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Website Used: [Pulitzer Center: Out of Eden](https://pulitzercenter.atavist.com/story/5823)
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Lesson/Unit Name and Content Area: High School Lesson Plan — A Storyteller's Point of View

Assessment of its Global Competence: The lesson "A Storyteller's Point of View" helps students to evaluate the use of evidence and rhetoric through the engaging lens of Paul Salopek's "[Out of Eden Walk](#)" for *National Geographic*. Students use a variety of texts as they consider what informs a person's point of view. Within the Language Arts (LA) domain of the Global Competence Matrix, it succeeds in all four areas of proficiency but could still improve a few specific points. Please see my evaluation of strengths and weaknesses within this lesson plan below.

INVESTIGATING THE WORLD: Students investigate the world beyond their immediate environment.

Strengths: The lesson does an admirable job of helping students move from local to global concerns/experiences by introducing the people and places Salopek encountered at the start of his journey in Ethiopia and on the Red Sea. Students are guided through critical thinking exercises that develop their understanding of "slow journalism", point of view, and rhetorical choices as they examine Salopek's experiences and reporting choices. The lesson also helps students to explore a variety of media and text choices used in Salopek's formal and informal reporting on lifestyles/perspectives, which, for most every student, will be new and exciting.

Areas for Improvement and Recommendations: The LA domain of the Matrix demands that students go beyond exploration (identification and analysis) and to develop "globally significant researchable questions". Here the lesson plan falls short. While the lesson prepares students to frame and potentially carry such questions to their logical conclusion, it doesn't challenge them to do more than reflect upon their own perspectives. I recommend expanding the lesson beyond the personal/classroom. An extension could start with interviews of local immigrants to practice slow journalism using the Salopek method. Work with these local resources could lead to contacts outside of our immediate community and into a more global sphere. The essential questions of the lesson (*What informs a person's point of view?* and *How does language inform a reader about a person's point of view?*) might then be considered both more globally appropriate and researchable.

RECOGNIZING PERSPECTIVES: Students recognize their own and others' perspectives.

Strengths: With its focus on the art of storytelling, this lesson earns high marks for encouraging students to explore the perspectives beyond their own current understanding. It prepares students to engage with the greater world by starting with

local/personal ideas and then expanding to international/foreign views. Specifically, it hits three of the four LA domain Matrix requirements: 1) understanding the development of personal perspectives; 2) examining the perspectives of others from around the world; and 3) explaining cultural interactions and text format interact with meaning or significance. The lesson thoroughly explores the formation, communication, and interpretation of perspective – students will have clear mastery of these aspects of the matrix after examining Salopek’s writing process.

Areas for Improvement and Recommendations: Meeting all of the requirements for the LA domain of the Matrix would require greater levels of research than the materials provided in the lesson currently offer. The final proficiency requirement of this section is that students describe “how differential access to literacy... affect perspectives and quality of life.” Not enough background information about the subjects of Salopek’s interviews is known to assess this question. In their own interviews, students could go beyond questions of “Who are you?” and “Where are you from?” to “How do you interact with the world?” in order to begin forming educated opinions about international literacy.

COMMUNICATING IDEAS: Students communicate their ideas effectively with diverse audiences.

Strengths: The lesson provides gradual-release supports to prepare students to meet the proficiency marks of this domain. Students have multiple opportunities to explore the diverse audience reactions, the dynamics of meaning across cultures and medias, the development of appropriate rhetorical strategies (in particular of word choice and listening), the use of numerous technologies to communicate, and in understanding how such communication impacts understanding around the globe.

Areas for Improvement: One of the few gaps that I see in this lesson’s ability to completely fulfill the aspirations of this domain is that of having students report (or communicate their findings) beyond their local community. To that end, the lesson might reach others via a variety of social media. A class blog, perhaps based on the one contributed to by Salopek himself (Out of Eden Learn Blog - <https://walktolearn.outofedenwalk.com>), might be a way to reach beyond the walls of our classroom.

TAKING ACTION: Students translate their ideas and findings into appropriate actions to improve conditions.

Strengths: This lesson helps students to reflect upon the use and development of language to effect change in understanding around the world. The lesson uses Salopek’s work for National Geographic and in his own media presence to foster an understanding of the multiple genres and purposes for writing as well as how a writer’s choices connect with the intended audience(s). It also concentrates on building specific

language arts skills that are both informative and persuasive. In particular, the exploration of first-person versus third-person writing is critical to understanding and communicating diverse international perspectives. The language-based communications skills development within the lesson are engaging and edifying.

Areas for Improvement and Recommendations: The lesson is not action-oriented or outreach-oriented. Its focus on personal writing development will develop skills that should be put to use to “improve conditions” as outlined in the Matrix. Without an action plan, the lesson does little to improve students’ global orientation. One idea for improvement might build upon the first extension I proposed by using students’ contacts with immigrants in our local community to improve their situation and that of aspiring immigrants. By addressing and communicating (again, using appropriate media) the needs of individuals of various backgrounds, students may act as advocates and allies to effect change for the better.

In conclusion, the lesson promises to meet several competencies but needs more of an outward and active focus to fully measure up to the Global Competence Matrix.