

**Proposed Unit 4-4:  
Live Strong!**

**SS Topic: Southwest and West Regions**

**(SW: TX, OK, AZ, NM)  
(W: AL, HI, WA, OR, ID, MT, WY, CA, NV, UT, CO)**

**Core Novel**

**Crossing the Wire**

Lexile: 640

DRA: 44

**Guided Reading  
Below Level**

**Escaping the  
Giant Wave**

Lexile: 750 DRA: 40

**Guided Reading  
On Level**

**Trapped**

Lexile: 830 GL5.0

**Guided Reading  
Above Level**

**Loser**

Lexile: 650 DRA: 44

**The Higher  
Power of Lucky**

Lexile: 1010 DRA: 44

**Esperanza  
Rising**

Lexile: 750 DRA: 44

## **Fourth Grade, Unit 4**

### **Theme Overview:**

Charles Darwin proclaimed the evolutionary theory of “Survival of the fittest.” As educators we embrace the need for all children and their families to survive in an ever changing world. It is through our personal desires, failures and accomplishments that we in fact learn to develop the internal and external strength needed to survive in today’s society. The fourth marking period theme, “Live Strong!” was selected because in each of the unit’s books, the main characters are surviving external and internal obstacles. During this interdisciplinary study of the Southwest and West regions, students will analyze the impact of the regions’ legends, people and communities in determining environmental, economical, cultural and regional accomplishments. Furthermore, students will synthesize the relationships historically and geographically between the West, Southwest, Midwest, Southeast and Northeast regions. Through a variety of possible projects, students will research and investigate the regions’ people, landmarks, extreme weather, physical resources, natural wonders, transportation, industry, and economical factors. In addition, students will read a variety of genres including expository text, adventure, fantasy and realistic fiction, as they simultaneously research topics on suggested websites. The thematic unit will incorporate language arts, social studies and technology standards. Students will be able to work as individuals, teams and in small groups.

### **Driving Questions:**

- **How do you “Live Strong” to overcome obstacles? Can you learn to be strong or are you born that way?**
- **Nature or Nurture: Which is a stronger influence in your life, your personal nature or the environment in which you are raised?**
- **How are the literary characters compelled to stay focused or motivated to survive in the midst of extreme circumstances?**
- **Compare and contrast the differences between the regions of the United States. How do the climate, natural resources, cultural beliefs, physical features, history, and industry affect the citizens of those regions?**
- **How do the varying climates and geography of the Southwest and West impact the regions’ inhabitants?**
- **How does strong visual imagery evoke emotional responses and personal connections on behalf of the reader?**

### **New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards specific to this unit:**

**STANDARD 6.1 (Social Studies Skills) All students will utilize historical thinking, problem solving, and research skills to maximize their understanding of civics, history, geography, and economics.**

- A.1. Explain how present events are connected to the past.
- A. 2. Apply terms related to time including years, decades, centuries, and generations.
- A. 3. Locate sources for the same information (e.g., weather forecast on TV, the Internet or in a newspaper).
- A. 4. Organize events in a time line.
- A. 5. Distinguish between an eyewitness account and a secondary account of an event.
- A. 6. Distinguish fact from fiction.

**STANDARD 6.2 (Civics) All students will know, understand and appreciate the values and principles of American democracy and the rights, responsibilities, and roles of a citizen in the nation and the world.**

**A. Civic Life, Politics, and Government**

- A. 1. Describe the characteristics of an effective rule or law (e.g., achieves purpose, clear, fair, protects rights and the common good).
- A. 2. Differentiate between power and authority.
- A. 3. Recognize that government exists at the community, county, state, and federal levels.
- A. 4. Recognize national, state, and local legislators and government officials and explain how to contact them for help or to express an opinion.
- A. 5. Describe the contributions of voluntary associations and organizations in helping government provide for its citizens.

**B. State and Nation**

- B.2. Explain the significance of symbols of American values and beliefs, including the Statue of Liberty, the Statue of Justice, the American Flag, and the national anthem.
- B.3. Describe how American values and beliefs, such as equality of opportunity, fairness to all, equal justice, separation of church and state, and the rights guaranteed by the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights, contribute to the continuation and improvement of American democracy.
- B.4. Evaluate the importance of traditions, values, and beliefs which form a common American heritage in an increasingly diverse American society.

**C. The Constitution and American Democracy**

- C.1. Discuss how the Constitution describes how the United States government is organized and how it defines and limits the power of government.
- C.2. Discuss how governmental bodies make decisions and explain the impact of those decisions on school and community life.
- C.3. Identify major services provided by state and local government.
- C.4. Delineate the respective roles of the three branches of the federal and state governments.

**D. Citizenship**

- D.1. Explain that a citizen is a legally recognized member of the United States with rights and responsibilities, such as voting in elections and serving on juries.
- D.2. Describe the significant characteristics of an effective citizen and discuss ways to influence public policy (e.g., serving in elected office, working on a campaign).
- D.3. Describe the process by which immigrants can become United States citizens.

**E. International Education: Global Challenges, Cultures, and Connections**

- E.1. Explain that the world is divided into many nations consisting of territory and people, with their own government, languages, customs, and laws.
- E.2. Discuss how the United States interacts with other nations of the world through trade, treaties and agreements, diplomacy, cultural contacts, and sometimes through the use of military force.
- E.3. Explain why it is important for nations to communicate and resolve disagreements through peaceful means.
- E.6. Explain why it is important to understand diverse peoples, ideas, and cultures.
- E.7. Explain that even within a culture, diversity may be affected by race, religion, or class.
- E.8. Identify aspects of culture and heritage presented in literature, art, music, sport, or the media.
- E.9. Examine common and diverse traits of other cultures and compare to their own culture.
- E.10. Use technology to learn about students and their families in other countries through classroom links, email, and Internet research.

**STANDARD 6.4 (United States and New Jersey History) All students will demonstrate knowledge of United States and New Jersey history in order to understand life and events in the past and how they relate to the present and future.**

**A. Family and Community Life**

- A.1. Discuss how families long ago expressed and transmitted their beliefs and values through oral tradition, literature, songs, and celebrations.
- A.2. Compare family life in a community of the past to life in a community of the present.
- A.3. Discuss the reasons why various groups, voluntarily and involuntarily, immigrated to America and New Jersey and describe the problems they encountered.
- A.4. Discuss the history of their community, including the origins of its name, groups and individuals who lived there, and access to important places and buildings in the community.
- A.5. Explain that Americans have come from different parts of the world and have a common American heritage, in addition to the heritage of the countries of origin.
- A.6. Describe situations in which people from diverse backgrounds work together to solve common problems.

**B. State and Nation**

- B.6. Discuss the experiences of immigrants who came to the United States and New Jersey, including reasons for immigrating, experiences at Ellis Island, and working and living conditions in America.
- B.8. Discuss the value of the American national heritage including:
  - Diverse folklore and cultural contributions from New Jersey and other regions in the United States
  - History and values celebrated in American songs, symbols, slogans, and major holidays
  - Historical preservation of primary documents, buildings, places of memory, and significant artifacts
  - Stereotyping and discuss how it impacts self-image and interpersonal relationships.

**STANDARD 6.5 (Economics) All students will acquire an understanding of key economic principles.**

**A. Economic Literacy**

- A.1. Distinguish between goods (e.g., objects) and services (e.g., activities).
- A.2. Distinguish between a want and a need and explain how to choose needed goods and services.
- A.3. Explain the three functions of money in the economy.
  - ✓ Medium of exchange (e.g., buying)
  - ✓ Measure of value (e.g., price comparison)
  - ✓ Store of value (e.g., saving)
- A.4. Discuss how natural, human, and capital resources are used to produce goods and to provide services.
- A.5. Explain that prices are the money value of goods and services and that prices change as a result of supply and demand.
- A.6. Define consumers as buyers and producers as workers and sellers.
- A.7. Explain that people can improve their ability to earn income by gaining new knowledge, skills, and experiences.
- A.8. Describe how to earn and save money in order to purchase a needed or desired item.

**B. Economics and Society**

- B.1. Explain that some essential goods and services are provided by the government, such as roads, schools, parks, police, and fire protection.

**STANDARD 6.6 (Geography) All students will apply knowledge of spatial relationships and other geographic skills to understand human behavior in relation to the physical and cultural environment.'**

**A. The World in Spatial Terms**

- A.1. Use physical and political maps to identify locations and spatial relationships of places within local and nearby communities.
- A.2. Describe and demonstrate different ways to measure distance (e.g., miles, kilometers, time).
- A.3. Estimate distances between two places on a map using a scale of miles.
- A.4. Identify the major cities of New Jersey, the United States, and the world.
- A.5. Identify the major countries, continents, bodies of water, and mountain ranges of the world.
- A.6. Locate time zones, latitude, longitude, and the global grid.

**B. Places and Regions**

- B.1. Identify the physical and human characteristics of places and regions in New Jersey and the United States (e.g., landforms, climate, vegetation, housing).
- B.2. Explain changes in places and regions over time and the consequences of those changes.
- B.3. Describe the geography of New Jersey.
- B.4. Discuss factors involved in the development of cities (e.g., transportation, food, marketplace, religion, military protection).

**C. Physical Systems**

- C.1. Describe the basic components of the Earth's physical systems, including landforms, water, erosion, weather, and climate and discuss their impact on human development.

**D. Human Systems**

- D.1. Describe the development of transportation and communication networks in New Jersey and the United States.
- D.2. Identify the distribution and characteristics of populations for different regions of New Jersey and the United States.

**E. Environment and Society**

- E.1. Differentiate between living and non-living natural resources.
- E.2. Explain the nature, characteristics, and distribution of renewable and non-renewable resources.

## **Materials**

### **Suggested Core Novel:**

*Crossing the Wire* by Will Hobbs (C)

### **Alternative Core Novel and/or guided reading selections:**

*The Higher Power of Lucky* by Susan Patron (C) \*

*Loser* by Jerry Spinnelli (C)

*Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan (C)

*Trapped* by Peg Kehret (A)

*Escaping the Giant Wave* by Peg Kehret (E)

Textbook: *Harcourt Brace: States and Regions*

Textbook: *McGraw Hill McMillan: Amelia's Road & Baseball Saved Us*

\* Please note there is a reference to a male reproductive organ on page 1, paragraph 2 and page 132, paragraph 6. Be sure to preview the passages and decide if it is appropriate to share with your class. You may want to obtain parental consent before sharing the novel with your students.

### **Independent Reading/Research:**

#### **Scott Foresman Pearson leveled readers:**

<b>Title</b>	<b>F&amp;P Level</b>	<b>DRA</b>	<b>Lexile</b>
Conflict in the American West	T	44	950L
Life Among the Chumash	T	44	900L
The Mexican-American War	Q	40	980L
American Indians Lives and Traditions			
A Battle Over Borders	R	40	890L
The Amazing Geography of the West	O	34	920L
Rails Across America	P	38	830L
Earthquake that Rocked San Francisco	Q	40	530L
The Transcontinental Railroad	U	44+	1010L
Early Americans	P	38	810L
Bone Detectives	R	40	880L

## Teacher Resources:

### Crossing the Wire

[http://www.harperchildrens.com/webcontent/teachers\\_guides/pdf/0060741392.pdf](http://www.harperchildrens.com/webcontent/teachers_guides/pdf/0060741392.pdf)

Teacher's guide with summary, curriculum activities, and discussion questions.

### Escaping the Giant Wave

<http://www.pegkehret.com/docs/giantwave.doc>

Summary with discussion questions and activities

<http://www.ilfonline.org/AIME/YHBA/2007-2008%20YHBA%20Web%20Site/IntermediateActPgsRev/EscapingGiantWave.pdf>

Summary, discussion questions, suggested activities, and vocabulary

### Loser

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/book.jsp?id=3225>

Summary with links to discussion guide, extension activities, and author's notes

### The Higher Power of Lucky

<http://oneminutebookreviews.wordpress.com/2007/02/22/reading-group-guide-to-%E2%80%98the-higher-power-of-lucky%E2%80%99-for-libraries/>

Brief book summary with discussion questions

### California Gold Rush

<http://ceres.ca.gov/ceres/calweb/geology/goldrush.html>

Dates, discoveries, and links for teachers

<http://pbskids.org/wayback/goldrush/index.html>

A student interactive website to learn information about the Gold Rush

<http://www.isu.edu/~trinmich/funfacts.html>

Fun facts about the California Gold Rush

### Natural Wonders- Grand Canyon, National Parks, etc.

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngkids/games/brainteaser/grandcanyon/grandcanyon.html>

Grand Canyon Brainteaser quiz

[http://www.bobspixels.com/kaibab.org/geology/gc\\_geol.htm](http://www.bobspixels.com/kaibab.org/geology/gc_geol.htm)

The geology of the Grand Canyon

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/yellowstone/>

Pictures and information about the wonders of Yellowstone National Park

## **Natural Disasters- Tsunamis, dust storms, earthquakes, and blizzards**

<http://www.weatherwizkids.com/index.htm>

A great student-friendly website with information, diagrams, and descriptions about weather and climate related issues and topics, including natural disasters

<http://earthquake.usgs.gov/learning/kids/>

Student friendly information on earthquakes, including animations to show concepts and terms

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/ngkids/9610/kwave/>

Information about how tsunamis are formed, including descriptions and effects

<http://www.drought.unl.edu/kids/impacts/dustbowl.htm>

Information about how droughts create dust storms and the effects and dangers of dust storms to the environment and its inhabitants

## **Esperanza Rising**

<http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-esperanza-rising/>

Chapter summaries, character and theme description, and topics for discussion

<http://www.emints.org/ethemes/resources/S00001403.shtml>

Links to summaries, book review, biography, and information about Mexico, the Mexican Revolution, the Great Depression, migrant workers, and labor camps.

## **Trapped**

<http://booksforkidsblog.blogspot.com/2008/01/cat-astrophe-averted-trapped-by-peg.html>

Summary of the novel

## **Audio-Visual**

[www.unitedstreaming.com](http://www.unitedstreaming.com)

Possible video and clip topics:

The Southwest Region: Environment

The Great Plains of the Southwest

Welcome to Alaska's National Parks

The Southwest Region of the United States, Part One and Part Two

Farming and Ranching in the Southwestern Region

American Geography Close-ups: The Pacific Region-Vol. 1 and Vol. 2

Trail to Riches: California Gold Rush and Settlement of the Pacific

## **Middletown Township Public Library**

<http://www.mtpl.org>

With a Middletown Township library card, students, teachers and families can log on to the library website and have access to a variety of databases to find supplemental materials for research, pbl's and other needs.

## **Suggested Student Activities:**

### ***Theme introduction activities:***

1. As a whole class, define the elements that develop strength. Consider physical strength, emotional strength, and intellectual strength.
2. Tell the class Olympic athletes, actors, and scholars all have personal training schedules to develop their individual strengths. Often they work with a personal trainer, teacher or independently to conduct a training circuit. (Example workout schedule: 20 minutes of running, 20 minutes of reading, 2 minutes of kindness, etc.) Ask students to individually brainstorm their personal strengths and weaknesses. Then ask them to design a personal training circuit to improve themselves physically, emotionally and intellectually.
3. Share circuits with entire class in small groups.
4. Develop a classroom behavior and learning training circuit.

### ***Core Text Activities:***

1. Listen to daily read-alouds and discuss vocabulary words.  
(Teachers are responsible for selecting vocabulary words for their classroom word walls. This allows for differentiated instruction and targets the classroom's specific needs.)
2. Predict possible outcomes and the ramifications of the characters' actions.
3. Critique and appraise decisions made by the characters, citing specific examples from the text.
4. Make inferences using textual information and providing supporting evidence.
5. Make revisions to original predictions with text supported evidence.
6. Utilize visual imagery to compare and contrast geographical features between states within a region or from region to region.

## **Suggested Short Term Projects (2-4 weeks) that could result in long-term PBL's (entire mp) :**

### **Novelty News!**

1. As a whole class, examine various newspapers and list the components of the newspapers. (Headlines, editorials, sports, advertisements, classifieds, obituaries, weather, book reviews, comics, advice columns, horoscopes, local news, crime reports, world news, etc.)
2. Working in their guided reading groups students will create a newspaper to summarize their novel.
3. All articles, advertisements, weather reports, book reviews, comic strips, editorials, etc. should reflect events that actually occurred in the book. In addition students can symbolize characters, objects, themes, and setting through the various newspaper components.
4. The project can be completed on Microsoft Publisher or Print Shop. All newspapers should be published and shared with the school community.

### **Year in Review**

1. Students will create a list of at least 10 characters from the various books they have read throughout the year. They will imagine a school where all of these characters co-exist. They will create new personas for each character, while still staying true to their actual characteristics.
2. Students will design a yearbook documenting the lives of these 10 characters. Items to include in the yearbook:
  - a. Theme
  - b. Pictures of characters
  - c. List of accomplishments or special talents
  - d. Timeline of significant events
  - e. Quotes representing characters' philosophies
  - f. Superlatives (Most outgoing, Class Clown, etc.)
  - g. Pictures of events (dances, sporting, fundraising, etc.)
  - h. Favorite memories of characters
  - i. Popular music, fashions, TV shows, movies, books
3. All yearbooks will be created with classroom art supplies and computer clipart.

### **Natural Wonders Ecotourism**

1. You are a college student majoring in Ecotourism.
2. You must intern at 1-3 different locations in the Southwest and West regions of the United States in order to receive your degree.
3. Working in groups or independently, select your locations.
4. Design extreme challenges to complete at these locations. (For example, zip-lining near waterfalls in Hawaii, repelling down the Grand Canyon, dogsledding in Alaska, white water rafting on the Colorado River, etc.)
5. Make a travel journal which would include:
  - a. Description of the geography and climate.
  - b. Specific location.
  - c. Details about the extreme adventure and what supplies you need to bring.
  - d. Pictures (clipart, magazine clippings, brochures, etc.) or sketches of what you saw on your adventure. (Flora, fauna, wildlife, geography, weather, extreme adventure in action, people in your tour group, etc.)
  - e. Map of the area
  - f. Log of your actual preparations, journey, and "interesting anecdotes" from the trip. Include emotional reactions to the beauty or ruggedness of the landscape and the extreme adventure.
6. Share tours with classmates.

### **Wild Weather**

1. As a whole class discuss the various extreme weather patterns present in the Southwest and West regions.
2. In small groups, select a natural disaster or phenomenon that has actually occurred in the Southwest or West regions based on weather patterns.
3. Gather research about the natural disaster or phenomenon.
4. Create a newscast as if the event was actually happening. Students will report “live” from the location. Students should include technical information, human interest stories, stories of survival, interviews with public officials, public service announcements or emergency broadcasts, etc.
5. Students should dress in the appropriate attire to protect themselves from the climate of the event.
6. Video clips, visual aids, and sound bytes could also be included.
7. Deliver newscast to class.

### **Survival Online**

1. Students will imagine they are emailing one of their favorite characters from a fourth marking period book.
2. Students will create an online conversation between themselves and the character describing a problem the character is experiencing.
3. Utilizing their personal experiences, students will give advice to the character.
4. Responses will draw upon lessons they have learned, familial advice, media influences and individual disposition.
5. Students should assign an email address to themselves, as well as their character.
6. Teachers can create a template for students to write on, or students could create a document on the computer.

### **Paws for Poetry**

1. Examine various animals native to each of the regions as a whole class.
2. Students will individually select their favorite animals and create a poem (cinquain, diamante, haiku, etc) about the animal and it’s survival instinct.
3. Type poem on the computer using a small font.
4. Outline a picture of the animal on black construction paper and color with cray-pas. Each animal should also wear a collar. Cut out.
5. Attach the poem to the animal’s “collar.”
6. Share with class.
7. Display on “Paws for Poetry” bulletin board.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Grade Survival Guide**

1. Students will create a survival guide about fourth grade to give to next year’s students.
2. Tips should address:
  - a. Things to look forward to
  - b. Academic pursuits
  - c. How to please the teacher ( or not aggravate the teacher)
  - d. Classroom rules
  - e. Classroom routines
  - f. Special Privileges
  - g. Celebrations
  - h. Field Trips
  - i. Science Experiments

Students will explain how they learned to be a stronger person in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Was it their personal nature or did the school environment nurture them?

## **Ongoing Long- term Region PBL's:**

### **USA Regions Scrapbook**

Students will travel to predetermined locations throughout the United States using online virtual field trips, books and classroom resources to gather information about the different regions. Using journal pages (available on link below) and creating scrapbook pages, students will document their learning experiences. Teachers can add “center” activities to accompany various destinations. The artifacts created will go in the scrapbook.

### **Region's Tour Outline for all 5 regions**

<http://hill.troy.k12.mi.us/staff/bnewingham/myweb3/>

Scrapbook materials needed include:

- 3 ring binder
- Sheet protectors
- Journal pages
- Paper: construction, colored copy, assorted scrapbook, colored tissue
- Markers
- Fancy scissors
- Stickers
- Ink stamps and pads
- Colored pencils
- Any brochures, clipart or photos students compile

### **Backpacking through the USA**

Students will create backpacks or valises for each region. Students will visit websites, read books, conduct interviews and watch video clips to ascertain the key accomplishments, natural resources, history, economics, landscape and other cultural phenomena of that region. Students can utilize folders, large envelopes or construction paper to design their backpacks or valises. Student-created documents to include in the backpacks or valises could include:

- Maps
- Brochures
- Postcards
- Pictures/Photos
- Stickers
- Fashions & Accessories
- Travel Itinerary

**You Can't Stop the Beat!** (This project can be adapted for all regions and students could create a music company or portfolio compilation.)

1. Research various music from different the US regions being studied. Examine style, history and connection to unit themes (such as rebels, home, outdoor adventures).
2. Select a song that best represents the unit theme and write an explanation as to the connection this music has to an American historical event.
3. Pick a topic tied to the unit theme, and create a musical artist or band that would sing songs about that topic.
4. Create a track list of songs tied to the topic. They could be real or new ones produced by the "musical artist/s."
5. Select an original song track and write lyrics for the title. Lyrics should include vocabulary appropriate for the event or time period.
6. After finishing the song, make a CD jacket. The outside pieces should have artwork relevant to the musical artist/s and time period, as well as track lists.
7. The inside of the jacket should feature the new song lyrics.
8. Depending on access to computers, work can be published on Print Shop or created with classroom materials.

**Assessments:**

- Informal daily observations
- Writing Conferences
- Anecdotal Notes
- Guided Reading and Writing Sessions
- Teacher-Designed Rubrics
  - Writing
  - Oral Presentation
  - Open-Ended Scoring Rubric
  - Final Project