

LESSON PLAN #3: Abigail's Daily Life

[1] **Curriculum framework(s):** 9.6 Relate a literary work to primary source documents of its literary period or historical setting.13.25 Analyze and explain the structure and elements of nonfiction works.

[2] **Goal of the lesson:** To observe the sundry activities of daily life for Abigail Adams.

[3] **Expected student outcomes:** Students will be able to compare and contrast their lives to that of Mrs. Adams, in terms of daily activity.

[4] **Assessment of expected student outcomes:** Students will hand in the questions after their small group inquiry about Mrs. Adams.

[5] **Instructional procedures:** 45 minutes

Introduction: Go over the Epistolary Analysis handout.

Activities: Post these questions on the Smart Board, and have students answer in both oral and written form.

- i. Go over vocabulary: “ardently;” “miserly;” “metropolis;” “regulars;” “cloister;” “melancholy.”
- ii. What is the significance of the salutation? The conclusion?
- iii. What happened on August 10th? What is Abigail’s reaction to this date?
- iv. What is Abigail’s tone at the start of the 1774 letter? Does it change? Explain.
- v. What is Abigail’s tone at the start of the 1775 letter? Does it change? Explain.
- vi. How would you classify Abigail after reading these two letters? Support.
- vii. Does Abigail accept that her husband must be away from her? What is her rationale? And what does this show about her?
- viii. What is her view on the city versus the country?
- ix. How do Abigail’s struggles indicate her “human” or “realistic” side?
- x. What are the benefits or limitations of the epistolary form?

Closure: Share findings from questions and give most significant point at the end of class as an Exit ticket.

Homework: Work on projects and use today’s lesson in particular for the development of the essay. Also, read and complete an Epistolary Analysis of the next letters in the unit.

Modifications: Use of graphic organizer. Teacher assistance and guided learning during question and discussion.

[6] **Material and resources:**

- 1) Epistolary Analysis handout
- 2) Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 16 October 1774
- 3) Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 12 November 1775

Student Name _____ Date _____

Epistolary Analysis

Date of letter(s)	Location of letter writer
Sender	Recipient

Topic of letter(s)	
Theme(s) of the letter(s)	
Significant quotes	
Historical details in the letter(s)	

Allusions, metaphors, similes and other figures of speech (give examples)	
Tone	
Images	
Diction	
Evidence of sarcasm or satire	
Vocabulary words	

Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 16 October 1774

Braintree October 16 1774

My Much Loved Friend

I dare not express to you at 300 hundred miles distance how ardently I long for your return. I have some very miserly Wishes; and cannot consent to your spending one hour in Town till at least I have had you 12. The Idea plays about my Heart, unnerves my hand whilst I write, awakens all the tender sentiments that years have encreased and matured, and which when with me ~~was~~ were every day dispensing to you. The whole collected stock of ~~nine~~ ten weeks ~~illegible~~ absence knows not haw to brook any longer restraint, but will break forth and flow thou my pen. May the like sensations enter thy breast, and (in spite of all the weighty cares of State) Mingle themselves with those I wish to communicate, for in giving them utterance I have felt more sincere pleasure than I have known since the 10 of August. Many have been the anxious hours I have spent since that day-the threatening aspect of our publick affairs, the complicated distress of this province, the Arduous and perplexed Buisness in which you are engaged, have all conspired to agitate my bosom, with fears and apprehensions to which I have heretofore been [a] stranger, and far from thinking the Scene closed, ~~illegible~~ it looks [as] tho the curtain was but just drawn and only the first Scene of the infernal plot disclosed and whether the end will be tragical Heaven alone knows. You cannot be, I know, nor do I wish to see you an inactive Spectator, but if the Sword be drawn I bid adieu to all domestick felicity, and look forward to that Country where there is neither wars nor rumors of War in a firm belief that thro the mercy of its King we shall both rejoice there together. I greatly fear that the arm of treachery and voilence ~~are~~ is lifted over us as a Scourge and heavy punishment from heaven for our numerous offences, and for the misimprovement of our great advantages. If we expect ~~the blessings~~ to inherit the blessings of our Fathers, we should return a little more to their primitive Simplicity of Manners, and not sink into inglorious ease. We have too many high sounding words, and too few, actions that correspond with them. I have spent one Sabbeth in Town since you left me. I saw no difference in respect to ~~ornamen~~ ornaments, &c. &c. but in the Country you must look for that virtue, of which you find but small Glimerings in the Metropolis. Indeed they have not the advantages, nor the resolution to encourage our own Manufactories which people in the country have. To the Mercantile part, tis considerd as throwing away their own Bread; but they must retrench their expenses and be content with a small share of gain for they will find but few who will wear their Livery. ~~illegible~~ As for me I will seek wool and flax and work willingly with my Hands, and indeed their is occasion for all our industry and economy. You mention the removal of our Books &c. from Boston. I believe they are safe there, and it would incommode the Gentlemen to remove them, as they would not then have a place to repair to for study. I suppose they would not chose to be at the expense of bording out. Mr. Williams I believe keeps pretty much with his mother. Mr. Hills father had some thoughts of removing up to Braintree provided he could be accommodated with a house, which he finds very difficult.

Mr. Cranch's last determination was to tarry in Town unless any thing new takes place. His Friends in Town oppose his Removal so much that he is determind to stay. The opinion you have entertaind of General Gage is I believe just, indeed he professes to act

only upon the Defensive. The People in the [Country] begin to be very anxious for the congress to rise. They have no Idea of the Weighty Buisness you have to transact, and their Blood boils with indignation at the Hostile preparations they are constant Witnesses of. Mr. Quincys so secret departure is Matter of various Specculation-some say he is deputed by the congress, others that he is gone to Holland, and the Tories says he is gone to be hanged.

I rejoice at the favourable account you give me of your Health; May it be continued to you. My Health is much better than it was last fall. Some folks say I grow very fat.-I venture to write most any thing in this Letter, because I know the care of the Bearer. He will be mast sadly dissapointed if you should be broke up before he arrives, as he is very desirous of being introduced by you to a Number of Gentlemen of respectable characters. I almost envy him, that be should see you, before I can.

Mr. Thaxter and Rice present their Regards to you.

Unkle Quinsy too sends his Love to you, he is very good to call and see me, and so have ~~all~~ many other of my Friends been. Coll. Waxen and Lady were here a monday, and send their Love to you. The Coll. promiss'd to write. Mrs. Waxen will spend a Day or two on her return with me. I told Betsy to write to you. She says she would if you were her Husband.

Your Mother sends her Love to you, and all your family too numerous to name desire to be rememberd. You will receive Letters from two, who are as earnest to write to Pappa as if the welfare of a kingdom depended upon it. If you can give any guess within a month let me know when you think of returning to Your most Affectionate

Abigail Adams

A scanned image of the original letter is available at the following site:
<http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/aea/cfm/doc.cfm?id=L17741016aa>

Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 16 October 1774 [electronic edition]. *Adams Family Papers: An Electronic Archive*. Massachusetts Historical Society.

Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 12 November 1775

Braintree Novbr. 12, 1775

I received yours of October 23 [[John to Abigail, 23 October 1775](#)]. I want to hear from you every day, and I always feel sorrow when I come to the close of a Letter. Your Time must be greatly engrosed, but little of it to spaire to the calls of Friendship, and I have reason to think I have the largest share of it.

Winter makes [its] approaches fast. I hope I shall not be obliged to spend it without my dearest Friend, I know not how to think of it.

The intelecance you will receive before this reaches you, will I should think make a plain path, tho a dangerous one for you. I could not join to day in the petitions of our worthy parson, for a reconciliation between our, no longer parent State, but tyrant State, and these Colonies. -- Let us seperate, they are unworthy to be our Breathren. Let us renounce them and instead of suplications as ~~for~~ formerly for their prosperity and happiness, Let us besech the almighty to blast their counsels and bring to Nought all their devices.

I have nothing remarkable to write you. A little Skirmish hapned last week. The perticulars I have endeavoured to collect, but whether I have the facts right I am not certain. A Number of Cattle were kept at Leachmores point where two Centinals were placed, in a high tide tis an Island. The Regulars had observed this and a Scheme was laid to send a Number of them over and take of the Stock. Accordingly a number of Boats and about 400 men were sent; they landed it seems, unperceived by the Centinals who were a sleep; one of whom they killed the other took prisoner. As soon as they were perceived, they poured the cannon from Prospect Hill upon them which sunk one of their Boats, but as the tide was very high, it was difficult getting over, and some time before any alarm was given. A Coll. Tomson of the Riffel Men, Marchd instantly with his Men, and tho a very stormy day, regarded not the tide, nor wated for Boats, but Marchd over, neck high in water, and dischargd their peices, when the Regulars ran without waiting for to get of their Stock, and made the best of their way to the opposite Shore. The General sent his thanks in a public manner to the brave officer and his Men. Major Mifflin I hear was there, and flew about as tho he would have raisd the whole Army.

May they never find us deficient in courage and Spirit.

Our Army is exceedingly well supplied with every article but wood and provinder which is very scarce. As to provisions we should find no difficulty to vidual an other Army full as large. Tis now very Healthy both in the Army, and country, we have had very long teadious rains for six weeks past; sometimes not more than one fair day in a week.

All our Friends are well. My Father seems to be much broke by his great affliction, seems to have his care and anxiety doubled. I can perceive it in numberless instances. -- I hope you will be able to get his Sulky repaird, as he wants it now it comes cold Weather very much.

Dr. Frankling invited me to spend the winter in Philidelphia. I shall wish to be there, unless you return. I have been like a nun in a cloister ever since you went away, have not been into any other house than my Fathers and Sisters, except once to Coll. Quincys. Indeed I have had no inclination for Company. My Evenings are lonesome and Melancholy. In the day time family affairs take of my attention but my Evenings are spent with my departed parent. I then ruminat upon all her care and tenderness, and I am sometimes lost, and absor'd in a flood of tenderness e'er I am aware of it, or can call to my aid, my only props and support.

I must bid you adieu tis late at Night. Most affectionately Yours.

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