

RESEARCH IDEAS

Historical Research

- Research nineteenth century Nantucket as the major whaling port and as a thriving town. What was the town like? What types of businesses were there? What types of recreation? What was the lifestyle? Who were some of the leading persons of the town?
- Research the history of the relationship between the early English settlers and the Pequod tribe during the 16th century to more fully understand the levels of significance of the name *Pequod* for Ahab's ship.

Mapping

- Reread Chapter 44, *The Chart*, in which Ahab discusses how he is able to "construct an elaborate migratory chart of the sperm whale." Define cartography and on a world map show the common whaling routes. Explain how a whaling captain can anticipate where whales will be at a particular time.

Tools

- Discuss and illustrate the various tools that were used on a whaling ship. Among the examples in *Moby Dick* are in chapters such as *Tryworks*, *The Carpenter*, *The Blacksmith*, *The Forge*, *The Quadrant*, *The Sexton*, *The Compass*.

Lifestyle

- Discuss and illustrate the lifestyle of the sailors on a whaler, other than their work. Include the types of recreation, music, reading, other activities. Include information about the possibility of captains bringing their families along on the voyage.

Moral, Ethical, and Religious Behavior

- Define the terms *moral*, *ethical*, *secular*, *religious*, and *spiritual*. How are the concepts related? Illustrate the concepts from *Moby Dick* and life in general. Write scenarios showing how the concepts seem to conflict within different characters. For instance, Starbuck is in obvious conflict at times. Does Ahab experience conflict with these concepts? Does Ahab seem to use his knowledge of these conflicts to his advantage? Does Ishmael have conflicts with these concepts? Stubbs? Flask? Queequeg?
- Devise a chart or other visual to compare/contrast the world views (personal philosophies) of four different characters. Refer to this synopsis of philosophical stances and a short description of the -isms for possible idea starters. (Do an Web search for more detailed information.)

Aesthetics

- Define the term *aesthetic(s)*. Choose a quotation or related quotations and illustrate it (them) aesthetically. See these Art Ideas if you need a jump start, but apply your own creative insights to other possibilities.
- Produce and publish or present an original narrative poem, ballad, or other musical composition, focusing on an event or a series of closely related events in *Moby Dick*.
- Write a short story from the viewpoint of Pip or another character, such as Starbuck's wife or Ahab's wife.

Mathematics

- Explain the mathematical concepts involved in the use of geometry and calculus to determine velocity, trajectories, and vectors used by harpooners.

Science

- Explain the similarities that Melville shows between the two mammals--whales and humankind. Include a discussion of the family unit of whales, and research the validity of Melville's statements about whales being the only mammal to leave the land and return to the sea.

Reading

- Explain how at least fifteen of the allusions in the novel fit the context of the novel.
- Report on true accounts about sperm whales and ships. Include the sinking of the ship, *Essex*, by a sperm whale.
- Using the vocabulary list, group words that apply to different characters, and explain the association between the words and the characters.

Physical

- Demonstrate the types of the knots used on ships and identify their special uses.
- Research the types of food, their storage on the ship, and meal preparation on a ship. Cook a typical meal served on a whaling ship.