



Lesson: A Sense of Place

(To follow Amplify CKLA 4, Knowledge 1: Personal Narrative, Lesson 4: Sensory Details)

At a Glance

In this lesson, students investigate the connection between geography and personal narratives. After reading about the life and work of poet and artist Celia Thaxter, whose work was inspired by her time living on the Isles of Shoals, students use sensory details to write their own place-based narratives that express the significance of geographical location and features.

Primary Focus Objectives

- Students will analyze historic photographs of the Isles of Shoals.
- Students will read and illustrate excerpts from *Celia's Island Journal*.
- Students will use sensory details to write about a special place.

Formative Assessment

- Sensory detail illustration
- Place-based narrative

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.2

Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

Materials

- Images: [Appledore Island Boat Landing](#), [White Island Isles of Shoals](#), [Miss Underhill's Chair](#), [Appledore House](#)
- Focus Text: [Unit 13: Tourism in New Hampshire, Learn It! "Tourism and Art," page 4, Celia Thaxter biography and "Isles of Shoals" recording](#)
- Access to online map application, e.g., Google Maps
- Focus Text: *Celia's Island Journal* (Little, Brown & Co., 1992)
- Sense of Place story planner
- Maps and images of students' selected locations

Time Needed

Two 30-40 minute class sessions

Learning Activity

1. **Memories of special places.** Discuss the kinds of details that come to mind when students think about a place they love. (5 minutes)
2. **Examine historic images.** Conduct a sensory detail-focused analysis of historic images of the Isles of Shoals. (5 minutes)
3. **Read about Celia Thaxter.** Read and listen to the non-fiction selections about Celia Thaxter and the Isles of Shoals. (15 minutes)



4. **Read Celia Thaxter's journal.** Read selections from the journal and support students as they illustrate what the entry describes, or match it to an historic image. *(15 minutes)*
5. **Write place-based narratives.** Using Celia Thaxter's journal entries as a model, support students as they write descriptive personal narratives about places they know well. *(40 minutes)*



Educator Rationale and Answer Guide

Connection to Amplify

In this lesson, students reinforce their understanding of sensory details and their ability to incorporate them in their writing through activities that place these concepts in the context of New Hampshire's geography and history. By focusing on the life and early writings of Celia Loughton Thaxter, who spent much of her life on the Isles of Shoals, students learn about a significant feature of New Hampshire's geography and develop a deeper understanding of how we use language to evoke the details that make places special in our memories.

Memories of special places

Ask students to think about a place where they love to spend time. Then ask students to share what it is about the place that immediately comes to mind when they think of it. Record student ideas and discuss as a whole group what makes these sensory details and what makes sensory details so powerful in writing.

Examine historic images

Provide each student with one of the historic images. Give students time to look closely at the image. Ask them to write, in one minute, as many things as they can see in the image. Then, give them one minute to write down things that other senses might detect in that scene: sounds, smells, textures, even tastes. Briefly discuss what they observed and imagined.

Read about Celia Thaxter

Explain to students that the images they looked at show an area known as the Isles of Shoals. Help students locate this place on an online map service. First, help them find the seacoast of New Hampshire then travel east to find the group of islands. Ensure that students understand that these islands are located about six miles off the coast of New Hampshire and overlap the state border between New Hampshire and Maine. Discuss how knowing the location helps them understand why the pictures featured different details. (For example, a lighthouse is necessary in a place that is close to water.) Give students time to read and listen to, independently or in small groups, the non-fiction selections about the Isles of Shoals and Celia Thaxter.

Read Celia Thaxter's journal

Provide students with copies of, or selections from, *Celia's Island Journal*. Explain that before she became a well-known writer and artist, Celia Thaxter kept a journal when she was a child on the Isles of Shoals. Ask students to identify examples of sensory detail in the journal entries and illustrate what those details help them see. Or, challenge the students to match a selection from the journal to one of the historic images they think it fits. Create a gallery wall of these illustrated sensory details.

This is a good place to pause if dividing the lesson across two sessions.

Write place-based narratives

Remind students that Celia Thaxter knew the Isles of Shoals well. Ask them to think about a place in New Hampshire that they know well. Help students find maps and images of that place. Then, using the writing process most familiar to students, support them as they plan and draft brief personal narratives (about three paragraphs) that help a reader see that special place by using strong sensory details in their writing. A graphic organizer is provided to help students plan their drafts. Ensure that students incorporate details about the geographic location and features of their special place. Final drafts should be displayed alongside the maps and photos students use for inspiration.



Appledore Island Boat Landing



Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



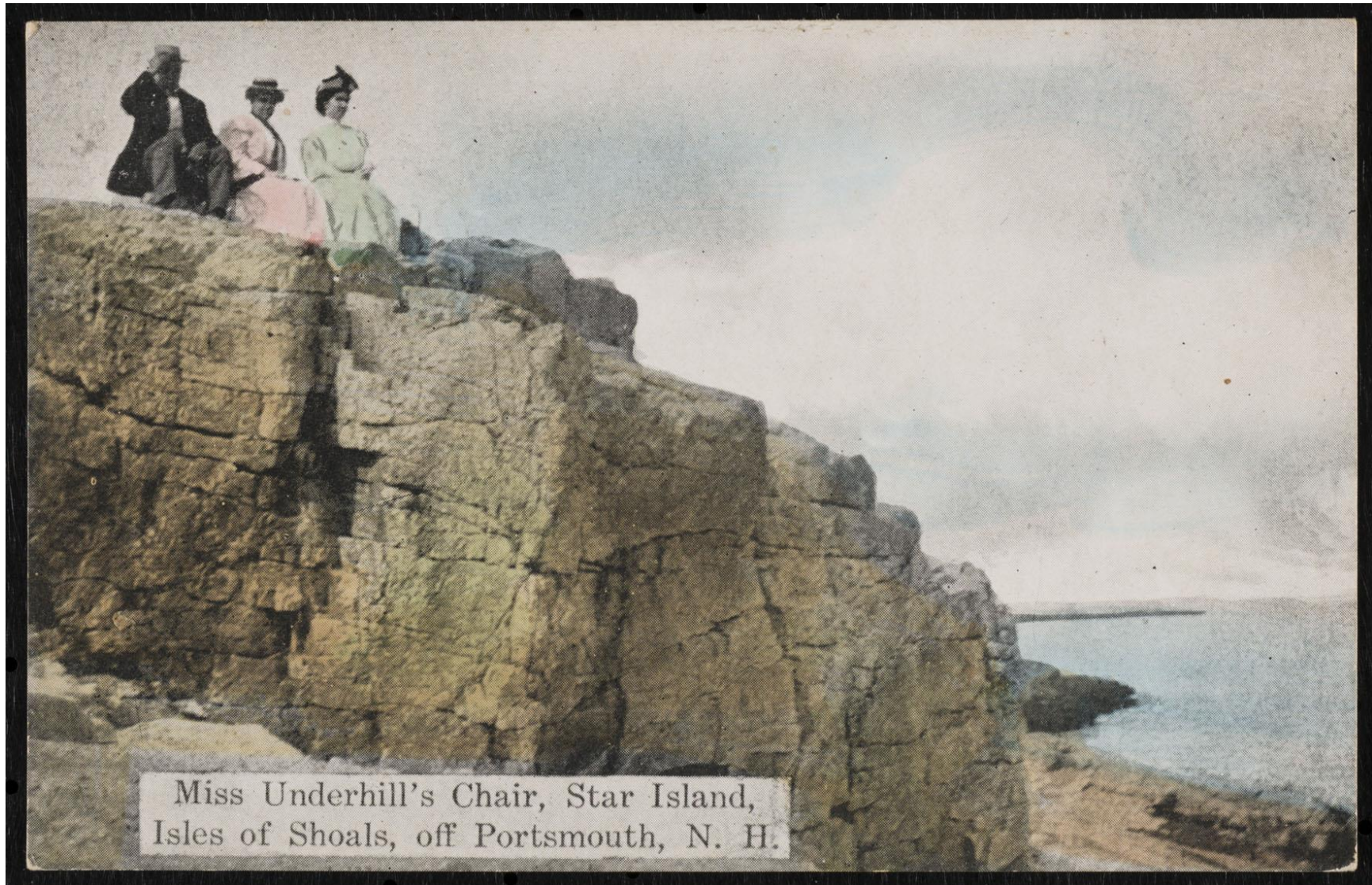
[White Island, Isles of Shoals](#)



Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



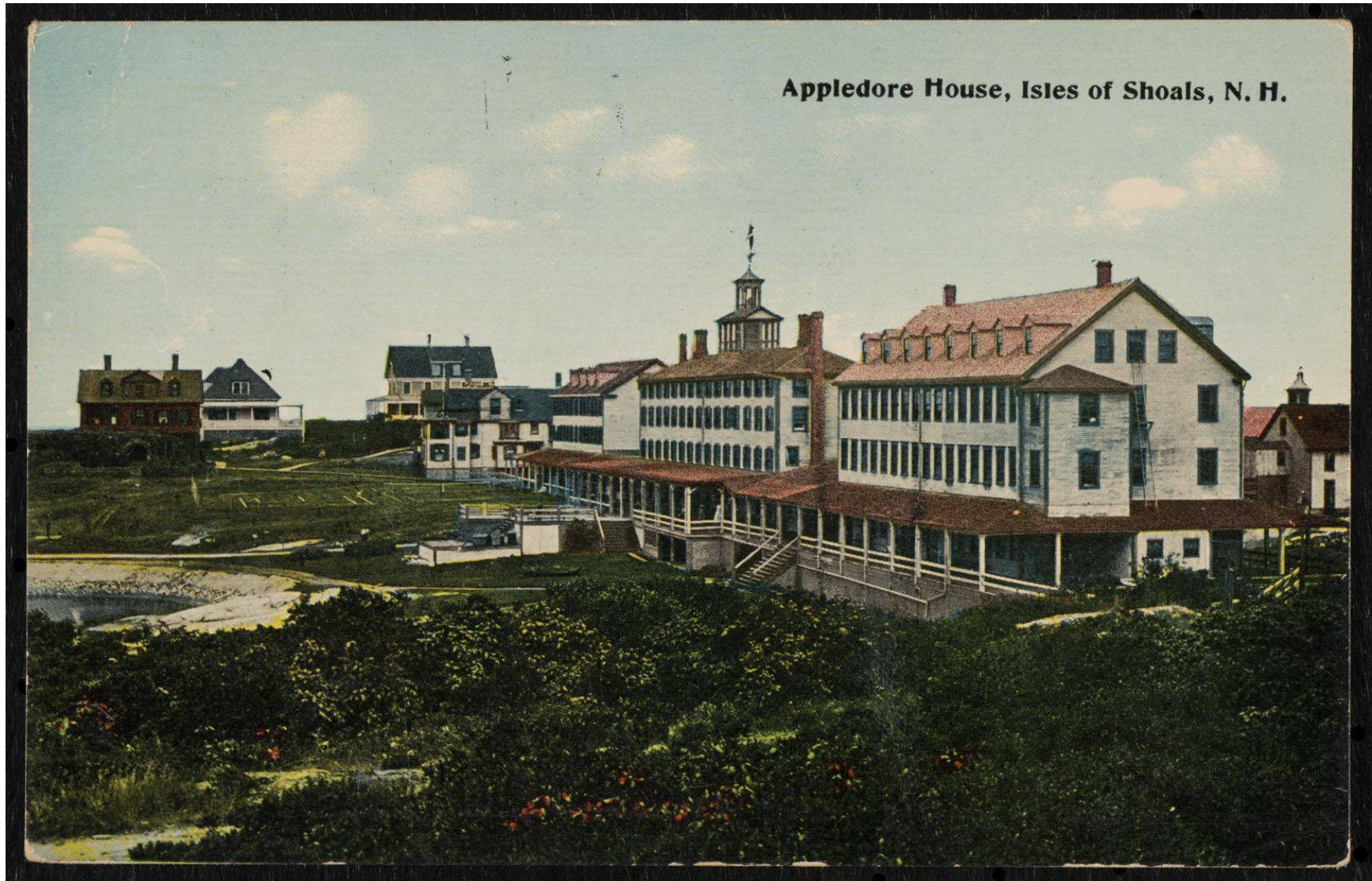
Miss Underhill's Chair



Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Appledore House



Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Sense of Place Stories

Sense: Details:	Sense: Details:
Sense: Details:	Sense: Details:

My special place is