Mr. Ferris and His Wheel

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SUMMARY:
In 1893, Chicago hosted the World’s Fair. After much convincing, George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. was awarded the opportunity to build his design as the star attraction. With the monetary support of only a few wealthy investors, Ferris built something that many people told him he couldn’t--a massive steel wheel designed to carry people high above their surroundings that would later become known as the Ferris Wheel.

BOOKTALK:
Take a ride on a Ferris Wheel, and you are taken on a slow, quiet, yet awesomely magical, trip high above everything else around you. Read Mr. Ferris and His Wheel to find out how George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. came up with the idea and convinced the construction chief and the judges of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair to allow him to build this seemingly impossible, magnificent attraction.

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Other books written by the author:
Wackiest White House Pets
White House Ghosthunters series
Never Sink Nine series,
Fishman and Charly, and others

CHALLENGING WORDS
surpassing (p. 2) verb--going beyond, going farther than

ambitious (p. 6) adjective--showing a strong desire to reach a goal

mechanical engineer (p. 6) noun--a person who designs and uses machines and tools in new ways that are useful for people

overshadow (p. 6) verb--to seem more important than

flimsy (p. 9) adjective--weak
architect (p. 9) noun--a person who designs buildings

dilly-dallied (p. 11) verb--wasted time

far-fetched (p. 11) adjective--not likely to occur, not thought of easily, crazy and “out there”

dynamite (p. 13) noun--an explosive used for blasting holes in the earth

circumference (p. 19) noun--the distance around the perimeter, or outside, of a circle

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1. Have you ever been on a Ferris Wheel? If so, describe where and when it was and what it was like.
2. What do you think it was like to be part of the crowd when the first Ferris Wheel operated at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair? What emotions did the spectators feel? What might you hear people saying?
3. George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. had a lot of perseverance, meaning he didn’t give up, even when people didn’t believe in him and when things didn’t seem possible. What are some things you do or might have to do that take perseverance?
4. The World’s Fair was designed as a place for people all over the world to gather together to share “different ways of life and new technologies” (p. 4). If there was a World’s Fair today, what do you think would or should be a part of it?

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Language Arts:

- Find a firsthand account of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair. Compare and contrast the information from this firsthand account with the information from Mr. Ferris and His Wheel.

  CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.6, 5.6
  Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.

- Complete additional research on the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair. Use these texts, in addition to Mr. Ferris and His Wheel, to design a creative way to highlight the most interesting aspects of the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.9, 5.9
Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.7, 6.7
Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

- Complete more research on George Washington Gale Ferris, Jr. Combine what you’ve learned from these texts with *Mr. Ferris and His Wheel* to design a creative way to teach others about this ambitious inventor.

- The original Ferris wheel is better known today as the Navy Pier Ferris wheel in Chicago. The Navy Pier Ferris wheel has gone through a few transformations over the years, with the newest version being revealed in 2016. Research the different versions of the Ferris wheel and write about one of the transformations.

5.W.3.2 Write informative compositions on a variety of topics that

5.W.3.2.a Introduce a topic; organize sentences and paragraphs logically, using an organizational form that suits the topic.

5.W.3.2.b Employ sufficient examples, facts, quotations, or other information from various sources and texts to give clear support for topics.

5.W.3.2.c Connect ideas within and across categories using transition words (e.g., therefore, in addition).

5.W.3.2.d Include text features (e.g., formatting, pictures, graphics) and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension.

5.W.3.2.e Use appropriate language, vocabulary, and sentence variety to convey meaning; for effect; and to support a tone and formality appropriate to the topic and audience.
5.W.3.2.f Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

5.W.5 Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.

Science:

- Research the kinds of energy involved in the working of a Ferris Wheel. Then, design and build a small version, or model, of a Ferris Wheel to demonstrate these forms of energy.

6.1.4 Recognize that objects in motion have kinetic energy and objects at rest have potential energy.

6.1.5 Describe with examples that potential energy exists in several different forms (e.g., gravitational potential energy, elastic potential energy and chemical potential energy).

6.1.6 Compare and contrast potential and kinetic energy and how they can be transformed from one form to another.

6.1.7 Explain that energy may be manifested as heat, light, electricity, mechanical motion, and sound and is often associated with chemical reaction.

6.4.1 Understand how to apply potential or kinetic energy to power a simple device.

6.4.2 Construct a simple device that uses potential or kinetic energy to perform work.

6.4.3 Describe the transfer of energy amongst energy interactions.

Social Studies:

- We live in a very technologically-based world, unlike the way the world was between 1850 and 1900. During that time, people would get together in person to share new ideas and inventions (like at the World’s Fairs). What are some of the benefits or positive outcomes of being so technologically-based like we are today? What are some of the benefits or positive outcomes that come from being less technologically-based as they were in the late 1800s?

6.1.17 Historical Knowledge: Modern Era: 1700 to the present: Compare the opportunities and dangers related to the development of a highly technological society.
6.3.10 Human Systems: Explain that cultures change in three ways: cultural diffusion, invention and innovation.

- Imagine you were put in charge of planning a World’s Fair to happen in the next year or so. Research at least 4 countries from Europe, North America, and South America that you believe would be important to include. Make a display to show the major “cultural characteristics” of each country, as well as some important inventions to come from each of these countries.

6.3.4 Physical Systems: Places and Regions: Describe and compare major cultural characteristics of regions in Europe and the Western Hemisphere.

RELATED INTERNET SITES:

The Brief History of the Ferris Wheel by the Smithsonian

"The First Ferris Wheel Held 2,000 Passengers" video

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