

Building Language Skills with The Seattle Times

September 24, 2015

Article: "BIG in The Past: Pioneer Days at the Washington State Fair"

Thursday, September 17, 2015 in the e-Edition of The Seattle Times, Sports page C8

Pre-Reading:

Before reading the article, read the title and look at the photographs. When were the pioneer days? How do you think pioneer days were relevant to the Washington State Fair?

Vocabulary:

As you read, look for the following vocabulary words that appear in today's article. Write down what you think the words mean based on the "context," or how the words are used in the sentence in which they appear. Next, look up the definitions in a dictionary and see how close your guess was for each word.

promote

horticultural

auxiliary

suffrage

grandstand

vaudeville

fiddler

restored

ventured

prospectors

exploited

churning

sluice

stunts

cowpoke

Comprehension:

1. How were the men who created the Washington State Fair pioneers?
2. What was the original mission of the Washington State Fair?
3. What was the first official fair “gate”?
4. What was the admission price in the first year of the Fair?
5. When did the Fair become a six-day event?
6. Why was a police force brought in in 1908?
7. Why did the Fair not open until the month of October in 1917?
8. What is the significance of the merry-go-round?
9. How was the Fair’s first elected mayor, Ezra Meeker, connected to the Klondike Gold Rush?
10. What role did Seattle play in the Klondike Gold Rush?
11. What part of Seattle were businesses which sold goods for the Yukon located in?
12. In what areas of the current Fair can you learn about the early days of the Pacific Northwest?

Post-Reading:

Read the following passage from the article and discuss the following questions in a group:

“The Valley Fair was renamed ‘The Western Washington Fair Association’ with new special attractions including horse racing, auto polo, vaudeville acts, a three-ring circus, high wire acts, log rolling and fiddler contests.”

Have you attended the Washington State Fair? If so, what exhibits did you see? How were they similar to or different from those at the 1913 fair listed above? If you have not been to the Fair, what would you like to see there? How do you think the Fair has changed the most over the past 100 years? What do you think has remained the same?

Building Language Skills:

Read the following passage, and complete the activity below:

“On July 17, 1897, the steamship Portland from Alaska docked in Seattle announcing that prospectors aboard the ship had struck gold in the Yukon Territory of Canada. Newspapers gradually spread the word. Soon, Seattle was poised in a perfect position to lure those who wanted to strike it rich to stock up on supplies.”

Research the Klondike Gold Rush. Use maps to review the route prospectors took. In addition to what you learned in the article, what did Seattle businesses do to profit from the Klondike Gold Rush? What products did they sell? Who did they target? What were the effects on the population of Seattle? How is this time in history similar to the effects of the current booming tech industry in Seattle? Summarize and reflect on your findings in a report you share with a group or the class.

Comprehension Question Answers:

1. Businessmen, farmers and residents of the Puyallup Valley were pioneers because they worked together to create the event.
2. The Fair was created to promote and educate residents on the local, agricultural, horticultural, dairy, stock-raising, mining and manufacturing industries.
3. A ten-foot fence surrounded the fair similar to a gate.
4. The admission price at the first year was \$1. Newspapers writers were admitted for free.
5. The Fair became a six-day event in 1905.
6. In 1908 the Fair's popularity was spreading so a police force was brought in to handle the crowds.
7. The opening was delayed because of World War I.
8. The first merry-go-round from 1923 arrived on a horse-drawn wagon base. This same merry-go-round has been restored and is now located in front of Expo Hall.
9. Ezra Meeker shipped food products to Dawson City in the height of the Gold Rush.
10. Seattle merchants exploited the rumor that prospectors bound for the Yukon needed a year's supply of food. Thus, encouraging them to stock up in Seattle in preparation for the long journey.
11. These businesses were located in Pioneer Square along First and Second Avenue.
12. You can learn about the early days of the Pacific Northwest at Pioneer Farm and Timber Gulch.