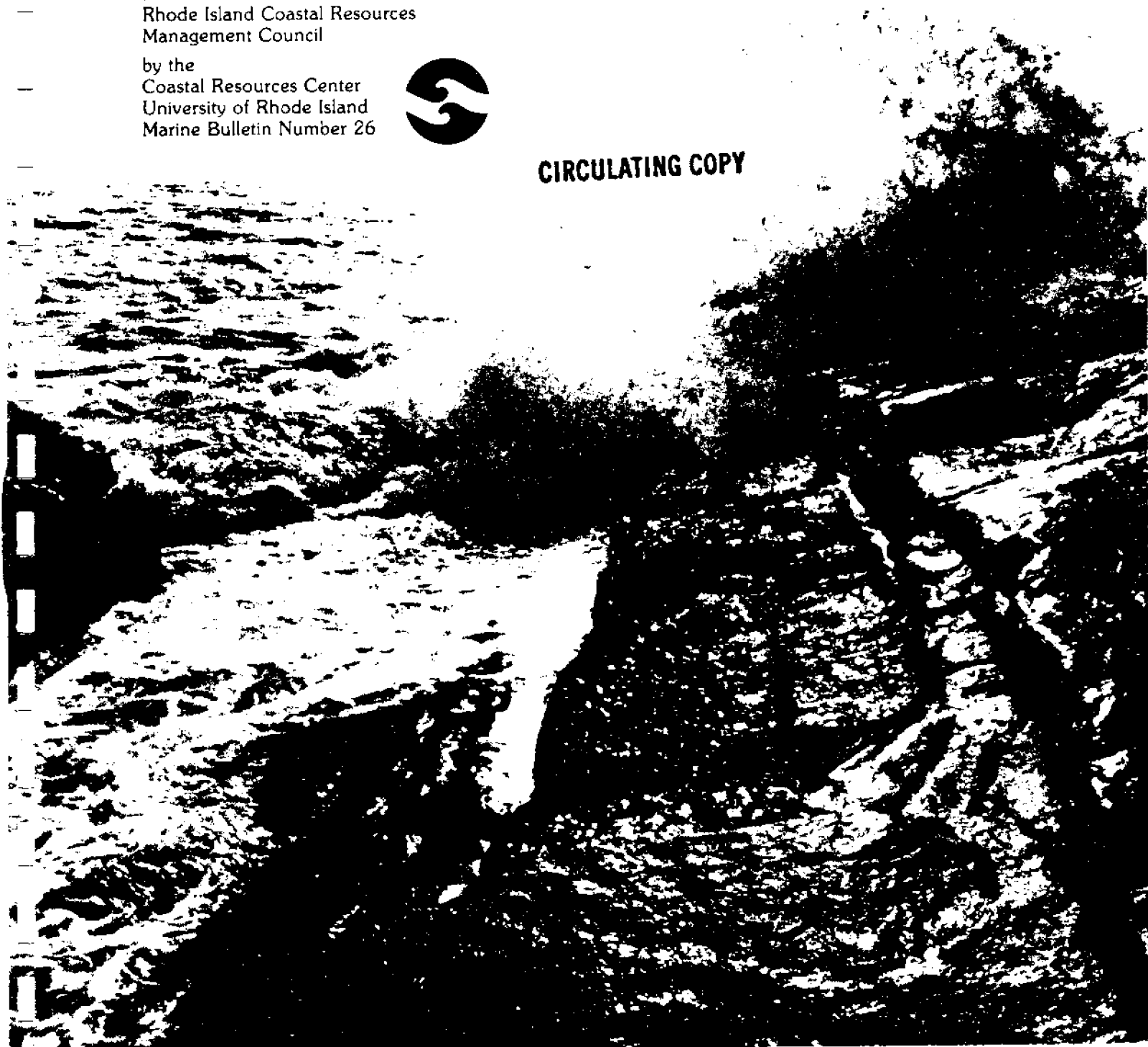
Pendleton H. Nixon

Produced for the
Rhode Island Coastal Resources
Management Council

by the
Coastal Resources Center
University of Rhode Island
Marine Bulletin Number 26



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Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council

This unit was prepared as part of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council's public education program. The Council, in existences since 1971, has a mandate to preserve, protect, develop, and, where possible, restore the coastal resources of the state for this and succeeding generations through comprehensive and coordinated long-range planning and management. The Council has broad powers to regulate activities that affect its management plan and the coastal environment.

"People and the Sea," three teaching units (one each for 7th, 8th, and 9th grade English classes), was written to increase the interest and involvement of young Rhode Islanders in the sea and in the state's marine resources. Each unit teaches language arts skills through the theme of people and the sea.

The units are based on well-written literature about the sea appropriate to the students' reading levels. Short stories, novels, poems, plays, and nonfiction books and articles make up the suggested reading. Introductory and background material, summaries, discussion questions, and suggestions for writing are included in the units, along with suggestions for creative activities, vocabulary building, films, trips, and speakers.

The themes of the three units are:

7th grade - Coastal Life

8th grade - Adventure at Sea

9th grade - The Relationship Between People and the Sea

The "People and the Sea" units may be obtained from the University of Rhode Island, Marine Publications Unit, Narragansett Bay Campus, Narragansett, RI 02882. Tel. (401) 792-6211.

The preparation of this booklet was financed in part by a planning grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, under the provisions of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-583), through the Integrated Grant Administration program administered as part of Federal Regional Council grant FRC-JF-01-11.

Pendleton H. Nixon, who prepared the units, has taught in North Carolina and Rhode Island and has an M.A. in German and English Literature from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

People And The Sea

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Acknowledgements

Many persons contributed their time and resources in the design and preparation of the three "People and the Sea" units for English classes. I am grateful to Sara Callaghan and Prentice Stout of the University of Rhode Island Marine Advisory Service who were instrumental in initiating the writing of the units and who provided many helpful suggestions and criticisms throughout their development. I also appreciate the assistance of Madge Mitchell and Deborah Prefontaine in the preparation of the typed manuscripts, and the editorial and design services of Martin Hanft, Larry Pearce, and Ilse Silvermann of the URI Publication Office.

Special appreciation is extended to the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council for their continuing support of marine-related education programs in the state.

Preface

This is an English unit, using the theme of "Coastal Life" as a focus for language arts activities in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Living on the coast as we do, we sometimes take for granted the special quality of life and the natural beauty we share here. While the main purpose of the unit is to develop basic language skills, it is hoped that by focusing on "Coastal Life" as a theme, the students' awareness and appreciation for this way of life will be deepened. Further, it is hoped that they will want to work to preserve both the environmental quality and the cultural traditions of our coast.

The unit is based on reading short stories, local history, novellas, selections by naturalists, and adventure novels. The teacher will need to help the students get started early in the unit on reading the novellas and a novel. Accompanying the reading are discussion questions to aid understanding, writing activities for practicing specific skills, and suggestions for related activities such as interviews, visits, films, and creative writing. The culminating activity is a long essay, which can be considered for entry in the Coastal Resources Management Council Contest, if desired. However, the unit may also be used without entering the contest.

The introductory and discussion parts of the unit are written as the teacher might use them. The wording of the ideas and questions is meant only as a suggestion. The teacher will, of course, adapt these and any other parts of the unit to fit the needs of the students.

Although many of the materials and activities contained in this unit have been used successfully with this age group before, the unit as a whole has not yet been used with a class. Therefore, we would greatly appreciate feedback from teachers on what they like and dislike about the unit, what worked with their students and what didn't work, so that we can change the unit to make it more useful in the future. Please send your comments and suggestions to Pendleton H. Nixon, Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island, Narragansett Bay Campus, Narragansett, Rhode Island 02882.

Objectives

General

1. To gain skill in reading, analyzing and understanding selected works of fiction and non-fiction.
2. To practice and gain skill in writing by completing essays, discussion questions and a variety of writing activities.
3. To gain skill in presenting ideas orally by participating in class and small group discussions.
4. To practice listening with concentration by listening to other people in interviews and class discussions, as well as listening to some stories, sea chanteys, and ballads.
5. By using the theme of "Coastal Life" as a focus for these activities, it is hoped that students will gain a deeper awareness and appreciation of the special quality of life, the natural beauty, and some of the problems that are part of living near the coast. Further, it is hoped that they will value and work to preserve both the environmental quality and cultural traditions of our coast.

Specific

1. To analyze effective descriptive writing, in order to understand better what makes it effective.
2. To practice descriptive writing, particularly descriptions of setting, sounds, and physical appearance of people.
3. To practice expository writing, depicting an operation or sequence of actions.
4. To understand the meaning of an oral tradition.
5. To gain an awareness and appreciation of the coastal lore and cultural heritage of our region.
6. To help to preserve some oral traditions.

7. To learn to conduct an interview effectively.
8. To make comparisons, draw conclusions, and form opinions, based on reading, listening, and visiting.
9. To recognize and understand the function of the basic element in stories and novels, such as setting, conflict, theme, characterization, turning point, and climax.
10. To expand reading vocabulary by using the context as a clue to meaning.
11. To express oneself creatively in writing and/or other activities.
12. To gain critical skill in reading. To be able to recognize and evaluate weaknesses such as one-dimensional characters and plot dependent on coincidence.
13. To organize and carry out a long writing assignment, such as a long essay or short story.

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I. Introduction

To The Teacher: Ideas For Discussion

The teacher could introduce the unit with a discussion of ideas and a poem, such as follows:

For the next few weeks we will be doing a unit on Coastal Life. Let's think for a moment about what it means to live on the coast. How many of you have always lived in Rhode Island? How is Rhode Island, a coastal state, different from inland states? What are some of the things coastal people are aware of more than, or in a different way than, inland people? (Salt marshes, beaches all year, rocky coastline, fishing as a business, light houses, islands, many kinds of boats, boating as a major sport, salt ponds, changeable weather and violent storms at sea, etc.).

What do you like and value about living on the coast? Read A.L. Hendrik's poem "The Fringe of the Sea," page 3.

The poem speaks of living on an island, but it would just as easily apply to living anywhere on the coast. What are some of the things the poet values about living near the sea? Do you agree? Explain. Who has lived far from the sea for a while? What did you miss?

What are some of the problems of coastal life? (How can we protect ourselves as much as possible from the dangers of hurricanes? How can we protect our marshes from pollution or misuse? How can we preserve our beaches for all to enjoy? How can fishermen make a good living and supply the needs of the people without depleting resources? How can we balance the demands of industrial development with the need for preservation of the coastal environment? etc.)

Life has changed along our coast in the last hundred years. Shipping and whaling are no longer the big industries they were in the 19th century, and the talk is seldom of ship wrecks or pirates, as it often was then. Who has grandparents or great-grandparents from Rhode Island? What were they doing years ago? How is that different from what your family does? Are you more or less in touch with the sea than they were at your age?

What coastal occupations are important now? (commercial fishing, tourism, sports fishing and boating, scientific research). What does that reflect about our current life style?

There is a traditional lore of coastal life which perhaps we take for granted. The stories older people tell of storms and shipwrecks, pirates, and light houses are a part of this lore. So are the sea chanteys and songs brought home from sea, the superstitions of fishermen, and the special flavor of coastal dialect. We will look at all of this. We will read about other aspects of coastal life as well. For example, we'll look at what happens in nature along the coast. We will also read about the adventures of a number of people on both strange and familiar faraway coasts.

The Fringe of the Sea

by A.L. Hendriks

We do not like to awaken
far from the fringe of the sea,
we who live upon small islands.
We like to rise up early,
quick in the agile mornings
and walk out only little distances
to look upon the water,
to know it is swaying near to us
with songs, and tides, and endless
boatways,
and undulate patterns, and moods.

We want to be able to saunter
besides it
slow paced in bronzing sunlight,
barearmed, barefoot, bearheaded,
and to stoop down by the shallows
sifting the random water
between assaying fingers
like farmers do with soil,
and to think of turquoise mackerel
turning with consummate grace,
sleek, and decorous,
and elegant in high blue
chambers.

We want to be able to walk out
into it,
to work in it,
dive and swim and play in it,
to row and sail and pilot
over its sandless highways,
and to hear
its calls and murmurs wherever
we may be.

All who have lived upon small
islands
want to sleep and awaken
close to the fringe of the sea.

II. Short Stories

To The Teacher

The stories by Snow are true tales depicting traditional aspects of New England coastal lore. Pyle's stories are highly fictional accounts in a vividly realistic coastal setting, showing one of the more exotic aspects of coastal life long ago - its link with piracy.

Both collections of stories are found in school and local libraries. The teacher may want to get the stories copied so that each student can have a copy, or if that is impossible, the teacher could read them aloud to the class (or ask fluent readers among the students to do so), since they are well suited to oral reading.

Pyle's writing in particular can be used as an excellent model for work in writing vivid description.

Summaries And Questions For The Short Stories

- "EGG ROCK," pp. 14-26, in Tales of Sea and Shore, by Edward Rowe Snow, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1966.

Summary:

Snow, who gathers his stories by visiting places, talking to people, and reading old letters, books and records, tells here the history of the lighthouse at Egg Rock, off the coast near Swampscott, Massachusetts. For those of us who live on the coast and see the lighthouses still standing, it is interesting to hear something about the lighthouse keepers and their families who used to live and work there. Snow tells of the storms, the loneliness, the rescues and other experiences of the lighthouse people.

- "NEW ENGLAND'S GREATEST SINGLE RESCUE FEAT," pp. 125-137 in Tales of Sea and Shore, by Edward Rowe Snow, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1966.

Summary:

Snow talked with George Bloomer, who in December, 1885, led a daring rescue operation that saved the crew of a vessel wrecked in a squall near Monomoy Island, off Cape Cod. The tale of the rescue by row boat in stormy seas is exciting itself, but is made more interesting since Snow records it in the words of old George Bloomer.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Do you notice expressions or terms in George Bloomer's language that are different from what you are familiar with? Do you have any friends or relatives who have grown up along the coast and use some characteristic expressions, pronunciations, or terms? What are some of these?
2. Do you have any friends or relatives who have been involved in a rescue operation after a ship wreck? Describe it as you have heard it.
3. Do you know any older person who was a lighthouse keeper or a member of a lighthouse keeper's family? What lighthouses are near where you live? Have you visited them? Would you like to have been a lighthouse keeper?

- "TOM CHIST AND THE TREASURE BOX: AN OLD-TIME STORY OF THE DAYS OF CAPTAIN KIDD," pp. 99-128 in Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates, by Howard Pyle, Harper Brothers, New York, 1949.

Summary:

This story is set in the late 17th century on the coast of Delaware, just below Cape Henlopen. Howard Pyle tells it with the relish of a true story teller and illustrates it with vividness that made him famous. Pyle relates how fourteen-year-old Tom Chist looked on while the infamous Captain Kidd and his men came ashore near his village. He watched in fascination and then horror as three pirates buried a chest in the dunes and then murdered one of their number. The next day Tom returned to recover the chest, which contained rich treasure and records which incriminated Kidd in numerous crimes of piracy. Tom went to New York with his treasure and information, where he discovered the secret of his birth and became a rich and great man.

- "BLUESKIN THE PIRATE," pp. 150-186 in Howard Pyle's Book of Pirates by Howard Pyle, Harper Brothers, New York, 1949.

Summary:

This is a gripping, haunting and, at one point, brutal adventure story. It is set in the quaint little harbor village of Lewes, Delaware and the marshes and dunes around there, during the winter of 1750. Into this peaceful coastal environment sailed Blueskin, one of the most vicious of pirates. He anchored off the coast for sometime. His stepbrother, Hiram White, and the people of Lewes knew him only as the long absent Levi West, and did not identify him as the evil Blueskin. Pyle relates how Hiram White, thought to be dull witted, gradually and unwaveringly grew in opposition to Levi, and eventually brought about his downfall and the revelation of his true identity.

Questions for Discussion and Writing:

1. Re-read the description of Levi West on pp. 159-160. Why is it so vivid? Pyle uses a number of comparisons in this description. Point them out. Choose someone you know and write a physical description of him or her that is vivid as you can make it. Use Pyle's description as a model as much as you can.
2. Re-read the description of Cape Henlopen and Lewis Harbor, at the beginning of the story of "Blueskin the Pirate." Though brief, it paints a vivid picture. Point out some of the metaphores. Write a description of your town and the surrounding area, including more information and detail than Pyle does here, but using his description as a model. Can you use some appropriate metaphores or other comparisons?

III. Coastal Life In The Past

To The Teacher

Finding out more about life along our coast in the past is exciting to our students and gives them more awareness and perspective on what it means to live on the coast. By reading and visiting historical places and talking to older natives, they discover their heritage. Not only do they gain an appreciation for the importance of fishing, whaling, and shipping as the basis of life along the New England coast in the past, but by gathering the memories of an older generation, they can learn to value and help to preserve a priceless tradition of stories, speech patterns, and superstitions that is rapidly disappearing.

Blow Ye Winds Westerly and A Wind To Shake The World are both recent books, very readable for Junior High level, and are found in most local and school libraries. A list of other good sources of local lore and history that are not so readily available, but can be found in the Providence Public Library, is given at the end of the section.

The discussion questions are aimed at getting students to make comparisons, draw conclusions and form opinions, based on their reading. The purpose of the activities is to encourage students to find out about, value and help to preserve some of the coastal lore of our region, much of which remains a rich oral tradition.

Summaries And Discussion Questions For The Historical Selections

- BLOW YE WINDS WESTERLY: THE SEAPORTS AND SAILING SHIPS OF OLD NEW ENGLAND, selected chapters, by Elizabeth Gemming, Thomas Y. Crowell, Co., New York, 1971.

Summary:

Blow Ye Winds Westerly is an especially excellent book for Junior High since it gives a view of everyday life on the New England coast so that students can really imagine it. The author includes many details, but avoids the kind of lengthy

explanation and political discussion that this age group often finds dull. Four chapters are particularly relevant for their depiction of coastal life: "Old Salem, 1790-1812" (pp. 3-18), "North of Boston and Down East to Maine" (pp. 33-44), "Cape Cod and Cape Ann" (pp. 77-90) and "Nantucket and New Bedford" (pp. 103-114). One or more of these chapters can be duplicated for the students, or, if that is impossible, the teacher could read a chapter or two aloud. Copies of Blow Ye Winds Westerly can be found in most public and some school libraries. Loan copies are also available from the Roger Williams Park Museum Resource Center in Providence and from the University of Rhode Island Marine Advisory Service (792-6211).

"Old Salem, 1790-1812" shows how the people of a seaport town lived, worked and played during those years. Ship building work done by shipsmiths, sail makers, rope makers, riggers, and figure-head carvers is described. The homes, daily routines, social activities, school days, and some of the shops in the town are also discussed.

In "North of Boston and Down East to Maine" the author describes the shipping activities typical of mid-nineteenth century New England coastal towns such as Thomaston (now Rockland), Maine and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Then she describes the daily lives of the people, and diversions such as fishing parties, concerts, and Fourth of July celebrations.

In "Cape Cod and Cape Ann" the emphasis is on fishing activities, particularly cod, haddock, halibut and mackerel fishing off the Grand Banks. Family life, different types of fishing vessels, and preparation of the fish for sale are all included.

The "Nantucket and New Bedford" chapter depicts life in nineteenth century whaling towns. The author concentrates mainly on Nantucket, and shows the business of fitting out whaleships, and the customs and daily activities of the people.

Discussion Questions for Chapters from Blow Ye Winds Westerly:

1. What were the schools like in the New England coastal towns described? What would you like about them? What would you dislike?
2. What were the major coastal occupations in the 19th century? (shipbuilding, shipping, fishing and whaling) Which ones are still vital to the New England economy today? Which ones are no longer important here? Why?
3. What would you have been doing now if you had lived here then? Would you have liked to? Why or why not? Which diversions that you read about appeal to you. How was life different for boys then? For girls? Was it harder to be a members of a fisherman's family then than now? Why or why not?

● "RHODE ISLAND," Book IV, pp. 155-229 from A Wind to Shake the World: The Story of the 1938 Hurricane, by Everett S. Allen, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1976.

Summary:

Everett Allen's book is a detailed account of the disastrous hurricane of 1938 as it was experienced by people living along the New England coast. In the section dealing with Rhode Island, students can read what happened to people and homes in places they are familiar with now, where few traces remain to tell them how it used to be and what changed it. There are four chapters in the part on Rhode Island, each focusing on a different area. The teacher may wish to choose the chapter on the area the students are most familiar with, and read it aloud to the class.

The first chapter of Part IV describes what happened when the hurricane reached the Westerly-Misquamicut area, where over a hundred people were lost and hundreds of beach homes destroyed. In the next chapter Allen relates people's experiences and descriptions of the hurricane as he learned them from residents of the Charlestown, Jerusalem, Galilee area. Then he goes to Providence, at the head of Narragansett Bay, where the water rose to a depth of fifteen feet in some parts of the low lying business district. In the last chapter of Part IV, Allen crosses the bay to show what happened at Newport, Jamestown and Sakonnet Point. In each chapter Allen tells the stories he has gathered from the people in the area of what they remembered about that day. He tells about the huge power of the storm, its terrible devastation, some people who survived through determination and courage, some who risked everything to save others, some who were lost, and some who couldn't recover afterwards.

Discussion questions for A Wind to Shake the World:

1. How has the area you lived in been affected by hurricanes? How have hurricanes caused your area to change? What signs of hurricanes still remain?
2. Have you ever been in a hurricane? Describe it.
3. Why do people live in places where there is likely to be hurricane damage? Do you think there should be regulations forbidding building in zones of high risk of hurricane danger? Why or why not? How could this be done fairly?

Activities Related To Coastal Life In The Past

These suggestions include activities for the whole class, for individuals, and for groups:

1. If someone in the class knows an older fisherman or sailor from a merchant ship or whaler, invite him to come for an informal talk with the class to share his memories. (The wife, son or daughter of a fisherman or sailor could have much to share also). An alternative would be for the student to interview the person and then share his interview with the class. See suggestions for interviewing, #3.
2. Visit Mystic Seaport, in Mystic, Connecticut so the students can see this carefully reconstructed 19th century seaport. There they can see sail makers, coopers, a "rope walk," figure head carvers, homes, shops, a whaling ship and much more, so they can get a realistic sense of what life used to be like in our coastal towns. If the trip is not feasible, there is a good film available showing the preparations necessary for a whaling ship to put to sea, as seen through the eyes of a Captain's young son, as he accompanies his father. It is filmed in color at Mystic and can be ordered from the Photography/Audio Visual Services Division, Mystic Seaport, Inc. Mystic, Conn. 06355. The film lasts 17 minutes and rents for \$12.00.
3. Almost every student knows someone who experienced the '38 hurricane or one of the more recent hurricanes in Rhode Island (1954). The class could discuss how to interview people in preparation for each student conducting an interview on his own with someone who has experienced a big hurricane. Guidelines for interviews follow:

Guidelines for interviews (Activity 3):

- a. Explain to the person you are interviewing why you want to interview him or her. (In this case, the purpose is to learn more about coastal life in the past, and how hurricanes affect people's lives)

- b. Ask his or her permission to go ahead.
- c. Have your prepared questions ready, but you may not need to stick to them. Use them to help the person you are interviewing start talking and keep going.
- d. If a question seems too personal to ask, leave it out. Or if the person you are interviewing seems reluctant to answer a question, respect his or her feelings. (You would feel free to ask your grandmother questions you might not ask an acquaintance).
- e. Restate or ask a question another way if it is misunderstood.
- f. Ask additional questions that are relevant to what your person tells you.
- g. Keep listening and don't interrupt.
- h. To help you remember what you are hearing check the questions he or she answers and perhaps write down a word or two to trigger your memory, for example, "Mary Smith's porch". Don't try to take real notes though, or you will miss too much.
- i. Thank the person for sharing his or her memories with you at the end of the interview.
- j. Go home and write it up immediately, so it is still fresh in your mind and you remember all the details.
- k. The teacher and class can discuss methods of writing up interviews ahead of time, i.e., using a question and answer format or writing it up in paragraph form, organized by major topics.

NOTE: A class at South Kingstown Senior High School made a collection of taped interviews about the '38 hurricane, as a part of an oral history project, under the direction of Judi Preble and Lynda Wood. Funded by the R.I. Committee on the Humanities, they have published a book containing transcripts from twenty of the interviews. The book is called In the Wake of '38 and should be available in school and local libraries by December, 1977.

- 4. Colorful terms and expressions used by coastal people only a generation or two ago are fast being lost in this television age of increasingly uniform speech. Some students could make glossaries of coastal terms and expressions used by older relatives and friends, carefully defining each entry. If desired the students involved could compile their glossaries into one longer collection as a group project or a single glossary could be gathered as a class project.

5. Fishermen are well known for their interesting superstitions, some of which are still held to today. Some students could find out about as many superstitions of fishermen or other coastal people as possible, by asking relatives and friends. Students could speculate about how each superstition arose. Then they could write down each superstition as they learned it, possibly including variations and speculations as to how it arose. This could be done as a class or group project instead of individually, if desired.

Other Historical Books

Books in the Providence Public Library about coastal life in the past, from Her Sheltered Bay: A Booklist on the Narragansett Bay, by Constance Cameron and Derryl Johnson, Providence Public Library (selected entries are quoted directly, as in the booklist) Note that most of these are old books.

- 974.57 Along the Shore Stories, by Harriet E. Thomas. Remington
T457a Ward, 1928.
 The locale of Easton's Beach and Second Beach is featured
 in a collection of historical myths about the Bay.
- 974.59 Anchors of Tradition, by Caroline Hazard. Yale, 1924.
H42a "A presentation of some little known facts and persons
 in a small corner of colonial New England called Narragan-
 sett to which are added certain weavings of Fancy from
 the thread of life upon the loom of Time."
- 917.459 In Old Narragansett: Romances and Realities, by Alice
E12e Morse Earle. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898.
 Hovering over the western shores of Narragansett Bay
 from Wickford to Point Judith are the fascinating
 legends originating from the voodooism of colonial Negro
 slaves, the pow wows of the Indians and the folk cus-
 toms of the large estate owners.
- 917.45 Narragansett Bay, by Edgar Mayhew Bacon. G.P. Putnam,
B128n 1904.
 Several romantic tales are presented to illustrate the
 local color, history and picturesque charm of Rhode
 Island's watery regions.

- 974.5
L7648i Indians, Privateers and High Society by Betram Lippincott.
J.B. Lippincott, 1961.
"A Rhode Island Sampler" from a look at the Old Mill to
the age of pleasure yachts and jazz -- the history of
Rhode Island and the lives of its people. (Also in
some school and local libraries.)
- 92
P316 Three Sides to the Sea: Memories of a S'Cunnet Childhood
by David Patten, Rinehart, 1956.
Sights, sounds and conversations of the turn of the cen-
tury are resurrected by heart warming reminiscences of
a summer on a poultry farm bordered by the sea.
- 917.45 Past and Present by Frederic Denison, J.A. & R.A. Ried,
1879.
Descriptions of famous sea side resorts such as Narragansett
Pier, Watch Hill, and Rocky Point are offered.

IV. Sea Chanteys And Ballads

To The Teacher

Sea chanteys and ballads have long been popular along the American coast, particularly here in the Northeast where ship-ping and fishing have been the major occupations of the coastal people. Children grew up hearing sea songs, went to sea and sang them as sailors, and brought back changed versions, additional stanzas and new songs to sing in their taverns and homes. The teacher can point out that the words and tunes were an oral tradition, passed down from generation to generation. It was not until this century that great interest arose among collectors and singers of folk songs to write them down. This, of course, is why there are so many different versions of each song, each stamped with the individual changes of many singers. Comparing different versions and guessing about why the differences came about will interest many students.

This section of the unit naturally depends on being able to hear some sea songs, not just read them. Many can be heard on records by Pete Seeger and other folk singers. Perhaps some member of the class plays the guitar and could sing and accompany some songs. The words and tunes are available in many song books of favorite ballads, as well as in books such as those listed below. The words of a few familiar chanteys and songs are included here for convenience, along with a little pertinent background on some. If students are self-conscious about singing, it may help to go outside and sit on the grass or to a room where they can sit informally on the floor and sing, with copies of the words.

Some records and cassettes which have sea chanteys and ballads are:

Pete Seeger, Archive of Folk Music, FS201, Everest Records.

New Christy Minstrels, "Songs of our Wonderful Country"

H31180, Harmony, Columbia Records

Gordon Bok, "Peter Kagan and the Wind" FS1-44, Folk-Legacy Records, Inc., Sharon, Connecticut

"The Spoken Arts Treasury of American Ballads and Folk Songs, (cassette) Spoken Arts Library for Young Listeners, Sung by Burl Ives (SAC10003) Traveling Songs; including

"Shenadoah," "Blow Ye Winds," Greenland Fisheries" and

"Blow the Man Down"

Some books which have sea chantey's and ballads are:

Shantymen and Shantyboys: Songs of the Sailor and Lumberman,

Collected and Compiled by William Main Doerflinger.

American Sea Songs and Chanteys: From the Days of Iron

Men and Wooden Ships by Frank Shay

American Ballads and Folk Songs by John A. Lomax and Alan Lomax

New Folk Songs of North America by Alan Lomax

American Favorite Ballads by Pete Seeger

The American Songbag, by Carl Sandburg

Fireside Book of Folk Songs, edited by Margaret Bradford Boni

Sea Chanteys: Background

A sea chantey (pronounced shanty) is a work song originally sung by seamen on sailing ships. The sailors made them up, remembered them, or borrowed them, to sing while heaving up anchor, hoisting sail, hauling away on heavy lines, and doing other tasks. The songs were designed to make the heavy work easier on board a sailing ship run by the power of human muscle and wind. Therefore the rhythm was supplied by the task and the words had to fit whether they made sense or not. Because of their origin, the wording of chanteys is simple and direct and the tunes spirited and wild, like the sea.

A good chanteyman was an invaluable member of the ship's crew. While joining in the task, he led the crew in singing. The chanteyman would lead off with a solo line, which he often improvised, and the crew would come back with the repetitive chorus, while heaving on the anchor, for example, with the rhythm. For example:

Chanteyman: Come all ye young fellows that follow the sea

Crew: To my yeo, ho! blow the man down (heaving)

Chanteyman: And pray pay attention and listen to me. (falling back)

Crew Oh, give me some time to blow the man down (heaving)

There is some dispute about the word chantey. Some say that it comes from the French, "chantez," to sing. Others think that is an over-educated assumption and insist that though it is spelled chantey, it comes from shanty, the usual house of a sailor or fisherman when at home on the coast. Still others say that since it comes from shanty, it should be spelled that way. The only agreement seems to be on the pronunciation.

Examples Of Sea Chanteys

- "BLOW THE MAN DOWN" from American Sea Songs and Chanteys, by Frank Shay.

This is probably the oldest American Chantey, and is still familiar today. The Black Ball Line was a line of American packet ships started in 1816 sailing between New York and Liverpool. Because for a long time it was the only means of regular communication between the U.S. and Europe, the ships were driven unmercifully to keep the schedule of 3 weeks out and 6 weeks home. Thus the ships had a bad name among sailors for harsh discipline.

Come all ye young fellows that follow the sea,
(chorus) To my yeo, ho! blow the man down
And pray pay attention and listen to me
(chorus) Oh, give me some time to blow the man down.

I'm a deep water sailor just in from Hong Kong,
(chorus) To my yeo, ho! blow the man down
If you'll give me some whiskey I'll sing you my song.
(chorus) Oh, give me some time to blow the man down!

Twass on a Black Baller I first served my time,
(chorus)
And on that Black Baller I wasted my prime.
(chorus)

'Tis when a Black Baller's preparin' for sea,
(chorus)
You'd split your sides laughing at the sights you see.
(chorus)

With tinkers and tailors and sailors and all,
(chorus)
That ship for prime seamen on board a Black Ball.
(chorus)

'Tis when a Black Baller is clear of the land,
(chorus)
Our boatswain then gives us the word of command.
(chorus)

"Lay aft," is the cry, "to the break of the poop!" (deck)
(chorus)
"Or I'll help you along with the toe of my boot!"
(chorus)

Tis larboard and starboard on the deck you will sprawl,
(chorus)
For "Kicking Jack" Williams commands that Black Ball.
(chorus)

Pay attention to orders, now you one and all,
(chorus)
For right there above you flies the Black Ball.
(chorus)

Tis when a Black Baller comes back to her dock,
(chorus)
The lads and the lasses to the pierhead do flock.
(chorus)

● "SO HANDY" from Shantymen and Shantyboys by William Main Doerflinger.

"So Handy" was a halyard chantey, which means it was sung when pulling on the halyards (lines) to raise the sails. The "Old Man" refers to the captain.

Handy high and handy low,
(chorus) Handy, me boys, so handy,
Oh, it's handy high and away we'll go,
(chorus) Handy, me boys, so handy!

Growl you may, but go you must.
(chorus)
Just growl too much and your head they'll bust.
(chorus)

Now, up aloft from down below,
(chorus)
Up aloft that yard must go.
(chorus)

Now, one more pull and we'll show her clew!
(chorus)
Oh, we're the boys that'll put her through,
(chorus)

With a bully ship and a bully crew,
(chorus)
And a bully Old Man to drive her through!
(chorus)

We're bound away around Cape Horn,
(chorus)
And we'll get there as sure as you're born!
(chorus)

Now, one more pull and that will do!
(chorus)
Oh, we're the gang that'll shove her through.
(chorus)

Now, here we are at sea again;
(chorus)
Two months advance we're up against.
(chorus)

Were the gang that can do it again!
(chorus)
Oh, we're the boys that'll do it once more!
(chorus)

● "SHENANDOAH" from American Sea Songs and Chanteys, by Frank Shay.

"Shenandoah" was a famous capstan chantey. This means that it was sung while hoisting the anchor by rotating the capstan, an upright, spool-like cylinder on which the anchor line wound. In an old form of the song, which originated on land, Shenandoah was an Indian chief on the shores of the Missouri River who had a pretty daughter. After getting the chief drunk, a white trader eloped with the daughter. There were several more versions popular as sea chanteys. In one, Shenandoah was an Indian maiden whose name meant "daughter of the stars," which may suggest why the sailors loved her, since their ships were navigated by reference to the stars.

Oh, Shenandoah, I love your daughter
(chorus) Away, my rolling river!
I'll take her 'cross yon rolling water
(chorus) Ah, hah! We're bound away,
'cross the wide Missouri!

Oh Shenandoah, I love your Nancy,
(chorus)
Oh Shenandoah, she took my fancy.
(chorus)

Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you,
(chorus)
'Cross that wide and rolling river.
(chorus)

Oh, Shenandoah, I'll ne'er forget you,
(chorus)
Till the day I die, I'll love you ever.
(chorus)

Sea Ballads And Songs: Background

Many songs popular at sea were sung for entertainment rather than for work. These were songs or ballads, rather than chanteys. Between six and eight in the evening it was common for sailors to gather in the forecastle (the front part of a merchant ship, where the sailors' quarters are located) or upon deck in clear weather, and there was singing. Many of the songs were handed down by tradition, but sailors continually changed them and made up new ones. These songs were brought home, where they became just as popular along the coast as at sea.

Examples Of Sea Ballads And Songs

- "THE WHALE" (or Greenland Fisheries) from American Sea Songs
and Chanteys, by Frank Shay.

It was in the year of forty-four,
In March the second day,
That our gallant ship her anchors weighed
And for sea they bore away,
Brave boys,
And for sea they bore away.

And when we came to far Greeland
And to Greenland cold we came,
Where there's frost and snow
And the whalefishes blow,
Brave boys,
And the whalefishes blow.

Our bosun went to topmast high
With his spyglass in his hand.
"A whale! There's a whalefish," he cried,
"And she blows at every span,
Brave boys,
She blows at every span."

Our captain stood on the quarter-deck,
And a brave little man was he.
"Overhaul, overhaul, on your davit tackles fall
And launch your boats for sea,
Brave boys
And launch your boats for sea."

We struck the whale, away he went,
And he lashed out with his tail,
And we lost the boat and five good men,
And we never got that whale
Brave boys,
And we did not get that whale.

Oh, Greenland is an awful place,
Where the daylight's seldom seen,
Where there's frost and snow,
And the whalefishes blow,
Brave boys,
And the whalefishes blow.

● "BLOW, YE WINDS" from American Sea Songs and Shanties, by
Frank Shay.

Tis advertized in Boston, New York and Buffalo,
Five hundred brave Americans, a-whaling for to go,
singing,

(Chorus)

Blow, ye winds in the morning,
And blow, ye winds, high-o!
Clear away your running gear,
And blow, ye winds, high-o!

They send you to New Bedford, that famous
whaling port,
and give you to some land-sharks to board and fit
you out.

(Chorus)

They send you to a boarding house-there for a time to
dwell,
The thieves they there are thicker than the other side
of hell!

(Chorus)

They tell you of the clipper-ships a going in and out,
And say you'll take 500 sperm before you're six months out.

(Chorus)

It's now we're out to sea, my boys, the wind come
to blow;
One half the watch is sick on deck, the other half below.

(Chorus)

But as for the provisions, we don't get half enough;
A little piece of stinking beef and a blamed small
bag of duff.

(Chorus)

Now comes that damned old compass, it will grieve
your heart full sore.
For theirs is two-and-thirty points and we have forty-four.

(Chorus)

Next comes the running rigging, which you're all supposed
to know;
Tis "Lay aloft, you son-of-a-gun, or overboard you go!"

(Chorus)

The cooper's at the vise-bench, a-making iron poles,
And the mate's upon the main hatch a-cursing all
our souls.

(Chorus)

The skipper's on the quarter-deck a-squinting at the sails,
When up aloft the lookout sights a school of whales.

(Chorus)

"Now clear away the boats, my boys, and after him we'll
travel,
But if you get too near his fluke, he'll kick you to
the devil!"

(Chorus)

Now we have got him turned up, we tow him alongside;
We over with our blubber hooks and rob him of his hide.

(Chorus)

Now the boat-steerer overside the tackle overhauls,
The Skipper's in the main chains, so loudly does he bawl!

(Chorus)

Next comes the stowing down, my boys; twill take both
night and day,
And you'll all have fifty cents apiece on the hundred
and ninetieth lay.

(Chorus)

Now we are bound into Tonbas, that blasted whaling port,
And if you run away, my boys, you surely will get caught.

(Chorus)

Now we are bound into Tuckoona, full more
in their power,
Where the skippers can buy the Consul up for
half a barrel of flour!

(Chorus)

But now that our old ship is full and we don't
give a damn,
We'll bend on all our stu'nsails and sail for Yankee-land.

(Chorus)

When we get home, our ship made fast, and we get
through our sailing,
A winding glass around we'll pass and damn this
blubber whaling!

(Chorus)

● "THE WATER IS WIDE" from American Favorite Ballads, by Pete Seeger.

The water is wide, I cannot get over,
And neither have I wings to fly.
Give me a boat that can carry two,
And both shall row, my love and I.

A ship is there and she sails the sea,
She's loaded deep as deep can be.
But not so deep as the love I'm in,
And I know not how I sink or swim.

I leaned my back up against some young oak,
Thinking he was a trusty tree.
But first he bended, and then he broke,
And thus did my false love to me.

Oh, love is handsome and love is fine,
Gay as a jewel when first it is new,
But love grows old, and waxes cold,
And fades away like summer dew.

The water is wide, I cannot get over,
And neither have I wings to fly.
Give me a boat that can carry two,
And both shall row, my love and I.

● "THE MAID ON THE SHORE" from The Folk Songs of North America, by
Alan Lomax.

'Twas of a young maiden who lived all alone,
She lived all alone on the shore-o;
There was nothing she could find to comfort her mind,
But to roam all alone on the shore, shore, shore,
But to roam all alone on the shore.

'Twas of a young captain who sailed the salt sea,
Let the wind blow high or low-o
'I will die, I will die, the young captain did cry,
If I don't get that maid on the shore, shore, shore
If I don't get that maid on the shore.'

'I have lots of silver, I have lots of gold.
I have lots of costly wear-o.
I'll divide, I'll divide with my jolly ship's crew,
If they'll row me, that maid from the shore, shore,
shore,
If they'll row me, that maid from the shore.'

After long persuadance they got her on board,
Let the wind blow high or low-o.
Where he placed her on a chair in his cabin below,
'Here's adieu to all sorrows and care, care, care,
Here's adieu to all sorrows and care.'

Where he placed her on a chair in his cabin below,
Let the winds blow high or low-o,
She sung charming and sweet, she sung
neat and complete,
She sung captain and sailors to sleep, sleep, sleep,
She sung captain and sailors to sleep.

She robbed him of silver, she robbed him of gold,
She robbed him of costly wear-o,
And she stole his broadsword, instead of an oar,
And she paddled her way to the shore, shore, shore,
And she paddled her way to the shore.

'My men must be crazy, my men must be mad,
My men must be deep in despair-o,
To let her go 'way, with her beauty so gay,
And paddle her way to the shore, shore, shore, shore,
And paddle her way to the shore.'

'Your men was was not crazy, your men was not mad,
Your men was not deep in despair-o,
I deluded the sailor, as well as yourself,
I'm a maiden again on the shore, shore, shore,
I'm a maiden again on the shore.'

Questions For Discussion

1. These chanteys and songs came down as oral tradition.
What is oral tradition? How does being an oral tradition affect a song?
2. Find two or more versions of the same song.
Point out the differences and try to guess why they occurred. Do any students already know different versions of the same sea song? Where did each version come from? (or where did he or she learn it?)
Are the differences regional? Due to experience? Due to dialect? Due to individual quirks? Due to possible misunderstanding?
3. What is the difference between a sea chantey and a sea ballad? Explain differences in both purpose and form.

V. Two Novellas With A Coastal Setting

To The Teacher

The setting of The Snow Goose, though on the Essex coast of England, will seem very familiar to Rhode Islanders used to salt marshes and a rugged shore line. The coastal atmosphere of The Pearl is different, being in a fishing village on the Mexican coast, but it has a purposely universal quality. Both novellas are good literature, dealing with basic human dilemmas like loneliness, love and greed, but they are simple enough to be understandable, meaningful, and appealing to seventh graders.

The teacher will need to explain that a novella is a long short story or a short novel. Each student will need copies of both books, which are available in inexpensive editions to buy, as well as in school and local libraries. The discussion questions for each novella are directed toward analyzing the basic elements such as setting, conflicts, characterization, and theme. Expanding vocabulary by using the context is also stressed. In addition, there are suggestions for related creative writing or other creative activities.

Because of the time needed to read the novellas at home, it would probably work best to introduce and assign them very early in the unit, to be discussed in class after the sea chantey section, or whenever the teacher arranges.

Guides For The Novellas

● THE SNOW GOOSE, by Paul Gallico.

Introduction:

Before the students begin reading the story the teacher can introduce it with some background such as follows:

First, ask how many have seen The Snow Goose on T.V. and find out their reactions.

Show them where the Great Marsh of Essex is on a map of England. Point out where it is in relationship to Dunkirk. Explain briefly or ask students to explain about the evacuation of the British from Dunkirk during World War II.

Read aloud the description of the Great Marsh that Gallico gives in the very beginning of the story. Ask students what marshes they are familiar with. Point out the basic similarities of various marshes, such as tidal pools, mud flats, marsh grasses, and being the home of wild fowl. Ask students to be thinking about why the setting is so important in this story, as they read. Showing some pictures of marsh land will impress the scene upon them. One excellent source of marsh photographs is The Edge of Life: The World of the Estuary, a Sierra Club Landform Book, by Peggy Wayburn with photography by Dennis Stock.

The style is lyrical and easily understood by seventh graders except for the short chapter when the men in the pub describe Rhayader's rescues at Dunkirk in dialect. Perhaps the teacher could read that chapter aloud to ensure understanding.

Some vocabulary which may be unfamiliar:

- salting - A British term indicating the area of the marsh covered with low grass, which is often flooded with salt water at high tide.*
- mud flats - areas of the marsh where mud rich in nutrients is exposed at low tide*
- tidal pools - areas of the marsh which are flooded at high tide, often nurseries for marine organisms*
- estuary - any body of water along the coast that is partly surrounded by land and partly open to the ocean, where fresh water from streams and lakes mixes with the salt water of the ocean*
- wild fowler - a hunter of wildfowl*
- pinion - the end joint of a bird's wing; wing feather*

Summary of The Snow Goose:

This moving story is set in the Great Marsh on the Essex coast of England, "a low, far-reaching expanse of grass and reeds and half-submerged meadowlands ending in the great saltings and mud flats and tidal pools near the restless sea." It is about Philip Rhayader, a man with a hunchback, a crippled arm, and a great love for the creatures of nature. He was an artist who left the world of men to live in the lighthouse on the sea at the edge of the marsh. People in the nearest village learned that he had a "way" with birds, could tame them and often heal them. Knowing this, a twelve-year-old girl named Frith arrived at the lighthouse one day in late fall with a wounded bird, shot by hunters. The bird was a snow goose, who must have been blown across the ocean by a great storm when flying south from her native Canada. Rhayader cared for the snow goose and, watching him, Frith gradually lost her fear of this strange looking man. The snow goose spent the winter there in the marsh with some other geese, and Frith came often to visit. When the snow goose left with the others to fly north for the summer, Rhayader and Frith expected never to see her again. But she came back that fall, and every fall for years. The bird, the man, and the girl shared much.

Then came news of the plight of the British Army across at Dunkirk--trapped on the beach, to be destroyed by the advancing Germans. Rhayader went in his sailboat to answer the call for small boats to help evacuate the British soldiers. The snow goose flew above him for the entire journey. Rhayader rescued boatload after boatload of soldiers before he was finally killed by a German machine gun. The snow goose stayed with his boat until it sank. Then she flew back to the lighthouse on the marsh, where Frith saw her circle once more over her familiar home and then soar away.

Discussion Questions for The Snow Goose:

1. Why is the setting so important in this story?
(make sure students understand that not only does it reflect the loneliness of Philip Rhayader, it serves as a haven for him).
Is he really alone there?
2. One way to understand Philip Rhayader is to examine his relationships with others in the novel. What is his relationship to the townspeople? How is this symbolic? Why are people afraid of people who are different or deformed? What is his relationship to the birds? Describe the relationship between Frith and Rhayader and show how it changes.

3. What do we find out about his inner life from his art? How does he see the world? What does he value?
4. Why does he decide to go to Dunkirk? Do you admire him? Why?
5. Why doesn't the snow goose stay with Firth when she comes back to the marsh at the end?

Vocabulary for The Snow Goose:

In order to encourage students to expand their reading vocabularies by reasoning from the context, the teacher can ask the students to find each word on the page given and copy the sentence it appears in. The students then try to figure out the meaning from the context and write it below the sentence. The teacher checks the work and indicates only the words that need to be looked up. The page numbers given here are from The Snow Goose, Paul Gallico, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1974.

1. recurrence p. 4
2. desolate p. 4
3. encroaching p. 5
4. visage p. 8
5. adept p. 11
6. lore p. 28
7. suppressed p. 35
8. inarticulate p. 37
9. grotesque p. 38
10. evaluation p. 49

After defining each word from the context (or the dictionary where necessary), students can write original sentences using each word appropriately.

Activities for The Snow Goose:

(Each student choose one)

1. Make a collection of photographs showing marsh scenes. Take the photographs yourself if possible.
2. Make a drawing, painting or a series of sketches of marsh life and landscapes. If possible, start your work at the marsh.
3. Go to a marsh, find a spot where you can sit or crouch unobserved and do one of the following:
 - a. Watch, then list and briefly describe the birds you observe. Identify them as best you can, using Peterson's Guide to Wild Birds, The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds, or another bird book.
 - b. Watch and listen, then write an informal essay or a poem describing what you see and hear and how you feel.

● THE PEARL, by John Steinbeck.

Introduction:

Steinbeck wanted The Pearl to be a parable. Make sure the students understand what this means. Ask them to be thinking about what Steinbeck was trying to get across as they read.

Because he was aiming for the universality of a parable, Steinbeck avoided limiting his story exactly as to time and place. Kino and Juana could be simple fisherfolk living on almost any coast, suddenly beset with wealth. However they are not wooden characters, mere puppets to illustrate a point, but real human beings, capable of evoking sympathy and concern in the reader.

Steinbeck shows how Kino and Juana are drawn inexorably into tragedy because of an intertwining set of factors: the inner factors of his blindness due to need, greed, pride, and love, and the outer factors stemming from an inhuman and unjust society. It is a powerful and moving story.

Summary of The Pearl:

The Pearl is the tale of a fisherman, Kino, his wife Juana, and the pearl they found. Kino and Juana were Indians living a simple but contented life in a fishing village on the Mexican coast. Their lives were filled with work and love for each other and their baby Coyotito. But one day Coyotito was stung by a scorpion. Fearing the effects of the poison, Kino and Juana took him to the white doctor in the town, who turned them away because they couldn't pay his fee. When they returned home, they applied a poultice of cool algae to the bite and the baby seemed better. They had no confidence in their own remedy, however, and decided to search for a pearl to pay for the doctor. Strangely enough, Kino found a huge, perfectly formed pearl on his first dive. Kino recognized the great value of the pearl and saw it as a way out of their present need, and indeed, a chance for a better life for his family and even an education for his son. But the pearl only brought about a steady development toward tragedy, which Kino could not recognize in time. The doctor took advantage of him, the pearl buyers tried to cheat him and Kino was beaten by prowlers who tried to steal the pearl. When Juana tried to throw the pearl, which had brought evil, back into the sea, Kino beat her, who he loved. Next Kino murdered an unknown attacker, their home was burned and their canoe ruined. So Kino and Juana were forced to flee on foot, into the mountains

with the baby. There they were pursued by trackers until in a final showdown, the baby was shot. Kino and Juana then returned to the village, in the knowledge of unspeakable suffering, and returned the pearl to the sea.

Discussion Questions for The Pearl:

1. Where and when is the story set? Why does Steinbeck leave this vague?
How does he make the setting vivid in the specifics of daily life?
2. Describe Kino as he is at first. What seems most important to him? What does he want to do with the money from the pearl? What do the "Song of the Family" and the "Song of Evil" show about him?
3. How does Kino change? What changes him? Is it the pearl or other things? When do you first see the change?
4. What kind of person is Juana? What is important to her? How does she feel about Kino as a man? Why does she go along with his decision to keep the pearl?
5. The final tragedy builds up incident by incident. List the steps that lead to it.
6. What did the priest say about people being able to change their position in life? Why would that be a comfortable belief for him? For Kino and Juana and their people? When does Kino start to oppose the view expressed by the priest? Do you think Steinbeck has Kino fail because he thinks people should remain in their places? Why not? Some readers have felt Steinbeck implied that there was, however, a natural order in nature; that is, the pearl belonged to the sea, and Kino disturbed the natural order by wresting it from its place there. Do you agree? Explain.
7. What things kept Kino and Juana from getting what they wanted? (What was that?) What would have made it possible?
8. Steinbeck said his parable can have many meanings. What are some of the things you think he was trying to say?
9. Steinbeck said that his writing was "aimed at making people understand each other." Do you feel that you gained understanding in reading The Pearl? Explain how you felt about Kino and Juana.

Vocabulary for The Pearl:

One way to use this vocabulary is to have each student find the word on the page given and copy the sentence. Then he or she can try to figure out the meaning from the context and write it below the sentence. The teacher can then indicate which words the student needs to look up. This method encourages students to guess at the meaning of new words as they read. The page numbers given here are from The Short Novels of John Steinbeck, Viking Press, New York, 1953.

1. detachment (p. 474) Chapter I
2. frantically (p. 474) Chapter I
3. plaintively (p. 475) Chapter I
4. scorpion (p. 476) Chapter I
5. appraised (p. 478) Chapter I
6. speculatively (p. 484) Chapter II
7. projected (p. 490) Chapter III
8. subjugated (p. 490) Chapter III
9. curtly (p. 490) Chapter III
10. aggressiveness (p. 499) Chapter IV

After defining each word from the context (and the dictionary where necessary), the students can write original sentences using each word appropriately.

Activities for The Pearl:

(Each student choose one)

1. Imagine a present day situation where a poor family suddenly comes into a great deal of money. Write a short story showing how they react and what happens to them.
2. Find music (without words) that sounds to you like the "Song of the Family." Then find some music that sounds like the "Song of Evil." Choose appropriate passages from the novel to read with each selection of music and record it or present it to the teacher or the class.
3. Write a poem or poetic essay entitled "The Song of the Family" and one entitled "The Song of Evil." You can write from the point of view of Kino, expressing his values, or write from your own point of view, expressing your own values. In that case you may need to change the title of your first poem or essay to "The Song of Good."

VI. Reading Selections By Naturalists

To The Teacher

Under the Sea Wind and *The Outermost House* are both beautifully written naturalists' views of life on the coast. But they are too difficult for most seventh graders to read them as whole books. Reading the selections chosen here will give students a chance to experience the naturalist's point of view and to enjoy the skillful, and at times poetic, writing of these two authors.

The teacher will need to have both selections copied so that each student can have a copy to work with, since close analysis is required. The discussion questions following each selection are aimed at aiding the analysis of the writing style and ideas involved. The writing activities at the end of the section are related to both reading selections and are designed to give students practice in using some of the methods examined.

It will probably be useful to explain to the students that a naturalist is a person who carefully observes and deeply appreciates nature, but does not necessarily explore it scientifically. They will not confuse the term with the literary movement of naturalism at this age.

Summaries And Discussion Questions For The Reading Selections

- "FLOOD TIDE," Book 1, Edge of the Sea, Chapter 1, pp. 9-18
from Under The Sea Wind by Rachel Carson

Summary:

Rachel Carson's book is a poetically written naturalist's description of sea and coastal life. It is not easy reading for seventh graders, but because it is so beautifully written, working on a brief selection such as this chapter would be time well spent. Rachel Carson's writing dispels any doubt that a scientist can also be a poet. Perhaps for seventh graders, it would work well to analyze this selection almost like a narrative poem, that is, to read it carefully, picturing exactly what the writer is describing as one goes.

This chapter, called "Flood Tide", describes what happens on a small island right off shore during one night in June. At dusk a black skimmer flies over the island and feeds in the shallow water of the sound between the island and the marshy coast of the main land. Two diamond back terrapins finish laying their eggs in the sands and enter the water rising in the marsh to feed near a great blue heron. A rat discovers the terrapin eggs and begins to eat them when he is speared by the heron. As night grows darker, migrating shad come into the sound on the rising tide on their way to the river winding down through the marsh. They are returning there to spawn after three years wandering in the sea. Fishermen had set nets early in the evening, and many shad are caught. But eels feast on the trapped shad, others swim by or escape, so the fishermen find few in their nets at dawn. The black skimmer circles the island, and as the sun rises he follows the now ebbing tide to the Outer Banks farther offshore.

The activity of the different creatures is the "plot" of the chapter. It is effectively unified by the arrival of the black skimmer at the beginning and his departure at the end. By showing how the lives of all the creatures, including man, are inextricably interwoven with each other and with their environment, Carson makes a powerful statement of the unity and interdependence of life in nature.

Discussion Questions for "Flood Tide":

1. It will help students to understand the chapter better if the teacher or a student draws a diagram on the board to help in visualizing the scene. Indicate East and West, the island, the sound, the marshes on the island and along the coast of the mainland, the inlet and river winding through the coastal marsh, the deep gutter between the northern end of the island and the coast, and the shallows between the south end of the island and the coast.
2. The activity of the different creatures is the "plot" of the chapter. Briefly describe the actions of the black skimmer (or flood gull), the diamond backed terrapins, the great blue heron, the rat, the shad, the fishermen, and the eels.
3. Describe the various interconnections between the creatures in the chapter, including man. That is, how are they interdependent? How are they dependent on their environment? What conclusions about Rachel Carson's meaning (or theme) can you draw?
4. How are the fishermen like the other creatures in the chapter?
5. How does Carson unify the chapter?
6. Why is Rachel Carson's writing so vivid and poetic? Find examples of poetic devices and effective description such as:
 - a. personification ("...the marsh grasses waded boldly out into the dark water")
 - b. describing an abstract quality with an action ("...island so small that a gull might have flown across it with a score of wing beats")
 - c. Comparisons of unlike things ("both water and sand were the color of steel") similes (the strange birds "progress as measured and meaningful as that of the shadows..." or Rynchops lower bill, "shaped like a scissor blade")
 - d. Use of concrete details that appeal to the senses ("The scent of terrapin and of terrapin eggs, fresh laid, was heavy in the air.")
 - e. Use of specific action verbs ("The sharp-eyed heron saw the movement and with a quick dart seized the fish cross-wise in his bill. He tossed it into the air, caught it head first, and swallowed it.")

● "THE HEADLONG WAVE," Chapter III, pp. 41-58, from The Outermost House, by Henry Beston.

Summary:

The Outermost House is the author's account of the year he spent living on the beach on Cape Cod, near Eastham. Beston, a naturalist, describes the cycle of life on that coast as he observed it during the year, and speculates philosophically about the meaning of his observations and man's relationship to nature. The philosophical considerations would make reading the whole book too difficult for most seventh graders, but reading a selected chapter or two could be exciting. The chapter on waves was chosen because most people who live along the coast respond strongly to waves, and students will find that Beston's descriptions make the familiar observations more exciting, more detailed, more involved.

In the first section of the chapter Beston describes the sounds of the surf, changing with wind and weather. Next he describes how surf looks, "taking pleasure in all its wild plays and variations." The last part of the chapter deals with heavy surf, with a description which captures the rushing excitement of watching a stormy sea.

Discussion Questions for "The Headlong Wave":

1. How do you feel when you stand on the beach and watch the waves break in heavy surf? Where do you like to go to watch the waves? Why do you think watching surf makes you feel the way it does? Do you agree with Beston that the sound of the ocean is the most awesome, beautiful and varied of the three elemental voices? (The rain, the wind and the ocean) Why or why not?
2. You can almost hear the ocean as Beston describes it. Point out some of the many specific sound words he uses. How does he describe the three different sounds made by a wave breaking?
3. Explain the metaphor Beston uses when he says "the seas are the heart's blood of the earth." What are the waves in this metaphor?
4. Point out the different ways Beston tries to describe the blueness of the ocean and sky on a clear day.
5. Explain how Beston uses personification to show how the waves roll in fighting a strong breeze (last paragraph, second section).
6. What forces does Beston say mingle in the surf of a storm?
7. Point out all the specific verbs Beston uses to capture the exciting action of waves breaking in a storm (Third paragraph, section III, beginning "Many forces mingle in the surf of a storm").

Writing Activities

1. Think about the interconnections of the various creatures and their environment that Rachel Carson revealed in her chapter. Choose a small area to study, such as your garden, your back yard, your birdfeeder and the area around it, or a small area of woods. By careful observation figure out how the living things in your area are related to each other and their environment. Then write a description of what happens there during a short time span, such as a half an hour, showing the actions and interactions of the different creatures. Use the methods for effective description we pointed out in the writing by Carson and Beston, referring to the discussion questions and the selections for guidance.
2. Re-read Beston's description of the three basic sounds of a breaker in fair weather in the middle section. Then re-read Carson's three paragraphs on the sounds on the island in the night, beginning "There were few sounds that night except those of the water and the water birds." Then go to a beach, a marsh, a rocky overlook, a coastal pond or some other suitable spot and sit there for a half hour. Take a notebook and write down every sound you hear, describing it as accurately as possible. Then go home and write up your description to hand in. Try to make it capture your experience by using the methods for effective description we examined in the discussion questions on each selection. Refer to the questions and the reading selections for help in using these methods.
3. Choose a scene with a dominant color other than blue. Examples: a sunset from a beach, a cloudy day in November, a spring morning, a late afternoon in fall in the woods or the marsh, etc. Re-read Beston's attempt to capture "blueness." Describe your scene as vividly as you can, focusing on the color as the central theme, trying in as many ways as possible to capture the different shades and effects it has.

VII. Adventures Novels With A Coastal Setting

To The Teacher

Robinson Crusoe, Treasure Island, and The Swiss Family Robinson are three fiction classics portraying exciting adventures on deserted tropical islands. This is coastal life at its most exotic, and these three novels have the imaginative power to have appealed to generations of young people and to continue to transport readers to their faraway coasts. The vocabulary and reading level of these older novels may be too difficult for some students however, and so a more recent and easier novel is included, called *Sea Fever*. Much less exotic, the coastal setting of *Sea Fever* seems very familiar, almost as if it were Rhode Island, although the story actually takes place on the Essex coast of England. But all four novels are engrossing adventures and inextricably tied to life on the coast.

The teacher can tell the students a little about the novels at the beginning of the unit, so that each student can choose a novel and begin reading it. All are readily available in school and local libraries. The students can read the novels at home during the unit, to finish by a specified date. Then they can take a brief written quiz on the novel, after which the teacher can meet with each of the four book groups to go over the discussion questions. The discussion questions emphasize the basic elements of each novel. During the time the teacher is meeting with the different groups, the students in the other groups could work on their choice of the writing activities that accompany each novel.

Guides For The Adventure Novels

● ROBINSON CRUSOE, by Daniel Defoe.

Summary:

Robinson Crusoe was written by Defoe in 1719. The story is based on the experience of Alexander Selkirk, who was stranded on one of the Juan Fernandez Islands, off the coast of Chile. He lived there in solitude for four and a half years, until rescued by an English ship. Defoe, a journalist, was fascinated by Selkirk's adventure, and interviewed him to learn about it first-hand. But the story Defoe created for Robinson Crusoe came mostly from his own life and imagination.

Robinson Crusoe left home to go to sea, against the wishes and advice of his parents. He was rebellious and eager for adventure. But right from the first, his adventures led to difficulties. His first voyage led to shipwreck; on the next one he was captured by Morish pirates and made a slave. After two years, he escaped by boat and was picked up by a kind Spanish captain who took him to Brazil, where he bought a plantation which prospered admirably. But once more he ventured on a sea voyage and this time was shipwrecked in the Caribbean. He swam to a nearby island, and found to his despair that he was the only survivor and that the island was deserted. He salvaged as much as he could from the wreck, and with these things and much determination and ingenuity, he forged a fairly comfortable life for himself. However the loneliness was almost unbearable for him at first. Then he became very ill, and upon his recovery turned to God and felt comforted and grateful for the life he could lead, feeling he was now a better man than he had been when in society. For many years he lived in peace, planting grain, raising goats, learning pottery, carpentry, tailoring, basketry and many other skills to provide for himself.

After eleven years he discovered a footprint on the sand and soon learned to his horror and revulsion that cannibals occasionally visited the island to celebrate victory over an enemy by eating their prisoners. At first he felt compelled to execute the cannibals, but gradually he came to a realization that their practice was culturally accepted and not a deliberate act of savagery, and that it was not up to him to act as their judge. After several years of living with some worry over his fate

if the natives discovered him, Crusoe was able to rescue a native about to be devoured. This was Friday, who became his faithful and devoted servant. Eventually Crusoe and Friday were rescued from the island by an English ship captain after they helped him recover his ship from mutineers. Robinson Crusoe returned to society after twenty-seven years on the island.

The story is written in the first person, as if Robinson Crusoe himself were telling it. Defoe wrote it over one hundred years before the modern novel form took definite shape, so it differs from the novel as we know it. Crusoe is the only character who is more than one dimensional. The author intrudes frequently to have Crusoe moralize about his situation, and his tone may seem overly sentimental at times to the modern reader. There are also far too many coincidences for easy credibility. The style and much of the vocabulary is, of course, old fashioned, being 18th century, but that is part of its charm. If we read the novel as a reflection of its time, both in style and outlook, it is a fascinating picture.

Any edition would be suitable, but if the teacher has a chance to order copies, the Reader's Enrichment Series edition is highly recommended. It contains a Reader's Supplement with biographical material, historical background, discussion of the author's style, character analysis, suggestions for student writing practice, and vocabulary aids. The edition is: Robinson Crusoe: Reader's Enrichment Series, Daniel Defoe, Washington Square Press, New York, 1968.

Quiz for Robinson Crusoe: (The answers to these and the other quiz questions are written as fragments for the sake of brevity, but the teacher will probably want to ask that students answer in complete sentences.)

1. What misfortunes did Crusoe endure before being shipwrecked on the island? (He was shipwrecked on his first voyage off the coast of England, and was captured by Moorish pirates and made a slave on his second voyage.)
2. Where did he sleep the first night on the island? (Up in a tree because of his fear of wild animals and natives)
3. What did Crusoe do during the first two weeks on the island? (Salvaged as much as he could from the wreck)
4. What living accommodations did Robinson Crusoe devise? (He built a fortress, which he called a castle, part of which was a cave and part an elaborate tent fenced around by a wall of stakes, which eventually grew into trees. He had another home on the other side of the island similarly fenced in, which he called his bower, or country house.)

5. Why didn't Crusoe leave the island in the small boat he built? (He attempted to but decided the dangers of currents and shoals were too great.)
6. What animals did Crusoe tame and raise? (Goats)
7. How did he meet Friday? (He saved him from being devoured by cannibals who had captured him.)
8. Why did the English ship that eventually rescued Crusoe come to the island? (Mutineers had taken over and planned to maroon the captain and two others.)

Discussion Questions for Robinson Crusoe:
(For the group to discuss with the teacher as leader)

1. When he fell into misfortune, Robinson Crusoe felt he was being punished for having gone against the wishes of his parents in going to sea in the first place. Why did they object to his going to sea? Do you think he should have gone along with their wishes about what sort of life he should live as an adult?
2. When Robinson Crusoe first discovers the natives are practicing cannibalism on the island he is revolted and considers them evil. How does his attitude change? (The teacher will probably need to explain why this degree of tolerance is remarkable for the 18th century, a time of absolutes.)
3. Defoe frequently uses the device of foreshadowing to hint at what is to come and thus keep the reader's interest up. Cite several examples.
4. Written in the 18th century, Defoe's book reflects many practices, attitudes, and ideas of the period. From what is shown in the book, what can you tell about attitudes toward slavery? piracy? religious beliefs or views of God? view of nature? (The teacher can help the students to see how Defoe's 18th century view of nature was different from the romantic view in the 19th century or today. Crusoe saw the island (nature) as disolate, horrid, good only as it could serve the purposes of man. There was no sense of nature as beautiful and valuable in and of itself.)
5. Describe Robinson Crusoe as a person. Show how he changes during the book. What are his strengths, talents, weaknesses? What does he value? Why does he survive?

6. The other characters in the book are one dimensional. Explain how and why? How does the way the story is told (by Crusoe) influence what we learn of other characters. Consider for example, the lack of dialogue and lack of omnipotence.
7. One of the weaknesses of the book is that so many things depend on coincidence. Why does this detract from the book? Cite several examples of coincidence you found as you read.
8. One of the strengths of the book is Defoe's sense of humor. Find some examples of the humorous touch which comes through when Robinson Crusoe describes himself or some situations.
9. Robinson Crusoe struggles against qualities within himself, such as loneliness and fear. He also struggles against nature and to some extent other men. Explain both sides of these three conflicts and show how they are resolved. Which is the major conflict of the book? Why?

Writing Activities for Robinson Crusoe:
(Each student choose one)

1. One of the reasons Defoe's writing is so vivid is that he uses many details to describe a scene or situation. Also, the words he chooses for the details are concrete ones, that call a specific image to mind. Reread his description of the scene when he entered a dark cave and discovered two "shining eyes of some creature," which turned out to be a dying old goat. (pp.184-185 in the Reader's Enrichment Series edition, cited above) Then write your own description of yourself or someone else entering a dark room or other place and finding someone or something else there. Use details and concrete words to make the reader see and experience what you describe.
2. Write an essay on loneliness. What is it? What does it feel like? When do you feel it? What helps? How much loneliness is necessary? What is the difference between loneliness and solitude? Why is some solitude necessary for our well being? Other ideas and feelings about loneliness?

● TREASURE ISLAND, by Robert Louis Stevenson

Summary:

Treasure Island is the popular story of pirates and good men, which, though too violent for some tastes, has fascinated young readers for so long now to have proven itself a classic of adventure fiction.

The novel is set in the 18th century and opens on the coast of England, at a quiet inn where a pirate named Billy Bones comes to hide out. Jim Hawkins, the teenage son of the innkeeper, tells the story as he lived and observed it. After Billy Bones spends a few tortured months restlessly walking the beach, he meets an end befitting a scheming drunken pirate. Immediately his former cohorts appear to attempt to find the map he had had, showing the location of the fabulous treasure buried on a faraway island. The map is, however, in the hands of Jim, who shows it to the family doctor and his friend Squire Trelawney. They eagerly make plans to fit out a ship and launch an expedition to recover the treasure. However, they have unwittingly hired several of Bone's old shipmates, including the infamous Long John Silver. It is Jim who discovers this truth just before they land on the island, thus saving them all from death at the hands of the greedy pirates. Once on the island the struggle between the pirates, led by Long John Silver, and the good men, led by the ship's captain and the doctor, is cleverly worked out and filled with suspense, but is also very bloody. When Jim and his friends finally sail triumphantly off with the treasure, one feels that they truly deserve it.

The simple form of this novel lends itself to a discussion of its elements. The character of Long John Silver is the most interesting, enigmatic, and well-developed in the novel, though Jim too emerges with many sides and his actions seem motivated by his youth and circumstances. The setting is vividly sketched and necessary to the plot. The plot unfolds clearly and builds steadily to a climax, after which everything is resolved.

Quiz for Treasure Island:

1. Who was Billy Bones? (Billy Bones was an old pirate who had been a cohort of Long John Silver and the other pirates in the novel. He had managed to steal the map showing where a fabulous treasure was buried and was thus in hiding from his former companions. He came to stay at Jim's father's inn, where he finally died.)

2. Who hired the crew of the ship to recover the treasure?
(Squire Trelawney)
3. When and where did Jim discover the plan of the mutineers.
(Just before they landed on the island, from what he overheard when he was in the apple barrel)
4. Who was Ben Gunn? (A man who had been marooned on the island 3 years before, and who helped Jim and his friends defeat the pirates)
5. What happened when the pirates found the place they expected the treasure to be? (They were surprised and furious to find it gone, since Ben Gunn had moved it. Then the others ambushed them, and rescued Jim.)
6. What happened to the pirates in the end? (They were marooned on the island.)
7. What happened to Long John Silver in the end? (Jim and his friends took him with them on the ship home, but he jumped ship in a Spanish American port.)

Discussion Questions for Treasure Island:

1. What kind of person is Jim? What are his strengths? Weaknesses? Does he seem believable to you? Why or why not? When does he show poor judgement? What are the results each time? Which results seem probable, which improbable?
2. Long John Silver is a fascinating character. Why? What sides of him do you see? What was remarkable about him? Was he at all admirable? What showed him to be a true villain?
3. The episodes on Treasure Island showing the conflict between Jim and his friends and the pirates contain a lot of violence. How does that affect you? Do you think Stevenson over-emphasizes the violence? Why or why not? What does he seem to feel about it? Explain.
4. Explain the effect of the coastal setting in the beginning of the novel. What is the function of the setting as it is portrayed on the island?
5. What is the climax of the story? How does Stevenson build suspense?

Writing Activities for Treasure Island:
(Each student choose one)

1. Write a character study of Long John Silver. Start with a physical description. Then try to figure out what motivates him. What does he value, think important? What does he fear? How does he deal with people? Why does he survive? What are his strengths and weaknesses? What makes him interesting as a character?
2. Imagine that Jim runs into Long John Silver in a tavern fifteen years after the novel ends. Write the scene you think might take place, using dialogue.

● THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON, by Johann Wyss.

Summary:

The Swiss Family Robinson was published in Zurich nearly one hundred years after Robinson Crusoe, which inspired it. It is the story of a family shipwrecked on an uninhabited island near New Guinea. A father, mother, and their four sons escaped their ship wedged on rocks in a makeshift vessel constructed out of tubs. They salvaged some fowl and supplies and landed on the edge of a small bay. There they set up a camp. When they explored the island they found coconuts, natural salt, calabash trees which bore gourds suitable for dishes and spoons, but no other survivors of the shipwreck. After wild jackals attacked and were driven off by the dogs who had accompanied them from the ship, they decided to look for a more secure home. First however, they salvaged all they could from the ship, planted seeds and fenced in the ship's cattle. Inland they found huge mangrove trees, where they built a marvelous treehouse they called Falconhurst. With ingenuity, luck, and organization they continued to build a comfortable and interesting life for themselves. During the rainy season they moved to a roomy cavern. Over the years they created a productive plantation where they raised a large herd of cattle and produced candles, rubber, pitch, and tar from the sap of different trees they found, and even made clothes woven from wild New Zealand flax.

Ten years had passed when the eldest son Fritz, then twenty-five, discovered a girl named Jenny Montrose, who had been shipwrecked on another part of the island three years before. Jenny came to live with the family, and all grew to love her.

One day there was the sound of cannon shots, which turned out to be from an English ship driven off course. By a coincidence so great as to be almost ridiculous, the captain had been searching for Jenny, who was the daughter of a friend. A family among the passengers on the ship was so taken with the island and the life the Robinsons led there, that they decided to remain. Then it was a time of decision for the Robinson family. The parents wanted to remain, but Father Robinson left the decision up to each of the boys. Fritz decided to return to Europe with Jenny to marry her, and the youngest son decided to return to attend a university. The other two sons remained on the island, where eventually a small colony developed and flourished.

The story is related in the first person as if Father Robinson were telling it. Some of its weaknesses are evident even in the sketchy summary above. For example, there is almost no sense of difficulty, loss, inner struggle, or conflicts between the family members. The coincidences accumulated with the strokes of luck to an extent that is amusing. The style and tone of the story is often pedantic and moralistic and the attitudes toward women, children, and family roles are, of course, old fashioned. What saves the novel is the undaunted inventiveness of the author in creating solutions for his characters and his obvious relish in spinning such a yarn. If the characters and the story are not believable, such boundless energy and optimism is nevertheless enjoyable to read about. All in all, in spite of its faults the book delights many young readers, who love to imagine themselves in such a contingency and revel in all the clever contrivances devised by the Robinsons to make their lives comfortable.

Quiz for The Swiss Family Robinson:

1. How did the Robinsons reach the island after their ship was wrecked? (They constructed a cumbersome vessel out of eight tubs made out of empty casks. They put themselves, and as many supplies as they could fit into the boat and rowed to shore.)
2. What saved the family when the wild jackals attacked? (Their dogs, who had followed them from the ship, drove the jackals off.)
3. What were Falconhurst and Rockburg? (Falconhurst was the treehouse they built in the roomy branches of a huge mangrove tree. Rockburg was the large dry cavern where the family lived during the rainy season.)
4. What pets did the family have? (A baby monkey, a tame jackal, and an ostrich.)

5. How had Jenny Montrose gotten enough food to eat during the three years she was shipwrecked? (She had trained an albatross to hunt for her.)
6. What was the connection between Jenny and the captain of the English ship that was blown off course to come to the island? (The captain was a friend of Jenny's father, and had promised him he would look for her.)
7. What did the various members of the family decide to do when they had the choice about leaving or staying on the island at the end? (Fritz and Jenny decided to return to England to marry and be with her father before eventually returning to the island. Franz decided to go to Europe to attend a university. The parents and Jack and Ernest chose to remain and live and work on the island.)

Discussion Questions for The Swiss Family Robinson:

1. How did you feel about the characters? Are they believable? Why or why not? What did you like and dislike about them? What do you find out about any inner struggles or conflicts?
2. The story depends on several coincidences and lucky breaks. Point them out. Why is this a weakness of the book?
3. What appeals to you about the book?
4. How would you describe the tone of the book? (Explain that tone means the attitude towards the reader and the topic that the author reveals.)
5. Since the book was written in the early 19th century, you would expect it to reflect attitudes different from ours today. What attitudes seem different? How are the women depicted? (Mrs. Robinson and Jenny Montrose) How does the family operate? What is the relationship between the father and sons? The mother and sons? The father and mother?
6. The father's values are firmly expressed throughout the novel. Cite some of the passages. What does he value? Are your values the same or different? How about your father's values?

Writing Activities for The Swiss Family Robinson:
(Each student choose one)

1. Re-read the descriptions of the construction of a bridge (in chapter 8), the construction of a ladder (in chapter 10), and

and the preparation of the tree house (in Chapter 11). What do you like and dislike about Wyss' description? Now choose an operation you know how to perform (such as catching a fish, building a fence, making a dress or throwing a pot (on a potter's wheel) and describe how you do it. Go step by step and include enough specific details so that your reader can imagine exactly how you perform the operation.

2. Imagine that your family was ship wrecked on an island. Write a short story showing the situation, the action, and the dialogue that might take place during the first few hours of your reaching the island.

● SEA FEVER, by K.M. Peyton

Summary:

Sea Fever is a story of life on the Essex coast of England, the fishermen of the village of Marshfield, and their daily work fishing on their smacks. The story centers on sixteen-year-old Matt Pullen, who works with his father, learning the grueling labor of fishing for a living. When his father is drowned in an accident, Matt takes on the responsibility of supporting his mother, two brothers and two sisters. In addition he must pay for a badly needed new smack to be built. The work is hard and the outlook bleak, when Matt gets a lucky chance to pilot a boat through a tricky course. He is handsomely rewarded for his services, and further, is offered a job aboard a racing yacht to supplement his fishing in the summer and is befriended by the owner's son Francis. Matt meets many new challenges during the months that follow, the most dangerous of which is the power of the malicious Beckett, a fisherman-smuggler who knows that Matt is aware of two of his most unsavory deceptions. But Matt comes through it all, surviving the test of endurance and determination necessary to keep fishing on his own, growing in a friendship with Francis, and through his skill, luck and courage, managing to raise the money to pay for the new smack.

The story is fast-moving and exciting, much easier reading than the other novels in this section. The situation is also much closer to the experience of the students, many of whom have contact with fishermen or their families and can imagine themselves in Matt Pullen's place more easily than Jim Hawkins' or Robinson Crusoe's. But, though a good story, Sea Fever does not have the vivid characterization of the two novels mentioned

above, nor the imaginative power of them or the Swiss Family Robinson. Except for Matt, the characters remain one dimensional. Even with Matt, his stoical resolve and unflinching courage seems to strain belief at times. The villain Beckett is an almost cardboard caricature of evil. The coastal setting is effectively evoked and seems familiar and almost homelike to Rhode Islanders, though it is years ago in England. The novel is skillfully constructed and the teacher can help students to analyze its elements.

Quiz for Sea Fever:

1. What did Matt do when the Seaflower wrecked offshore one night? (He went out with his father, hoping for salvage and risked his life to save the one surviving passenger. Matt left the smack and rowed over to the wreck, climbed up and untied the passenger lashed to the mast, and brought him back. The passenger gave him a 100 pound reward.)
2. Who saw the accident that killed Matt's father, besides Matt? (Beckett, who did nothing to help)
3. What did Uncle Albert want the family to do after Tom Pullen's death? (He wanted them to move to town and live with him, so that he could have a built-in housekeeper and helpers in his store.)
4. Why did Francis admire Matt so much? (Francis saw Matt as a "doer", someone competent to carry on a way of life which Francis saw as romantic and exciting compared to his own comfortable life of study and travel.)
5. What did Matt discover about Beckett the night before the regatta? (He overheard him say that he would purposely lose the race.)
6. How did Matt get the last of the money he needed to pay for the new smack? (He earned it by salvaging the Rose in June, which contained a large quantity of fine French Brandy.)
7. What happened to Beckett in the end? (He fell from the wrecked Rose in June and drowned during a struggle with Matt.)

Discussion Questions for Sea Fever:

1. Describe Matt Pullen as a person. What is important to him? How does he react to his father's death? (At first and as time goes on) What can you tell about his relationship with his family? What character traits apply to him? Do you ever find him not believable? When and why? How does he change during the course of the novel? What do you admire about him?
2. Describe the relationship between Matt and Francis? Why do they like each other? How does each grow through the friendship? What does each learn about the life of the other?
3. How is Mary Pullen trapped by circumstances after her husband dies? What are her choices? Would the situation be different now? Why or why not?
4. Describe the setting. How is it similar to the Rhode Island coast? The date is never specified, but when do you think the story takes place? why?
5. There are several suspenseful episodes in the story. Point out which they are and decide which one is the climax and turning point of the novel.
6. Does Beckett's death seem too convenient? Why or why not? Can you think of an ending you would find more believable? Explain.

Writing Activities for Sea Fever:

Choose one.

1. Think about the friendship between Matt and Francis. Then write an essay about a friendship you have had. How were you and your friend similar or different? What did you each like most about the other? What did you learn through the friendship? Why did it end? How did you feel? Did you change during the friendship? Other ideas about your friendship?
2. Write an essay showing the contrast between Beckett and Matt Pullen. Compare their values, their methods of dealing with people, and their relationship to the community. Use specific examples from the novel to back up your conclusions. Why are they each unbelievable in a different way? What trait or traits do they share? Explain.

VIII. Culminating Activity

To The Teacher

As a culminating activity to encourage students to draw together some of the ideas of the unit and to practice some of the writing skills emphasized, they could write a long essay or short story. The teacher could use this as some measure of what each student has learned in the course of the unit. If desired the essays or stories could be considered for entry in the Coastal Resources Management Council Contest. Essays in that case should be from 800 to 1200 words long. Information about dates and procedure for entering the contest is being sent to English department heads or is available from the Coastal Resources Center, 792-6224.

The teacher can suggest some topics and encourage students to suggest others that would be suitable.

Suggestions For Essay Topics

1. Living on the coast
What makes living on the coast different from living inland? What are coastal people aware of, more than inlanders? What elements are common to coastal life, whether here, in England, on the coast of Mexico, or on a tropical island? (Draw on your reading) What do you value most about living on the coast? What problems do we face in order to preserve our coastal environment and our way of life? What are your ideas about how these problems could be solved? Explain.
2. The life and work of a fisherman (or sailor, or ship captain) in the 19th century and now. Compare the life and work of a fisherman in the 19th century with that of a fisherman now. Briefly describe the life and work of each. What problems do they have that are different? the same? Which would you prefer? Why? Draw on your reading, interviews, discussions, and visit to Mystic, as well as your own thinking. Back up all conclusions with examples and make your writing as vivid and exact as you can.

3. The life and work of a fisherman's (or sailor's or captain's) wife and family in the 19th century and now. Compare the life and work of the wife and family of a fisherman in the 19th century and now. Briefly describe the lives and work of each. What problems do they have that are different? The same? Which time would you prefer? Why? Draw on your reading, interviews, discussions, and visit to Mystic, as well as your own thinking. Support your conclusions with explanations and examples and make your writing as vivid and exact as you can.

4. A short story about life on the coast
Write a short story, drawing on ideas from your reading, discussions in class and outside, visits, and your own experience and imagination. Use what you learned about the basic elements of a short story, novella, or novel to help you to form your story. Figuring out the answers to questions such as the following will help you get started:

Where does the story take place? Depict the setting as specifically and vividly as you can. Make it vital to the action of the story.

Who are the characters? Describe them and have them talk, act and think "in character." Limit the number of main characters to one or two.

What is the problem or conflict?

How does the problem or conflict affect the characters?

How is it solved? What is the turning point?

Who tells the story?

Write a rough draft, then revise and rewrite it using the guidelines for effective writing we studied during the unit.