



A Lesson on Traveling West by Eric Kent

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour

Lesson Keywords: Western expansion, wagons, pioneers, travel

Lesson Description: Students will read a small passage about the western expansion of the united states. We will then answer some questions about the text. I would like also to expand this to a classroom discussion so we can further discuss the Oregon trail, medicine and food for the settlers, and interactions with the native tribes.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

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.RI.4.3: Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2d: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

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.)

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.SL.4.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.4a: Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

Traveling West by

Content: Long ago, when people settled the United States, most people lived in the East. It was hard to travel west. There were no planes, trains, or automobiles. People traveled by wagon or boat.

In the 1840s, many people traveled far across the United States. They were traveling to the West. They were pioneers. They would settle in the western part of the country.

Getting to the west was very difficult. There were no roads. People traveled in groups. Each family would buy a covered wagon. That is a big wagon with a kind of tent on it.

Each family would pack the tools and supplies they needed to build a new home. They would have to fit all they took in their wagon. Then they would travel together. They made what was called a wagon train. It was a group of wagons all going the same way. They would meet with other families to plan their trip. They would choose a route.

When the families started the trip, they did not know each other. They met when the trip began. But they would spend more than a year together. So they got to know each other well. Sometimes they would borrow tools from each other. Sometimes they shared food. They had to travel in bad weather. It was a long trip.

It would take more than a year to reach the West. The families sometimes had babies along the way. The wagon train would stop for a few days to help the mother with the baby. Then they would keep going. They knew they had a long way to travel. They could not stay long.

When the wagon train got to the West, the families would settle there. They would build homes. They would start farms. They would build communities. Those communities would grow into towns and cities.

It was hard to get to the West in the pioneer days. Then people built roads. People built a railroad that crossed the United States. By 1900, there were many more people in the West. People came west by train. A trip that had taken months now took a few days. The railroad brought many changes.

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Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: pioneers **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: They were traveling to the west. They were pioneers.

A: People that bake pies with their ears.

B: Out of work circus acrobats.

C: Deadbeat dads heading out to avoid paying child support.

D: People who go into unknown territory. Innovators.

Question: Choose a sentence where "pioneers" is used correctly.

A: Mom couldn't find a place to park because of all the pioneers in the road.

B: The pioneers had to float their wagon over the snake river.

C: My bed was lumpy, and I found some pioneers under it.

D: Sally and Jim shared some pioneers together after dinner.

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Q: 2 WordPhrase: route **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: They would choose a "route." What does "route" mean here?

A: It is a type of starchy vegetable.

B: It is fancy fabric worn around your neck.

C: It is a pathway or way to reach a destination.

D: It is card that shows what needs to be done that day.

Question: Pick a sentence that demonstrates the meaning of the word "route"

A: Kim could not understand why Bill had a better route on his math test.

B: Jamaya pulled the squash up by the route.

C: The football team won 46 to 7. It was a total route.

D: The streets were twisty and crowded, but Omar found a perfect route to the store.

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Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - Covered Wagons

People used to travel in wooden wagons that had a cloth cover on it.? Why did people stop traveling like this?? Would you like to travel in a bumpy wagon?

2 - Native Americans

As the pioneers went out west, they came across a lot of native people who lived out there.? What were their relations like?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: At that time, most of North America was empty land. Would you be allowed to travel across it now in the same way? Within a few years, the country was full of roads and towns and trains.? Was this good for America? Give examples.

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