

Author's Notebook

1. **Historical Fiction**—*Chief Pontiac's War* is a story that is classified as historical fiction. While it is based on history and contains many historical facts, several situations and the modern characters in the story come from the author's imagination. Can you name three characters in the story who are historical figures and three who are fictional, or made up?
2. **Creating Your Own Historical Fiction**—Write a story about your last birthday. All the people in the story should be real characters. However, create a character to represent you. As you write your story, describe how your fictional character feels at different points during the day. Try to create a few different conversations between the fictional character and the real characters.

3. **Professor Tuesday and Miss Pepper**—The names for the professor and the teacher come from the author’s imagination. However, the good professor was named after a real person. Although the person’s true name is not “Tuesday,” the person seems to always say that he’ll get something done on Tuesday. In creating Miss Pepper’s name, the author wanted a unique name that made the reader think of someone with a spicy character. Can you think of some unique names for characters in an adventure story?
4. **The Narrator**—Much of the story is told through the eyes of Jesse. Describe Jesse in your own words. Is Jesse a boy or a girl? Is Jesse wise or silly?
5. **Jargon**—Jargon is defined as terminology or language that is used by a group, activity, or profession. People who enjoy gaming often use a particular type of jargon. Doctors usually speak in medical jargon. Can you name a group of people who have their own jargon?
6. **Voice**—Different people speak differently. Children speak differently than adults. Teachers usually speak differently than dentists. Mothers often speak differently than fathers. When writing a story, authors have to pay attention to the voices of their characters ... how words and phrases are used by unique characters. See if you can point to how Miss

Pepper's and Robert's voices are different in this story.

7. **Passenger Pigeons**—During one point in the story, the class sees a huge flock of passenger pigeons. Research the passenger pigeon and write a report on the bird. Include in your report a description of a passenger pigeon (including your own drawing); estimates of how many passenger pigeons there were thought to be at one time; what the passenger pigeon ate; and how the passenger pigeon became extinct.
8. **Character Development**—When writing a story, it is fun to develop the personalities and behaviors of different characters. Describe these different characters in your own words: Miss Pepper, Robert, Professor Tuesday, Mr. La Blanc, Tamika, and Louis.
9. **Surprise**—Surprise is an important element in any story. Did anything happen in the story that surprised you? Did you find a funny surprise? Did you notice any scary surprises?
10. **Onomatopoeia**—Words that imitate sounds are referred to as onomatopoeia. Zoom, pow, and bang are a few examples. In this story, a native man trades for a gun. The guns used in the 1700s were called flintlock rifles. When a flintlock rifle is shot, it makes two distinctive noises. First, it makes a CLICK when a piece of flint creates a spark. Next, it makes

a BOOM when the gunpowder in the rifle is ignited. Can you think of some words that make sounds?

11. **Homonym**—Words that have more than one meaning are often referred to as homonyms. For example, the word ‘left’ can mean your left hand or left side. ‘Left’ can imply that someone or something was left behind. In this story one of the students locates an ‘appendix’ in a book. Another student thinks ‘appendix’ is a part of the body. Both are true. The word ‘appendix’ is a homonym. Can you think of another homonym?
12. **Native American Tribes**—*Chief Pontiac’s War* mentions several different Native American tribes. Research the tribes in your area of the country. Find three facts about one of the tribes and share these facts with your classmates.
13. **Location**—In the story, the students discover the GPS locations for different places. The author of this story lives near the 45th parallel. Do you know what the 45th parallel is? What is it between?
14. **Historical Places**—Several historical places are mentioned in this book. They include Fort Detroit, Michigan; Sandusky, Ohio; Fort La Baye, Wisconsin; Fort Michilimackinac, Michigan; and several others. Write a story about visiting a historical site and what you learned when you were there.