

LESSON 12 TEACHER'S GUIDE

Two Against the Mississippi

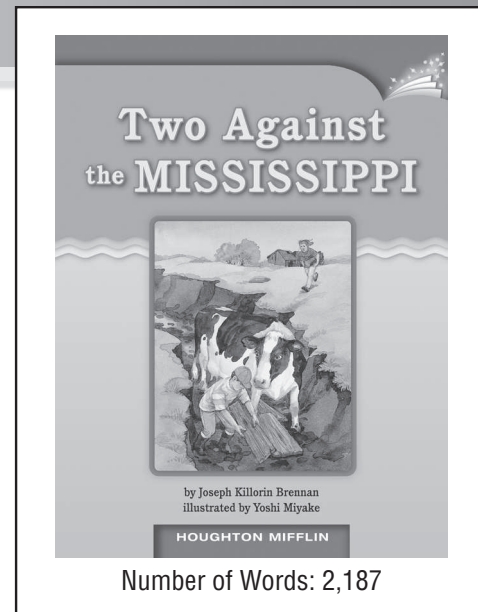
by Joseph Killorin Brennan

Fountas-Pinnell Level T

Historical Fiction

Selection Summary

Emma and Lastings are siblings. They must work together to help save their family's farm as the Mississippi River threatens to flood the land around them.



Characteristics of the Text

Genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historical fiction
Text Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third-person narrative; six short chapters • Story told in sequential order
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of the Mississippi River • Emma and Lastings have very different personalities • Flood preparation; dairy farming
Themes and Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together • Overcoming challenges • Appreciating qualities in others
Language and Literary Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of dialogue and narrative • Figurative language: <i>similies</i> • Sequential words
Sentence Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mix of short and complex sentences • Exclamations • Questions
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few flood-related terms: <i>levee, dams, banks</i>
Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many multisyllable words, such as <i>possessions, gymnasium, galloping, and deliberately</i>
Illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lively drawings support the text.
Book and Print Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirteen pages of realistic text • Chapter heads

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Two Against the Mississippi by Joseph Killorin Brennan

Build Background

Help students use their knowledge of the Mississippi River to visualize the story. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: *What happens when the water in a river rises really high? How could you stay safe if you lived near a river that flooded over?* Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Tell students that this story is historical fiction, so the places and dates are real, but the characters are not.

Introduce the Text

Guide students through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Page 2: Explain that this is a story about two siblings, Emma and Lastings, who don't always get along and they are facing an emergency on their family's farm.

Suggested language: *Turn to page 2 of this book. The date in the first sentence tells me that this story takes place in July 1993. Why do you think the exact year is included? Here is a picture of the brother and sister. What do you think the girl is doing? What type of farm do you think they live on?*

Page 3: Explain that the tension is building as the Mississippi River rises towards flood level. Show students a map of the United States. Point out the Mississippi River. Explain that the Mississippi River is the largest river in the U.S. The Mississippi sometimes overflows, but giant levees are usually able to hold the water back. A levee is a raised bank beside a river.

Page 5: Tell students that Emma and Lastings are very different. Ask students to think about these differences as they read and to think about how they might respond in an emergency situation.

Page 7: *The river has not yet crested, or reached its highest point. What do you think might happen if the river crests and the children are not prepared?*

Now go back to the beginning of the story and find out how Emma and Lastings respond to the emergency.

Expand Your Vocabulary

crested – to reach the highest or culminating point, p. 7

levee – an embankment raised to prevent a river from overflowing, p. 3

sandbagging – filling of a bag with sand to be used in the formation of protective walls, p. 12

saturated – soaked, filled, or loaded to capacity, p. 3



Read

Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to use the Visualize Strategy  **TARGET STRATEGY** and to pay attention to how the details help them to visualize the events in the story.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response

Invite students to share their personal responses to the book.

Suggested language: *Which method of reacting worked best for Emma and Lastings? Do you think different situations require different ways of reacting? Why or why not?*

Ways of Thinking

As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

Thinking Within the Text	Thinking Beyond the Text	Thinking About the Text
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A brother and sister must work together to save their family's farm.• A flooded river can threaten many homes and lives.• The sister decides to listen to her brother.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reacting to situations in different ways can be a positive thing.• It is important to work with others to accomplish important tasks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The dates and places in the story help it seem more realistic.• The language sounds realistic, the way siblings might talk to one another.• The author uses suspense to make the story more exciting.

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Choices for Further Support

- **Fluency** Invite students to work in partners, choose a passage from the text, and demonstrate phrased fluent reading. Remind them to pay attention to punctuation, and to stress certain words to sound as if the children were actually speaking to one another.
- **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students' reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.
- **Phonics/Word Work** Remind students that *-ly* is a suffix that can turn an adjective into an adverb, a word that tells the way something was done. On page 2 of the selection, three *-ly* adverbs appear: *slowly*, *madly*, and *lazily*. Have students locate three more *-ly* adverbs in the selection and explain what they mean.

Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking

Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 12.9.

Responding

Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader's Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Sequence of Events ✓ **TARGET SKILL** Remind students that sequence words can help them understand the order in which the events of a story happen. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a "Think Aloud" like the one below:

Think Aloud

On the first page of the story, the author includes the date July 1993. This date helps you know when the story began. Then, throughout the story, the author uses time order words such as then, next, and now. After Lastings and Emma rounded up the cows, they had to wait until they were rescued. Write this event in the second box of the chart.

Practice the Skill

Encourage students to share their examples of another story that uses a sequence of events.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text

Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Assessment Prompts

- The author compares the moods of the Mississippi River to the personalities of the siblings in order to
_____.
- The main problem in the story is that
_____.
- What will most likely happen the next time the siblings have to work together to complete an important task?

English Language Development

Reading Support Pair advanced and intermediate readers to read the story softly, or have students listen to the audio or online recordings. Remind them that Emma and Lastings must work together to help save their family's farm.

Cognates The story includes many cognates. Point out the English words and their Spanish equivalents: constructed (*construir*), debris (*destrito*), possessions (*posesión*), trembles (*temblar*), and saturated (*saturar*).

Oral Language Development

Check student comprehension, using a dialogue that best matches your students' English proficiency. **Speaker 1** is the teacher, **Speaker 2** is the student.

Beginning/Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced/ Advanced
<p>Speaker 1: Who are the main characters in the story?</p> <p>Speaker 2: Emma and Lastings</p> <p>Speaker 1: What type of farm do they live on?</p> <p>Speaker 2: a dairy farm</p> <p>Speaker 1: Who must Emma and Lastings rescue from the mud?</p> <p>Speaker 2: Queenie</p>	<p>Speaker 1: How does Emma react to situations?</p> <p>Speaker 2: She responds quickly without thinking.</p> <p>Speaker 1: How does Lastings react to situations?</p> <p>Speaker 2: He likes to stop and form a plan before he reacts.</p>	<p>Speaker 1: How do Emma and Lastings work together to help save the cows?</p> <p>Speaker 2: Emma finally realizes that her brother's plans really could work. She stops trying to do everything her way and does what her brother suggests they do instead.</p>

Responding

TARGET SKILL **Sequence of Events** In what order do the major events occur in the book? Look for clue words, dates, and times of day to determine the order of events. Copy and complete the chart below.

Event Lastings and Emma round up the cows before the land floods.

↓

Event ?

↓

Event ?

Write About It

Text to Text Think of another story that you have read in which characters are in conflict with nature. Write a paragraph describing how the main characters survive the conflict.

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Lesson 12
BLACKLINE MASTER 12.9

Name _____ Date _____

Critical Thinking

Two Against the Mississippi
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions. Possible responses shown.

- Think within the text** How are Lastings and Emma's personalities different?
Lastings slowly thinks things through. Emma rushes ahead without thinking.
- Think within the text** What do Emma and Lastings have to do before they can leave for safety?
They have to coax their dairy cows away from their farm to the top of Gettleman's Ridge.
- Think beyond the text** Do you think Emma and Lastings will ever work together again? Explain your answer.
I think they will work together again because even though they are very different, they accomplished their task.
- Think about the text** Why does the author include descriptions of Emma and Lastings raking leaves, preparing breakfast, and tending the vegetable garden?
The author wants to give examples of how Emma and Lastings are very different.

Making Connections Think of a problem that would be better solved with a plan and not with speed. Write a step by step plan to solve the problem.

Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.

Critical Thinking 11 Grade 4, Unit 3: Natural Encounters
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Name _____ Date _____

Two Against the Mississippi

Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in two or three paragraphs.

Remember that when you think beyond the text, you use your personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

If you were facing an emergency like the one in this story, who would you want to have help you, Emma or Lastings? Or would you want both of them to help you? Why or why not? Support your answer with examples from the story and from your own experience.







Name _____ Date _____

Critical Thinking

Two Against the Mississippi
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. Think within the text How are Lastings and Emma's personalities different?

2. Think within the text What do Emma and Lastings have to do before they can leave for safety?

3. Think beyond the text Do you think Emma and Lastings will ever work together again? Explain your answer.

4. Think about the text Why does the author include descriptions of Emma and Lastings raking leaves, preparing breakfast, and tending the vegetable garden?

Making Connections Think of a problem that would be better solved with a plan and not with speed. Write a step by step plan to solve the problem.

Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.



Student _____ Date _____

Two Against the Mississippi

LEVEL T

Two Against the Mississippi
Running Record Form

page	Selection Text	Errors	Self-Corrections
2	The brother's and sister's different personalities were a lot like the moods of the Mississippi River. When the sun was shining, the river flowed lazily, but when the spring rains melted the winter snows, the river surged forward.		
3	The two children knew that as long as the river stayed within its banks, they were safe. Yet if it broke through the giant levees, they would need a lot of luck. If the water overflowed the levees, the flat land on either side of the river would soon be underwater—as it was before the levee system was built to keep the river in check.		
	Comments:	Accuracy Rate (# words read correctly/104 × 100) _____ %	Total Self-Corrections _____

Behavior	Code	Error
Read word correctly	✓ cat	0
Repeated word, sentence, or phrase	Ⓢ cat	0
Omission	̄ cāt	1

Behavior	Code	Error
Substitution	cut cat	1
Self-corrects	cut ^{sc} cat	0
Insertion	the ^ cat	1
Word told	Ⓢ cat	1

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