

*“The Legendary King”*

**Resource Summary:** The lesson idea(s) that follow, have been designed to be utilized after a viewing of one of the fourteen tales entitled ***The Legendary King*** in the film **West of the West: Tales from California’s Channel Islands**. The segment is approximately 14 minutes long and tells the story of Herbert and Elizabeth Lester, who moved from the California mainland in 1930 to San Miguel Island where they lived for 12 years and raised two young daughters. Their story provides myriad opportunities to inspire student writing in all three of the writing genres – Opinion, Informative/Explanatory, and Narrative.

**Subject Areas:** English Language Arts & Literacy

**Grade Level Range:** 4 – 6

**Standards (for Grade 5)**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.2**

Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1**

Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2**

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3**

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

**Resource Provided By:** Barbara LaCorte, Principal, Hope School, Hope School District

**Resource Details:**

The teacher will explain that the students will be watching a segment of the film **West of the West: Tales from California’s Channel Islands**, which tells the story of Herbert and Elizabeth Lester, who moved from the California mainland in 1930 to San Miguel Island where they lived for 12 years and raised two young daughters. After viewing this segment, the teacher will facilitate a discussion during, which the student will generate a list of the pros and cons of living on an island; the students’ ideas will be recorded on chart paper.

The teacher may then share Barbara Cooney's *Island Boy*, about a family who settled on a small island off the coast of Maine, followed by a discussion of the differences between living year round on an island in northern Maine versus an island in southern California. The teacher may also share the poem, "If Once you have Slept on an Island" by Rachel Field with a follow up discussion of the poet's perspective on island life.

Students will then be given options for culminating writing activities:

- Write a diary entry as if you were one of the Lester girls living on San Miguel Island.
- Write a letter pretending to be one of the Lester daughters to a friend or relative on the mainland.
- Write an opinion essay explaining why you would like to or not like to grow up on an island.
- Write a letter to a student living on an island in Maine. (There are a number of islands with one room schoolhouses in Maine with whom a teacher could arrange for pen pals) telling them about the Lesters and the Channel Islands.

### **Additional Resources:**

“*If Once You have Slept on an Island*”, a poem by Rachel Field.

If once you have slept on an island  
You'll never be quite the same;  
You may look as you looked the day before  
And go by the same old name,  
You may bustle about in street and shop  
You may sit at home and sew,  
But you'll see blue water and wheeling gulls  
Wherever your feet may go.

You may chat with the neighbors of this and that  
And close to your fire keep,  
But you'll hear ship whistle and lighthouse bell  
And tides beat through your sleep.

Oh! you won't know why and you can't say how  
Such a change upon you came,  
But once you have slept on an island,  
You'll never be quite the same.

Cooney, Barbara (1991). *Island Boy*. Puffin Books.

Lester, Elizabeth Sherman (1979). *The Legendary King of San Miguel; The Lesters at Rancho Rambouillet*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: McNally & Loftin, West.