

ANCIENTADVENTURES

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# ADVENTUREMINE

A Guide to Writing and Helping

Others to Write

Choose Your Own Adventure Stories

For use in the classroom or homeschool

by

Jay D'Ambrosio

*If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind. - Kahlil Gibran*

## ANCIENTADVENTURES

Each adventure has been carefully constructed based on historical facts and situations. They are designed to be read a group of students. They provide a fun and exciting way for children to learn about history.

Directions:

1. Read the introduction to the story you select.
2. At the end of the introduction, read the choices available. Allow the students to vote on the direction in which the story will go. The majority vote wins. Read the letter of the choice they have selected.
3. If an attack/defense situation arises and a coin toss is required, ask a student at random to call heads or tails. If the call is correct, read the WIN scenario, if not then read the LOSE scenario.
4. If a story's path leads you to an unsatisfying end, you have the option of starting over.
5. If you have any questions concerning the adventure series, email them to [jsd71@yahoo.com](mailto:jsd71@yahoo.com), or visit our website at <http://jaydambrosio.tripod.com>
6. Have fun!

## ADVENTURES CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

### HUNTER GATHERER HIJINX

You are a young boy from a Paleolithic hunter-gatherer tribe in western Africa. In this adventure, students will learn about the hunter-gatherer lifestyle, as well as many tribal beliefs and customs still common to many tribal societies today. (8.00 US)

### A MESS IN MESOPOTAMIA

You are a young person from the great Sumerian city-state of Lagash. In this adventure ,the students will learn about the Sumerian city-states and their inhabitants.

### EGYPTSHMEGYPT

You are a young person from lower Egypt during the Old Kingdom. In this adventure, the students will learn about the construction of the pyramids and everyday Egyptian life.

- Includes ancient language decoder chart.

### HIEROGLYPHIC HORSEPLAY

You are a young person studying to be an Egyptian scribe. In this adventure, the students will learn about the ancient Egyptian writing system, as well as Egyptian views concerning the afterlife.

- Includes ancient language decoder chart.

### GREECE LIGHTNING

You are a young person attempting to recover a golden statue of Athena from some dangerous men. In this adventure, the students will learn about ancient Greek customs and beliefs, as well as early democracy, architecture, art, sports, and writing.

### ADVENTURE MINE

This packet contains all 5 of the adventures mentioned above, as well as an easy to follow, step-by-step guide to writing your own adventures, research supporting the concepts behind adventure-learning, and national social studies standards met through the use of these activities. A plan for teaching your students to write their own adventures is also included.

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## SECTION ONE:

### WHAT IS A "CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE"?

A teacher affects eternity, he can never tell where his influence stops. - Henry B. Adams

A man may die, nations may rise and fall, but an idea lives on. - John F. Kennedy

Good teaching is one-fourth preparation and three fourths theater. - Gail Godwin

"Choose your own adventure" stories are an exciting and interactive way in which to engage your students in the learning process. "So what is a 'Choose your own adventure'?", you may ask. It is a story that contains several possible endings and paths. Throughout the story, students are given choices that determine the course of the story and the outcome. These stories can be designed to focus on the terms and concepts of almost any curriculum. Research findings indicate that giving students choices in an activity leads to more effective learning (Johnston & Allington, 1991). I have discovered this personally in my own classroom. I have written these adventure stories for my seventh grade ancient history class. In this case, the stories were centered on the people, places, and events of the ancient past. The students have a more in depth knowledge of the historical setting and events because their attention is riveted on the story and the choices they are making. Researchers have learned that students are motivated by activities that are interactive, fun, personally meaningful (eg., McCombs, 1991, 1993, 1994). These stories would be a fun and exciting way to incorporate national, state, and local social studies, math, science, or language arts standards. By following a simple, step-by-step, process, the "Choose your own adventure" stories could easily be written by both teacher and student. In fact, studies show that a key factor in motivating students to learn is allowing them to experience a feeling of control and creative freedom over what they are doing (Deci & Ryan, 1991). copyright Jay D'Ambrosio, 1998 Based on the 1989 National Council of the Social Sciences Task Force on Scope and Sequence, it becomes clear that "Choose your own adventure" stories are an excellent way in which to meet nationally recognized social studies standards. The following is an example of the NCSS standards that can be met by stories of this type:

## ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

### Acquiring Information

#### I. Reading Skills

A. Detect cause and effect relationships

B. Read for a variety of purposes; critically, analytically, to predict outcomes, to answer a question, to form an opinion, to skim for facts

## II. Vocabulary

- A. Use context clues to gain meaning
- B. Recognize and understand an increasing number of social studies terms

## III. Study Skills

- A. Use appropriate source of information
- B. Make outline of topic
- C. Prepare summaries
- D. Make timelines
- E. Take notes
- F. Keep records
- G. Listen for information
- H. Follow directions

## Organizing and Using Information

### I. Thinking Skills

- A. Identify relevant factual material
- B. Sense relationship between items of factual information
- C. Group data in categories according to appropriate criteria
- D. Place in proper sequence
  - 1. order of occurrence
  - 2. order of importance
- E. Place data in tabular form: charts, graphs, illustrations
- F. State relationships between categories of information
- G. Note cause and effect relationships

- H. Predict likely outcomes, based on factual information
- I. Form a simple organization of key ideas, related to a topic
- J. Separate topic into major components according to appropriate criteria
- K. Examine critically relationships between and among elements of a topic
- L. Restate major ideas of a complex topic in concise form
- M. Propose a new plan of operation, create a new system, or devise a futuristic scheme based on available information
- N. Reinterpret events in terms of what might have happened, and show the likely effects on subsequent events
- O. Communicate orally and in writing

## II. Decision-Making Skills

- A. Identify a situation in which a decision is required
- B. Secure needed factual information relevant to making the decision
- C. Recognize the values implicit in the situation and the issues that flow from them
- D. Identify alternative courses of action and predict the likely consequences of each
- E. Make a decision based on the data obtained
- F. Take action to implement the decision

## III. Metacognitive Skills

- A. Select an appropriate strategy to solve a problem
- B. Self monitor one's thinking process

## Interpersonal Relationships and Social Participation

### I. Personal Skills

- A. Express personal convictions

### II. Group Interaction Skills

A. Contribute to the development of a supportive climate in groups

B. Serve as a leader or follower

C. Assist in setting goals for the group

III. Social and Political Participation Skills

A. Work individually or with others to decide on an appropriate course of action

("In Search of a Scope and Sequence for Social Studies.", *Social Education*, 53(6), October 1989, 376-385)

These are but a few of the national social studies standards that are met through the use of these adventure stories. By using your imagination and creativity, you will be able to find new ways to meet your specific district or state goals. In the next section, you will learn about some practical ways in which you can use "Choose your own adventures" in your own classroom.

SECTION TWO:

HOW CAN YOU USE A "CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE" IN YOUR CLASSROOM?

A life without cause is a life without effect. - Barbarella

Adventure is not outside a man, it is within. - Jonathan Swift

The people themselves need to learn simplicity. - Lao Tzu

"Choose your own adventure" stories allow teachers to capture the imagination of their students while reinforcing terms and concepts learned in the classroom. As a teaching strategy, few activities can match the potential of these stories to tap the hidden talent and ideas of young learners. Below are several interesting ways in which a "Choose your own adventure" can be integrated into your classroom.

WHOLE CLASS READING

The Whole Class Reading method can be applied to a classroom with as many as forty students. The teacher, following the step-by-step process, creates a "Choose your own adventure" based on the terms and concepts currently being studied in the course. The teacher then reads the story to the students. When it is time for the students to make a choice to affect the story's outcome, the teacher reads the options, and then asks for a vote by show of hands. The majority decides which way to go. However, if the story takes an unfavorable turn, you may always go back and make a different choice. I have experienced a great deal of success in my own classroom using this method.

## STUDENT ENDING

When using the Student Ending method, the teacher creates an adventure, however, when the adventure is about to conclude, the teacher then turns it over to the students. The ending is then written individually by each student. The students can then share their own endings with the rest of the class.

## CHAIN REACTION

In the chain reaction method, you may want to divide the students up into groups of four or five. One student writes the introduction to the story and finishes their section with two choices. One student writes the results of choice A, another the results of choice B, and so on, each taking turns writing. The stories are then shared with the rest of the class.

## INDIVIDUAL STUDENT WRITING

When using this method, the student follows the same step-by-step method used by the teacher to write their very own "Choose your own adventure". This method will most likely present the greatest challenge to a student, but will also be something of which the student can be proud. Before assigning this as a project for your students, it would be a good idea to write an adventure of your own. This will allow you to become more familiar with the process.

There are many other possibilities for stories like these. Be creative. With a little thought and imagination, you'll be able to find the method that works best with your classroom.

## SECTION THREE:

### SOME SAMPLE "CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURES"

It concerns us to know the purposes we seek in life, for then, like archers aiming at a definite mark, we shall be more likely to attain what we want. - Aristotle

The ear is nothing more than a door. - proverb of Surinam

To give away is to make provision for the future. - Sotho tribe (Africa)

In this section, we will look at some sample "Choose your own adventures" in order to better understand the concept. Included in this section is a story focusing on the life of a young person Mesopotamia, two stories based on the lives of fishermen and scribes in ancient Egypt, and a fast-paced story featuring an exciting day in the life of a young person from ancient Greece. The final story showcases the life of a young boy in an ancient African tribe. In these stories you will see different ways you can enhance your own adventures. The following story is set in the desert city of Ur in ancient Mesopotamia:

(CONTINUE ON TO "A MESS IN MESOPOTAMIA")