



# ATCHAFALAYA BASIN ARTIFACT PACKET: STEAMBOATS IN THE BASIN

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b><i>Student Packet</i></b> .....	3
Reading.....	4
Glossary.....	6
Reading Assessment.....	7
Artifact Analysis.....	8
Primary Source Analysis.....	9
A Trip Through the Atchafalaya.....	11
<b><i>Teacher’s Guide</i></b> .....	13
Framework Standards.....	13
Compelling Question.....	14
Contents Overview.....	14
Reading Outline.....	16
Reading Assessment Key.....	17
Glossary.....	20
Artifact Analysis Key.....	20
Primary Source Analysis Key.....	22
Summative Assessment Key.....	25
Instructional Strategies.....	25
References.....	30
Attachments.....	31

*Iberville Museum*

PLAQUEMINE  
LOUISIANA

**STEAMBOATS IN  
THE ATCHAFALAYA**

Name:

Date:

Section:

# READING

The steamboat was one of many technological advances that influenced the culture and economy of Louisiana during the 19th century. As a result, it became an essential vessel. People used steamboats to transport goods and people throughout the state. Steamboats first traveled the Mississippi River as early as 1812. But by 1819, steamers, like the *Louisianais*, began navigating the Atchafalaya Basin. In April 1825, the steamboat *Louisville* was the first steamboat to enter Bayou Plaquemine from the Mississippi and travel to St. Martinville. The accomplishment reduced travel time and shipping costs. By the 1830s, people used steamboats to transport food supplies, cotton, lumber, animal pelts, livestock, and Spanish moss. They were also used to deliver news and mail throughout the Basin and Bayou Teche.

Steamboats were ideal for Louisiana's inland waterways for several reasons. Unlike previous cargo and passenger boats, steamboats did not rely on wind or muscle power to propel through the water. The use of steam as fuel made these vessels swift and reliable against rough water conditions. They could also navigate through the winding and narrow passages of Louisiana's shallow **bayous**. However, steamboats had several limitations. Waterways were plagued with log jams, sand bars, and **shoals**. These, combined with violent thunderstorms stemming from the Gulf of Mexico, severely damaged or even sank many of the vessels traveling through the Basin. The average lifespan of a Louisiana steamer was only three years. Travel routes were also dependent on water levels, which varied with the season. Both highwaters and low waters were dangerous for different reasons.

The workforce of steamboats relied on a mix of different positions to operate smoothly. Steamboat crews consisted of enslaved Black people, Free Black workers, and white, Native American, or European crew members. Views on race at the time limited the positions a person could have based on the color of their skin. The ship's cargo was the responsibility of deckhands. They supervised the moving and storing of a ship's freight. Deckhands were assisted by **roustabouts**, who were hired at a dock to load and unload cargo. Firemen were responsible for feeding either wood or coal into the furnaces of a steamer. It was the most common position for African Americans. Finally, stewards were in charge of passenger care. They also supervised a ship's ensemble of kitchen workers, waitstaff, and chambermaids. Working aboard a steamer was no easy feat, as crewmates worked in physically demanding positions in the dangerous environment of the Basin. Many crewmembers were injured or killed yearly due to harsh weather conditions, exposure to the elements, loading accidents, disease, or drowning.

Despite the drawbacks of steamboats, they were essential to the rapid development of Louisiana's **commerce** in the 19th century. This is especially true for the state's sugar plantation systems by the 1840s. Enslaved persons were brought alongside planting equipment and supplies through routes in the heart of the state, like the Red River. Those living in the Basin would come to depend on these vessels for the import and export of goods, travel, leisure, and communication.

# GLOSSARY

**bayou**

**commerce**

**roustabout**

**shoal**

**spoke**

# READING ASSESSMENT

**Instructions:** Answer each question to the best of your ability using specific information and evidence from the reading.

1. Why were steamboats used in the Atchafalaya? What were their advantages and disadvantages? How did the Basin become depend on steamboats over time?

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2. Discuss the dynamics of steamboat crews. What were the responsibilities of different crew positions? What challenges did crewmembers face?

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Name:

Date:

# ARTIFACT ANALYSIS



This ship's wheel, also known as a helm, is from a Louisiana steamboat. It dates back to 1890, possibly earlier. The captain or helmsmen used the helm to steer the vessel and control its course. This wheel is made from wood, with eight **spokes** that meet at the brass center. Because of its large size, it would often require more than one person to operate it.

Those that piloted the steamers were required to learn more than their route. They had to know the locations of snags, rocks, sandbars, landmarks, the water's depth, and the strength of the current. But as soon as they learned these vital facts, some changed. From the feel of the boat, the color of the water, and ripples and swirls, a pilot had to deduce new information about what lay ahead. They put this knowledge to use day and night, in all kinds of weather and in all seasons.

Specifications:

- Diameter - 43 inches
- Spoke Length - 6 inches

What type of artifact is it?

photograph	object
document	map
other	

What material is it made from?

bone	leather	plastic	fabric
pottery	glass	metal	wood
paper	stone	other	

How old is it?

Who used it and what was it used for?

What is the historical context of the artifact? How does it connect to the Basin?

What can you conclude about technology of the time?

What can you learn from this artifact that you might not learn elsewhere?

What other types of sources could you use to better understand the artifact?

Name:

Date:

# PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS

## DOCUMENTS

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St. Martinville, April 16, 1825

The steamboat Louisville very unexpectedly made her appearance in the river Teche last Monday, having entered our country by the way of bayou Plaquemine. This arrival forms a new era in the history of our section of country. Hitherto the opinion has been that the navigation between Plaquemine and the mouth of the Teche, was impracticable for vessels of this description. The enterprise of capt. Curry has destroyed this illusion, and steamboats will soon be as common in the Teche as on Red River.

We are pleased to hear that Mr. Joseph Theall, of St. Mary, intends buying one half of the Louisville, and will keep her in our trade. In doing so he will deserve, and no doubt receive, a preference when the freighting season arrives.

Capt. Curry expressed, when here, a belief that he could bring his boat as far up as this place. With a very small expenditure in cutting away a few trees, this could no doubt be effected at all seasons.

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[ Printed in *Louisiana State Gazette* (New Orleans, LA), April 22, 1825.]

What kind of document is it? Select all that apply.

advertisement  
magazine  
speech

email  
newspaper  
telegram

govt. document  
patent  
other

journal/diary entry  
press release  
letter  
report

1. Describe the document in your own words:

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Who created the source?

Who read or received it?

When was it created?

Where is it from?

2. What is the historical context of this source?

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What is the purpose of this source? Is it to persuade, to inform, communicate, etc?

Are there any words, phrases, or people that you don't recognize? What information can you infer from the source?

3. How does this source connect to the steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin?

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What other types of sources could you use to help you understand this one?



Group #:

Steamboat Name:

Journal Entry 1

Journal Entry 2

Journal Entry 3

**UNIT TWO: Louisiana Purchase through the Battle of New Orleans**  
**UNIT THREE: Antebellum Era through Reconstruction**

**TOPIC ONE: Louisiana Purchase**  
**TOPIC ONE: Antebellum Louisiana**

**C3 FRAMEWORK STANDARDS**

**D2.His.1.6-8.** Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts

**D2.His.2.6-8.** Classify series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.

**D2.His.3.6-8.** Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant.

**D2.His.4.6-8.** Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

**D2.His.9.6-8.** Classify the kinds of historical sources used in a secondary interpretation.

**D2.His.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources

**D2.His.13.6-8.** Evaluate the relevancy and utility of a historical source based on information such as maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

**D2.His.14.6-8.** Explain multiple causes and effects of events and developments in the past.

**D2.His.15.6-8.** Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

**D2.His.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.

**LOUISIANA BELIEVES STANDARDS**

**8.2.2** Explain the importance of the Mississippi River as it relates to historical events throughout Louisiana's history.

**8.4.3** Explain ways in which inventions and technological advances have affected Louisiana's culture.

**8.9.3** Analyze and explain factors affecting the production and allocation of goods and services in Louisiana, the United States, and the world.

**8.10.3** Describe historical factors influencing the economic growth, interdependence, and development of Louisiana.

**8.1.1** Produce clear and coherent writing for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences by conducting historical research, evaluating a broad variety of primary and secondary sources, determining the meaning of words and phrases from historical texts, and recognizing varied points of view within historical context.

**COMPELLING QUESTION:** How did steamboats of the Atchafalaya Basin help develop business and commerce in the area and throughout the state of Louisiana?

**SUPPORTING QUESTIONS:**

1. What were the advantages and disadvantages of steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin?
2. What were the different positions and responsibilities of crew members aboard steamboats?
3. How did the Basin come to rely on the use of steamboats in the 19th century?

**CONTENTS OVERVIEW**

- Reading (Instructional Strategies 1-3 and Summative Assessment)
  - Reading about steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin in the 19th century.
  - Appropriate reading level for 8th grade.
- Reading Assessment (Instructional Strategy 1)
  - Two short answer questions based on the compelling and supporting questions for students to answer with knowledge from the reading.
- Glossary
  - Relevant vocabulary to the packet for students to fill out with the assistance of the educator.
- About the Artifact (Instructional Strategy 2)
  - The accompanying artifact of the packet (steamboat wheel) with a picture and its relevant information.
- Artifact Analysis (Instructional Strategy 2)
  - Analysis section for the artifact of the packet (steamboat wheel) to be filled out by the educator and students as a class.
- Primary Source (Instructional Strategy 3)
  - The accompanying primary source of the packet [*Louisiana State Gazette* (New Orleans, LA), April 22, 1825.] with its relevant information.

## CONTENTS OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

- Primary Source Analysis (Instructional Strategy 3)
  - Analysis section for the primary source of the packet [Louisiana State Gazette (New Orleans, LA), April 22, 1825.] to be filled out by students in small groups.
- A Trip Through the Atchafalaya (Summative Assessment)
  - Assessment section that involves student groups creating 3 journal entries as steamboat passengers aboard a Basin steamer.

## FORMS OF REPRESENTATION:

*Students will be applying information they have gained from the attached secondary source to analyze this packet's artifact and primary source.*

## BASIC SKILLS KNOWLEDGE:

What were the advantages and disadvantages of steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin?

What were the different positions and responsibilities of crew members aboard steamboats?

How did the Basin come to rely on the use of steamboats in the 19th century?

READING OUTLINE (INFORMATION NOT EXPLICITLY STATED IN BOLDFACE; VOCAB UNDERLINED)

1. Technological advances in the 18th century

a. Steamboats

- i. 1812 in Mississippi River; Basin in 1819
- ii. *Louisianais*: Basin steamboats. **First used to transport cattle from western Louisiana to New Orleans**
- iii. Steamboat *Louisville* was the first steamer to use Bayou Plaquemine as a route
- iv. 1830s: transported food, cotton, lumber, animal furs, livestock, moss
- v. News and mail delivery

2. Steamboat advantages and disadvantages in the Basin

a. Advantages

- i. Relied on steam instead of wind or muscle
- ii. Able to navigate narrow waterways of the swamps and bayous
- iii. Able to reach various parts of the state

b. Disadvantages

- i. Waters full of log jams, sand bars, shoals
- ii. Bad weather conditions; thunderstorms
- iii. Short life spans
- iv. Water level dependent; varied with the season

3. Workforces of Basin steamboats

- a. Enslaved Black workers, Free Black people of color, White, Native American, and European workers
- b. Race was a limiting factor in the positions a crew member could obtain
- c. Deckhands: handled movement and storage of ship cargo; **mostly White or European, though there are records of Black deckhands**
- d. Roustabouts: loaded and unloaded cargo; casual laborers; hired when a steamer docked
  - i. Stewards: oversaw passenger care and hospitality; **one of the highest positions a Black worker could obtain**
  - ii. Kitchen staff: **comprised mostly of Black workers, some enslaved**
  - iii. Waitstaff: **comprised mostly of Black workers, some enslaved**

## READING OUTLINE (CONTINUED)

- iv. Chambermaids: **women responsible for the cleaning of passenger cabins**
- e. Firemen: those who fed wood or coal into a steamer furnace; **seen as the most degrading position; mostly reserved for Black workers**
- f. **Not mentioned:**
  - i. **Captains**
  - ii. **Mates**
- g. All positions listed commonly faced:
  - i. Difficult working conditions (onboard accidents, inclement weather, intense labor, etc.)
  - ii. Racial disparities (segregated working cabins, unfair treatment of crew members, biases, etc.)
  - iii. Lack of safe working conditions (elemental exposure, accidents, disease, etc.)
- 4. The effect of steamboats in the Basin
  - a. Responsible for the rapid development of the state's commerce
  - b. Would become a major transporter of enslaved workers, planting equipment, and plantation goods
  - c. People of the Basin depended on steamboats for:
    - i. Travel
    - ii. Import/export
    - iii. Leisure
    - iv. Communication (mail and news)

## READING ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWER KEY

1. Why were steamboats used in the Atchafalaya Basin? What were their advantages and disadvantages? How did the Basin become dependent on steamboats over time?
  - a. Steamboats were used in the Atchafalaya Basin because...
    - i. Able to navigate narrow and shallow waterways
    - ii. Traveled swiftly
    - iii. Fueled by steam instead of manpower or wind

**READING ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWER KEY (CONTINUED)**

- b. The advantages of steamboats were...
    - i. **Fueled by steam instead of manpower or wind**
    - ii. **Able to travel all over the Basin and state**
  - c. The disadvantages of steamboats were...
    - i. **Short lifespan; damaged by weather or natural hazards (sandbars or log jams)**
    - ii. **Dangerous life for crewmembers**
    - iii. **Dependent on waterway levels that varied with the season**
  - d. The Basin became dependent on steamboats over time because...
    - i. **Able to travel all over the Basin and state**
    - ii. **Transporters of...**
      - 1. **Passenger and leisure travel**
      - 2. **Goods (food, cotton, moss, etc.)**
      - 3. **News and mail**
      - 4. **Enslaved workers**
      - 5. **Farming and planting equipment**
2. Discuss the dynamics of at least two different steamboat crew positions. What were their responsibilities? What challenges did these crewmembers face?
- a. At least two different positions from the following:
    - i. **Deckhands**
      - 1. **Responsibilities: maintenance, moving, and storage of ship cargo**
      - 2. **Challenges: physically demanding labor, onboard accidents**
    - ii. **Roustabouts**
      - 1. **Responsibilities: loading and unloading of cargo**
      - 2. **Challenges: physically demanding labor, onboard accidents, their jobs were temporary**

**READING ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWER KEY (CONTINUED)**

- iii. **Stewards, chambermaids, kitchen or waitstaff**
  - 1. **Responsibilities:** the hospitality and care of passengers; cleaning passenger cabins; waiting on passengers; cooking and serving food to crew or passengers
  - 2. **Challenges:** differences in treatment based on race or gender
- iv. **Firemen**
  - 1. **Responsibilities:** feeding coal or wood into steamboat furnaces
  - 2. **Challenges:** differences in treatment based on race; physically demanding labor, onboard accidents
- b. Overall challenges:
  - i. **Harsh weather conditions**
  - ii. **Exposure to elements**
  - iii. **Onboard cargo and loading accidents**
  - iv. **Disease**
  - v. **Drowning**
  - vi. **Racial disparities**

## GLOSSARY

### Bayou

- **A marshy, minor river that is tributary to another body of water. From the Choctaw word bayuk, meaning small stream.**

### Commerce

- **The exchange or buying and selling of products on a large scale involving transportation from place to place**

### Roustabout

- **A casual laborer or deckhand who worked temporary jobs and performed performs manual duties, such as assisting in loading and unloading cargo.**

### Shoal

- **Shallow areas of water where a boat could collide with sandbars or banks.**

### Spoke

- **Handles that stick out from a boat's steering wheel.**

## ABOUT THE ARTIFACT

- Description
  - This ship's wheel, also known as a helm, is from a Louisiana steamboat. It dates back to 1890, possibly earlier. The captain or helmsmen used the helm to steer the vessel and control its course. This wheel is made from wood, with eight spokes that meet at the brass center. Because of its large size, it would often require more than one person to operate it.
  - Those that piloted the steamers were required to learn more than their route. They had to know the locations of snags, rocks, sandbars, landmarks, the water's depth, and the strength of the current. But as soon as they learned these vital facts, some changed. From the feel of the boat, the color of the water, and ripples and swirls, a pilot had to deduce new information about what lay ahead. They put this knowledge to use day and night, in all kinds of weather and in all seasons.

## ABOUT THE ARTIFACT (CONTINUED)

- Specifications
  - Diameter - 43 inches
  - Spoke Length - 6 inches
- Citation

David Whitehurst. Wheel, steering, ca. 1890. Iberville Museum, Plaquemine, LA.

## ARTIFACT ANALYSIS: DOCUMENT ANSWER KEY

*The information given in sections I-IV is definite answers. Sections V-IX can be answered in numerous ways. The information given in that section is just a guide for interpretation.*

- I. What type of artifact is it? **object**
- II. What material is it made from? **metal, wood**
- III. How old is it? **circa 1890**
- IV. Who used it and what was it used for? **Captains/Helmsmen/Pilots; To Steer a Boat/Control a Boat**
- V. What is the historical context of the artifact? How does this artifact connect to steamboats in the Basin?  
**Steamboats and water travel through the Atchafalaya**  
**Depicts how a steamboat was operated; shows the technology of the early steamers**
- VI. What can you conclude about the technology of the time?  
**No computers or automatic steering; depended on manual labor**
- VII. What can you learn from this artifact that you might not learn elsewhere?  
**Understanding the size of a helm and the difficulties that come along with operating one**

## ARTIFACT ANALYSIS: DOCUMENT ANSWER KEY (CONTINUED)

IX. What other types of sources could you use to better understand the artifact?

Primary

- **Journal entries or diaries from people aboard a steamer**
- **A steamboat blueprint**
- **Photograph or illustration of the object or people using it**

Secondary

- **Essays or papers written on how a helm was used or made**
- **Movies or documentaries about riverboats**

## ABOUT THE PRIMARY SOURCE

*The following newspaper article was printed in the Louisiana State Gazette in New Orleans, Louisiana on April 22, 1825. The Louisiana State Gazette reprinted the article from an unknown St. Martinville newspaper, which first published the story on April 16, 1825.*

St. Martinville, April 16.

The steamboat *Louisville* very unexpectedly made her appearance in the river Teche last Monday, having entered our country by the way of Bayou Plaquemine. This arrival forms a new era in the history of our section of country. Hitherto the opinion has been that the navigation between Plaquemine and the mouth of the Teche, was impracticable for vessels of this description.

The enterprise of capt. Curry has destroyed this illusion, and steamboats will soon be as common in the Teche as on Red River.

### ABOUT THE PRIMARY SOURCE (CONTINUED)

We are pleased to hear that Mr. Joseph Theall, of St. Mary, intends buying one half of the *Louisville*, and will keep her in our trade. In doing so he will deserve, and no doubt receive, a preference when the freighting season arrives.

Capt. Curry expressed, when here, a belief that he could bring his boat as far up as this place. With a very small expenditure in cutting away a few trees, this could no doubt be effected at all seasons.

[ Printed in *Louisiana State Gazette* (New Orleans, LA), April 22, 1825.]

### PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS: DOCUMENT ANSWER KEY

*The information given in sections I-VI are definite answers. Sections VII-XI can be answered in numerous ways. The information given in that section is just a guide for interpretation.*

- I. What kind of document is it? **Newspaper**
- II. Who created the source? **The Louisiana Gazette; St. Martinville Newspaper**
- III. Who read or received it? **Louisiana Residents**
- IV. When was it created? **April 1825**
- V. Where is it from? **St. Martinville; New Orleans**
- VI. What is the purpose of this source? Is it to persuade, to inform, communicate, or another reason?  
**Inform**
- VII. Describe the document in your own words.  
**Newspaper article describing the success of Captain Curry in piloting the steamer Louisville down Bayou Plaquemine to St. Martville via the Atchafalaya Basin.**

**PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS: DOCUMENT ANSWER KEY (CONTINUED)**

VIII. What is the historical context of this source?

***Steamboats; Watertravel; Increase in trade and commerce between New Orleans and Western Louisiana; New technology of steamboats and their benefits***

IX. How does this source connect to the steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin?

***Reports on the success of the first steamer to use the smaller bayous to travel throughout the basin and shows what people thought of it at that time***

X. Are there any words, phrases, or people that you don't recognize? What information can you infer from the source?

***"Hitherto" means until now; "enterprise" in this context means undertaking or endeavor; "freighting season" is referring to the seasonal occupations that those who lived around the swamp followed. Because they were dependent on water travel, they were also dependent on the weather and water levels that would make travel easier. They couldn't use all bayous and streams year-round.***

XI. What other types of sources could you use to help you understand this one?

***Primary***

- a. ***A map of the Basin/route***
- b. ***Logbook or diary from members aboard the Louisville***
- c. ***Artwork of the steamer or bayous***

***Secondary***

- a. ***A book on Steamboat travel, bayou Teche, or the Atchafalaya Basin***

**SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT: A TRIP THROUGH THE ATCHAFALAYA ANSWER KEY**

*Please see the Summative Assessment section and grading rubric in the Attachments section for more information.*

## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

### 1. READING & ASSESSMENT

#### Materials

- Artifact Packet: Steamboats in the Atchafalaya (see Attachments)
- Reading Outline (see Content Knowledge)
- Reading Assessment Questions and Answer Key (see Content Knowledge)

#### Directions

1. Students will be given their own copy of the Artifact Packet: Steamboats in the Atchafalaya. They will keep this for the duration of the lesson.
2. Students will be instructed to read the reading provided in the Packet. They will do this on their own in the classroom. The reading provides a brief overview of the history of steamboats in the Atchafalaya and their effects on the economy of the area.
3. After completing the reading, students will use their newly learned information to individually answer the assessment questions. These answers should be based solely on the information given in the reading and students are encouraged to give specific examples or quotations.
4. The reading and students' answers will be discussed as a class to ensure that students understand the historical value and context of steamboats in the Atchafalaya. Discussion will be led by the following compelling and supporting questions:
  - a. How did steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin help develop business and commerce in the area and Louisiana?
    - i. What were the advantages and disadvantages of steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin?
    - ii. What were the different positions and responsibilities of crew members aboard steamboats?
    - iii. How did the Basin come to rely on the use of steamboats in the 19th century?
5. The reading and each students' responses will be kept accessible by students for the duration of the lesson. They will need it in order to analyze the artifact's primary source, and complete the summative assessment.

## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### 2. ARTIFACT ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

#### Materials

- Artifact Packet: Steamboats in the Atchafalaya; “About the Artifact” section
- Artifact Analysis Answer Key (see Content Knowledge)
- Artifact Photograph - Steamboat Wheel (see Attachments)

#### Directions

1. Using their Artifact Packet, students will turn to the “About the Artifact” section. They will be instructed to read over the materials but to wait to fill out the analysis section as a class.
2. The educator will present the picture of the artifact (steamboat wheel) on a projector visible to the entire class. Students will be given several minutes to silently observe the artifact’s picture and description. This ensures that students are able to see the artifact in full detail to better assess its appearance and materials before analysis.
3. As a class, the educator will assist students in filling out the artifact analysis section of the Artifact Packet. To successfully complete this analysis, students will need to access prior knowledge from Instructional Strategy 1. The educator must also emphasize that students use their critical thinking skills to infer information using the artifact’s picture, description, and citation.
4. Discussion will focus on:
  - a. The artifact’s purpose.
  - b. The artifact’s historical context.
  - c. The artifact’s connection to the overall theme of steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin.

## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES (CONTINUED)

### 3. PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

#### Materials

- Artifact Packet: Steamboats in the Atchafalaya; “Primary Source” section
- Primary Source: Printed in *Louisiana State Gazette* (New Orleans, LA), April 22, 1825. (see Attachments)
- Primary Source Analysis: Artwork Answer Key (see Content Knowledge)

#### Directions

1. Students will be divided into groups of 2 to 4 individuals and turn to the “Primary Source” section of their Artifact Packet. The educator will present the primary source (“The steamboat Louisville” Louisiana Gazette newspaper article, 1825) on a projector visible to the entire classroom. Groups will be given several minutes of silent observation to fully assess the source and its information.
2. As a group, students will work together to fill out the “Primary Source Analysis” section. They will need to access prior information learned from Instructional Strategies 1 and 2 as well as critical thinking skills to infer information using the primary source and its citation. It is essential that students work in small groups to compare and contrast their information from the previous Instructional Strategies.
3. After groups have completed their analyses, the educator will review this section as a class. It is recommended that the educator takes turns asking each group for their specific answer to provide a variety of perspectives.
4. Discussion will focus on:
  - a. How the primary source connects to the overall theme of steamboats in the Atchafalaya Basin.
  - b. The evidence students used to complete their analyses.

**SUMMATIVE AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT****A TRIP THROUGH THE ATCHAFALAYA**

*D4.3.6-8. Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies.*

**Materials**

- Artifact Packet: Steamboats in the Atchafalaya; “A Trip Through the Atchafalaya” section.
- Summative Assessment Grading Rubric (see Attachments)
- Steamboat Travel Route Map (see Attachments)

**Directions**

1. Students will turn to the “A Trip Through the Atchafalaya” section of their Artifact Packets. They will be divided into 3 equal groups. Each group will be 1 of the 3 steamboat groups outlined below with a specific route and cargo. The educator may present the Steamboat Travel Route Map on a projector if needed.
2. Following the instructions given in the packet, students will apply all of their previous knowledge and analyses surrounding the steamboats in the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area. They will create a narrative about their group being passengers aboard a Basin steamer in 3 separate journal entries. They must use information from the route map, the hazards of their route, the ship’s cargo, how their ship is important to the area economy, and additional details. Crating these journal entries will help students see from the perspectives of those aboard steamboats in the 19th century. By writing a diary-style narrative, students are creatively applying the information they’ve obtained.
3. Group presentations are optional.

## SUMMATIVE AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT (CONTINUED)

### A TRIP THROUGH THE ATCHAFALAYA

The year is 1825, and you and your group are passengers aboard a steamer set to travel through the Atchafalaya Basin and to the Mississippi River. All of you are so excited to be experiencing one of the most advanced technologies of the century! You decide that the best way to preserve your 3-day journey is to write about each day's events in a journal. Your journey will differ significantly depending on your steamer's route and cargo. Using your group's steamboat information and the travel route map below, provide the following detail throughout 3 separate journal entries (1-2 paragraphs each). Be sure the information you include is in chronological order according to the map. All voyages are heading to Plaquemine, LA where they will use the bayou to enter the Mississippi River.

- Name of steamboat
- Where it left from, where it is headed to
- Crew members and their actions
- Cargo of the steamer and its importance to the area economy
- Hazards and stops of your specific travel route
- Daily activities and occurrences encountered by your group
- Additional information like weather, other passengers, the time of year, or the scenery around you

#### Group 1:

**Travel Route A;**

**cargo: cotton, food supplies**

#### Group 2:

**Travel Route B;**

**cargo: cattle, animal furs**

#### Group 3:

**Travel Route C;**

**cargo: mail, newspapers**

## REFERENCES

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Bernard, Shane K. *Teche: A History of Louisiana's Most Famous Bayou*. The University Press of Mississippi, 2016.

Buchanan, Thomas C. *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks, and the Western Steamboat World*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Smithsonian National Museum of American History. "Reading the River," *On the Water; Inland Waterways*, [https://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/exhibition/4\\_5.html](https://americanhistory.si.edu/onthewater/exhibition/4_5.html), (Accessed August 2021).

"St. Martinville, April 16, 1825." *Louisiana State Gazette* (New Orleans, LA), April 22, 1825.

ATTACHMENTS



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## St. Martinville, April 16, 1825

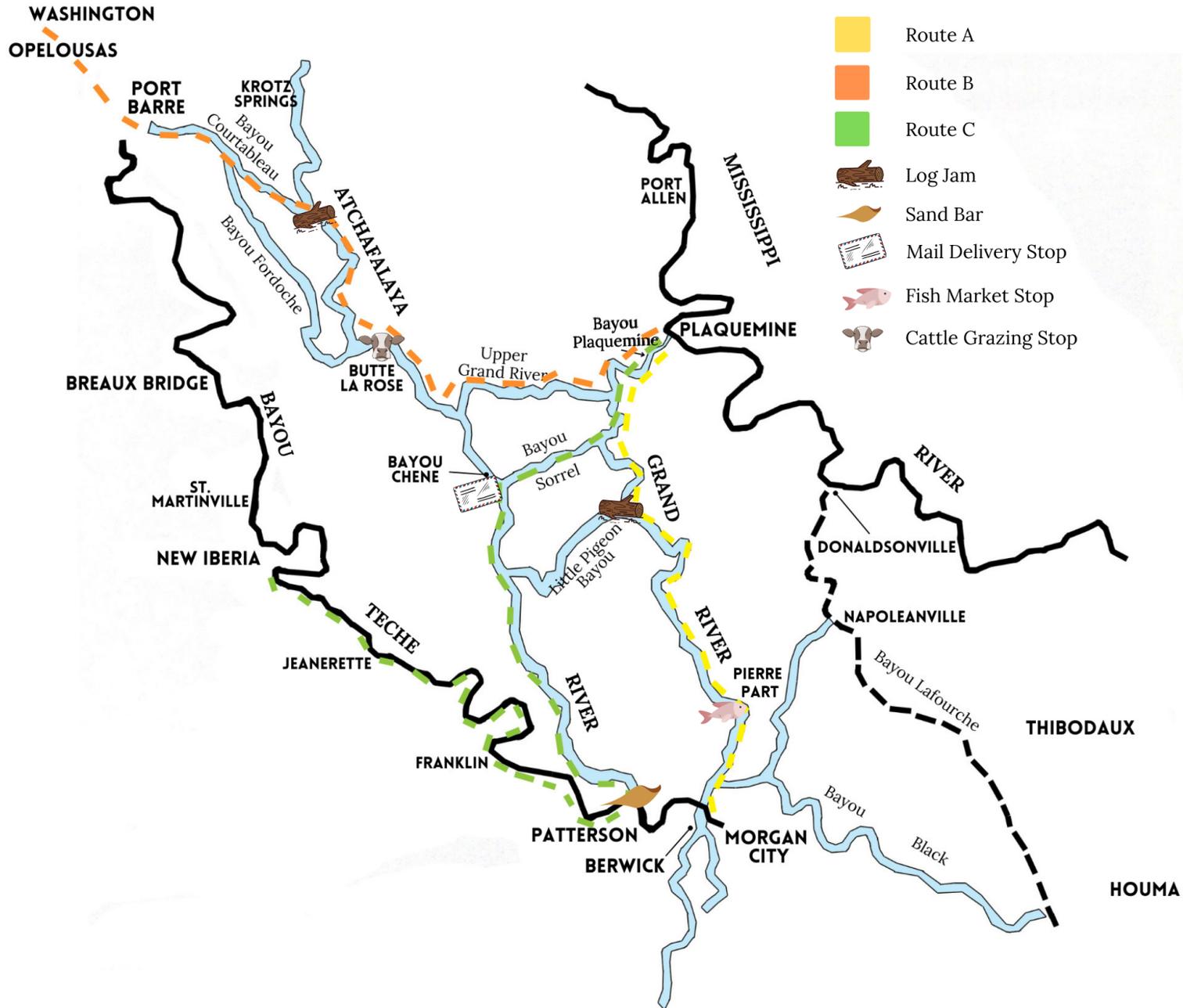
The steamboat Louisville very unexpectedly made her appearance in the river Teche last Monday, having entered our country by the way of bayou Plaquemine. This arrival forms a new era in the history of our section of country. Hitherto the opinion has been that the navigation between Plaquemine and the mouth of the Teche, was impracticable for vessels of this description. The enterprise of capt. Curry has destroyed this illusion, and steamboats will soon be as common in the Teche as on Red River.

We are pleased to hear that Mr. Joseph Theall, of St. Mary, intends buying one half of the Louisville, and will keep her in our trade. In doing so he will deserve, and no doubt receive, a preference when the freighting season arrives.

Capt. Curry expressed, when here, a belief that he could bring his boat as far up as this place. With a very small expenditure in cutting away a few trees, this could no doubt be effected at all seasons.

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ATTACHMENTS



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<b>SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT GRADING RUBRIC</b>			
<b>A TRIP THROUGH THE ATCHAFALAYA</b>			
	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
Journal Contents	Group has written a total of 3 journal entries at 1-2 paragraphs each that cover all of the listed information.	Group has written a total of 3 journal entries at 1-2 paragraphs each but they do not cover all of the listed information.	Group has written less than 3 journal entries of any length and do not cover all of the listed information.
Creative Expression	Journals express a creative and well thought out narrative that is logical and accurate to the time period.	Journals express a fairly creative and well thought out narrative that is somewhat logical and accurate to the time period.	Journals do not express a creative narrative and are not logical or accurate to the time period.
Application of Group Information	Journal entries clearly and accurately utilize information from the group prompts and the travel route map.	Journal entries somewhat utilize information from the group prompts and travel route map.	Journal entries utilize little to no information from the group prompts and travel route map.
Organization and Grammar	Journals describe a clear and organized narrative containing no grammatical errors.	Journals describe a relatively clear and organized narrative but contain several grammatical errors.	Journals do not describe a clear and organized narrative and contain an excessive amount of grammatical errors.