

1800-1849 Routes West

Activities and lesson plan created by Michael Young, former History Department Chair, Omaha Burke High School. Edited by Lonnie Moore & Karen Graff.

activities

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1

Landmarks

Activity Grade Level

8



■ activity

Photograph Analysis

Have students read the following section on the 1800-1849 timeline of Nebraska Studies.

<http://www.nebraskastudies.org/1800-1849/routes-west/landmarks/>

Have students compare and contrast the photographs of Chimney Rock and Scotts Bluff found on that page.

Then, have students answer the following questions:

- How were these landmarks formed?
- What are the chances that Chimney Rock will be standing 150 years from now? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think Chimney Rock appears in more Oregon Trail journals than any other physical feature?
- How did these two landmarks receive their names?
- In what ways do these landmarks benefit Nebraskans today?
- Why do you think Scotts Bluff chosen to be a National Monument over Jailhouse and Courthouse Rocks?

The rock formations seemed important to early travelers. Are they important to the state of Nebraska today? Why or why not?

For more information, students may visit the following webpages:

<https://www.nps.gov/scbl/index.htm>

https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/scotts_bluff/chimney_rock.html

■ Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Social Studies: **SS 8.3.2; SS 8.3.3; SS 8.4.1; SS 8.4.2; SS 8.4.4; SS8. 4.5**

Language Arts: **LA 8.1.6 Comprehension; LA 8.2.1 Writing Process**

Science: **SC 5.4.2 | SC 8.1.1; SC 8.3.3**

2 | River Routes

Activity Grade Level

8



■ activity

Discussion

Have students read the following pages on the 1800-1849 timeline of Nebraska Studies.

<http://www.nebraskastudies.org/1800-1849/routes-west/the-mighty-mo/>

<http://www.nebraskastudies.org/1800-1849/routes-west/platte-river-road/>

Then, have students complete the graphic organizer on the Missouri River and the Platte River, found in the Resources section.

Next, conduct a class discussion comparing and contrasting the rivers using the graphic organizer to have students consider each river's value as a means of transportation.

- Water depth.
- Water current.
- Location with reference to western settlement.
- Influence on development of communities.
- Relationship between the Native Americans and the rivers.
- Comments made by early travelers.

Why was it difficult to travel on the Platte River? How was the Platte River useful to travelers?

■ Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Social Studies: [SS 8.3.2](#); [SS 8.3.3](#); [SS 8.4.1](#); [SS 8.4.2](#); [SS 8.4.4](#); [SS 8.4.5](#)

Language Arts: [LA 8.1.6 Comprehension](#); [LA 8.2.1 Writing](#)

Science: [SC 5.4.2](#) | [SC 8.1.1](#); [SC 8.3.3](#)

■ activity

Map Analysis

Have students read the following page on the 1800-1849 timeline of Nebraska Studies.

<http://www.nebraskastudies.org/1800-1849/routes-west/landmarks/>

Then, have students click on the map titled "Places to Visit on the Trails." Next, have the students choose two (2) places on the trail.

The students should then write four journal entries. Two entries will be as if they were traveling the trail in the mid-1800's describing what they experience and saw at those two locations. The next two entries will be writing what they might experience and see if they were traveling today at those locations.

The websites below can serve as good starting points for background research for developing authentic journal entries.

Rock Creek Station: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/rockcreekstation/>

Fort Kearny: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/fortkearny/>

O'Fallon's Bluff: <http://www.outbacknebraska.com/2013/09/sunday-stories-early-history-ofallons.html>

Ash Hollow: <http://outdoornebraska.gov/ashhollow/>

Courthouse Rock: https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/scotts_bluff/courthouse_jail_rocks.html

Chimney Rock: https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/scotts_bluff/chimney_rock.html

Scotts Bluff: <https://www.nps.gov/scbl/index.htm>

Fort Laramie: <https://www.nps.gov/foia/index.htm>

■ Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Social Studies: SS HS.3.2; SS HS.3.5; SS HS.4.2; SS HS.4.5

Language Arts: LA 12.1.6 Comp

Science: SC 12.3.3; SC 12.4.2

4 Trail Journals

Activity Grade Level

HS



■ activity Writing

Have students read the Platte River page in the Routes West section on the 1800-1849 timeline of Nebraska Studies.

<http://nebraskastudies.org/1800-1849/routes-west/platte-river-road/>

Then, have students complete the Platte River Comments Analysis Worksheet found in the Resources section. Have them conclude their written comments with a discussion of how people living in Nebraska in the 21st century view the Platte River.

■ Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Social Studies: **SS HS.3.2**; **SS HS.3.5**; **SS HS.4.2**; **SS HS.4.5**

Language Arts: **LA 12.1.6 Comprehension**; **LA 12.2.2 Writing Modes**

Science: **SC 12.3.3**; **SC 12.4.2**

L1

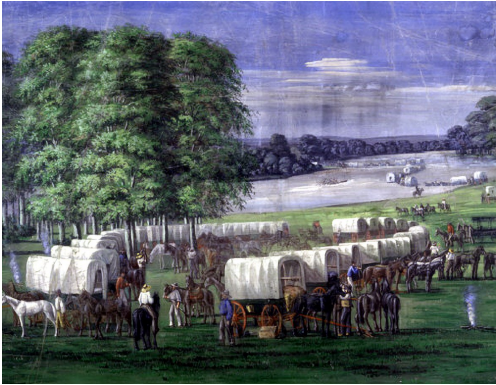
LESSON PLAN

The Covered Wagon

This lesson plan was created by Cindy Simonsen, a 4th Grade Teacher Sandhills Elementary, Halsey, Nebraska. Edited by Lonnie Moore, High School History Teacher, Omaha South.

Activity Grade Level

8



Lesson Objectives

1. Students will understand the importance of the covered wagon to emigrants on the westward trails.
2. Students will identify and share information about covered wagons images.

Introduction

Show photographs, drawings, or replicas of a covered wagon to your students. You may use the wagon diagram at this site to label the parts of a covered wagon.

Wagon Diagram from End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center:

<https://www.oregontrailcenter.org/HistoricalTrails/TheWagon.htm>

■ Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Social Studies: **SS 8.3.2**; **SS 8.3.3**; **SS 8.4.1**; **SS 8.4.2**; **SS 8.4.4**; **SS 8.4.5**

Language Arts: **LA 8.1.6 Comprehension**; **LA 8.4.1 Information Fluency**

L1

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Resources

Materials

Papers, pen or pencil

Current Map of Nebraska (see web links below as well)

Covered Wagon Multiple-Choice located in the Resources section at the end of this document.

Internet Resources

Nebraska Studies 1800-1849 website, Routes West section

<http://nebraskastudies.org/1800-1849/routes-west/>

Nebraska Studies 1800-1849 website, The Oregon Trail

<http://nebraskastudies.org/1800-1849/routes-west/the-oregon-trail/>

Wagon Diagram from End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center

<https://www.oregontrailcenter.org/HistoricalTrails/TheWagon.htm>

How did Pioneers Travel? from History Channel

<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/a-thousand-pioneers-head-west-on-the-oregon-trail>

Nebraska County Map

<https://geology.com/county-map/nebraska.shtml>

Graphic Organizers

<http://www.graphic.org/venbas.html>

Rubrics: General Rubric

<http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/rubric.htm>

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Internet Resources

Nebraska Dept. of Education Academic Standards

<https://www.education.ne.gov/contentareastandards/>

Nebraska Dept. of Education State Social Studies Standards

<https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Nebraska-Social-Studies-Standards-Final-11-2019.pdf>

Nebraska State Historical Society

<https://history.nebraska.gov>

Nebraska State Historical Society: Nebraska History magazine

<https://history.nebraska.gov/publications/nebraska-history-magazine>

Rubrics: General Rubric

<http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/rubric.htm>

The American Memory Collection. Library of Congress. <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/index.html>

The Library of Congress Learning Page: The Historians' Sources: Analysis of Primary Sources.

"Questions for Analyzing Primary Sources."

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html>

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Activity Grade Level

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The Process

1. Have students access the Oregon Trail page in the Routes West section of the 1800-1849 timeline on the Nebraska Studies website:
<http://nebraskastudies.org/1800-1849/routes-west/the-oregon-trail/>
2. Have students create a list of important uses and information about a covered wagon as they read the text on the Oregon Trail page. When they are finished reading, you can watch the video on the page as a class.
3. Next, have them type "covered wagons" in the search box of Nebraska Studies, click on "photographs" in the faceted search options, and look at these images. Students can then expand the search to the rest of the Internet. At the end, they should have an image to share with the class. There are some suggested sites below:

California Trail Interpretive Center

<https://www.californiatrailcenter.org/history-of-the-covered-wagon/>

Oregon Pioneers

<http://www.oregonpioneers.com/wagon.htm>

<http://www.oregonpioneers.com/oxen.htm>

Britanica

<https://www.britannica.com/technology/prairie-schooner>

Have students complete the Covered Wagon Research Worksheet found in the Resources section.

4. Have students choose one of the following paintings by William Henry Jackson and answer the questions below:
<http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15330coll22/id/79660>
<http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/79183/rec/1> <http://digital.denverlibrary.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15330coll22/id/79621/rec/14>
 - a. Who was the artist?
 - b. During what year did he paint this picture?
 - c. What is the range of years he was trying to depict?
 - d. About how many years between the time that is being depicted and when it was painted?
 - e. With many years in between the actual event Jackson witnessed and the time of his painting, what does that potentially mean for the trustworthiness of the painting's accuracy?
 - f. Make five observations about the painting's contents.
 - g. What is your favorite part of the painting?
 - h. What is one aspect of the painting that does not fit with your study of covered wagons on the Oregon Trail? What is one aspect that does fit?

Finally, have students pair off with another student with a different painting and have them share their findings with each other. Have three students at random share their findings on one of the William Henry Jackson paintings.

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Activity Grade Level

8

Learning Advice

Bring the students back for a large group discussion. Share the lists of uses and important information about the covered wagon. Share their individual images and create a bulletin board or mural of the pictures.

Conclusion:

Through the readings, video, and images, students will have learned about covered wagons and their importance to the pioneers.

Assessment:

Assess students' participation, completion of the Covered Wagon Research Worksheet, reports given when in pairs, and the Covered Wagon Multiple Choice quiz. Create your own rubric for the students' participation and oral reports. Here are some sites with rubrics for assessment.

General Rubric

<http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/rubric.htm>

Answers to the Multiple Choice assessment activity found in the Resources section:

1. B 2. C 3. B 4. A 5. C 6. B 7. C 8. C 9. B 10. B

Extension Activities:

1. Have students create their own covered wagon replica out of construction paper.
2. Have students create a bulletin board of the images they shared.
3. Have students create a physical classroom display of a wagon train.
4. The next lesson could be to *Pack Your Wagon*.



1800-1849 Routes West

resources

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Nebraska Department of Education Academic Standards
<https://www.education.ne.gov/contentareastandards/>

Nebraska Department of Education Social Studies Standards
<https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Nebraska-Social-Studies-Standards-Final-11-2019.pdf>

National Archives <http://www.archives.gov/index.html>

Library of Congress Learning Page Lesson Plans <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/index.html>

Places to Visit on the Trails



River Routes Graphic Organizer

	Missouri River	Platte River
Water Depth		
Water Current		
Settlements near the river		
Influence on development of communities		
Native American relationship to the river		
Comments by early travelers		

Platte River Comments Analysis Worksheet

1. Interpretation: What do you think was meant by each of the following descriptions of the Platte River?
 - a. "A mile wide and an inch deep"
 - b. "The most magnificent and useless of rivers"
2. Summaries: Read over each person's statements on the Platte and write a one sentence summary for each.
 - a. Early traveler writing on the Platte's depth.
 - b. Hiram M. Chittenden on Platte navigation.
3. Compare and Contrast: Compare and contrast the experiences of three fur traders (Stuart, Laramie, & Pains) on the Platte.
 - a. Statement of comparison.
 - b. Statement of contrast.
4. What was one word on this page that was new to you, or had an unclear meaning? Write its definition here.
5. What were ten terms used to describe the Platte River on this page?
6. Write a one-sentence summary for this page entitled Platte River Road.

Covered Wagon Research Worksheet

1. Write a description of a covered wagon that includes at least ten (10) aspects that you observe from the photographs/drawings.
2. Write a list of at least five materials needed to construct a covered wagon.
3. Write a list of the ten items you think would be the most important to pack in a covered wagon for the journey to Oregon or California.
4. Why didn't travelers sleep in the wagon at night?
5. Why did pioneers often take items out of the wagon and leave them on the trail?
6. What is the difference between a Conestoga wagon and a covered wagon?
7. Why did travelers on the Oregon/California Trail most often choose a covered wagon over a Conestoga?
8. Why was the covered wagon often called a prairie schooner?
9. How much did a yoke of oxen usually cost for the trip to Oregon?
10. How did the driver control the oxen?
11. About how many miles would they try to travel in a day?

Covered Wagon Multiple-Choice

NAME _____

PERIOD _____

DIRECTIONS: Circle the best answer.

1. A typical wagon of the 1840s could carry a load weighing about _____.
 - a. 1200-1400 pounds
 - b. 1600-2000 pounds
 - c. 2000-2010 pounds
2. What was the nickname used for covered wagons?
 - a. Great Deserts
 - b. Prairie Rushers
 - c. Prairie Schooners
3. Why were the wagons called this?
 - a. Because the wagons looked like a long train passing.
 - b. Because the wagon's cover looked like a ship's sail.
 - c. Because the wagon blended into the prairie colors.
4. What was the size of the average wagon?
 - a. 10 feet long and 4 feet wide
 - b. 10 feet long and 10 feet wide
 - c. 4 feet long and 4 feet wide
5. Most wagons were pulled by _____.
 - a. horses
 - b. cows
 - c. oxen
6. About how much did a yoke of oxen cost?
 - a. \$100
 - b. \$50
 - c. \$25
7. The covered wagons carried the pioneers about _____ miles per day.
 - a. 20 miles
 - b. 10 miles
 - c. 16 miles
8. Why did some of the trails begin to look like winding junkyards?
 - a. Because there were many graves on the trail.
 - b. Because of all the litter from the pioneers.
 - c. Because pioneers overloaded the wagons and had to discard items.
9. In some places the wagons had to pass in columns hundreds of yards apart because _____.
 - a. there wasn't enough room for two wagons at a time.
 - b. the trail shifted because of weather and use.
 - c. they were not traveling together.
10. A group of wagons in a line was called _____.
 - a. a wagon trail
 - b. a wagon train
 - c. a wagon tow

appendix

Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

Social Studies Standards

4

SS 4.3.1 Students will explore where (spatial) and why people, places and environments are organized in the state.

SS 4.3.2 Compare the characteristics of places and regions and their impact on human decisions.

SS 4.3.3 Explain how human and natural forces have modified different environments in Nebraska and how humans have adapted.

SS 4.3.5 Use geographic skills to make connections to issues and events.

8

SS 8.3.2 Examine how regions form and change over time.

SS 8.3.3 Determine how the natural environment is changed by natural and human forces and how humans adapt to their surroundings.

SS 8.4.1 Analyze patterns of continuity and change over time in the United States history.

SS 8.4.2 Use multiple perspectives to evaluate the historical, social, and cultural context of past and current events.

SS 8.4.4 Evaluate and interpret sources for perspective and historical context.

SS 8.4.5 Apply the inquiry process to construct and answer historical questions.

HS

SS HS.3.2 Evaluate how regions form and change over time

SS HS.3.5 Evaluate issues and/or events using geographic knowledge and geospatial skills to make informed decisions.

SS HS.4.2 Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of history.

SS HS.4.5 Apply the inquiry process to construct and answer historical questions.

Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

■ Language Arts Standards

4

LA 4.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by using prior knowledge and text information while reading grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 4.2.1 Writing Process: Students will apply the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish writing using correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other conventions of standard English appropriate for grade-level.

8

LA 8.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by applying prior knowledge, using text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading increasingly complex grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 8.2.1 Writing Process: Students will apply the writing process to plan, draft, revise, edit, and publish writing using correct spelling, grammar, punctuation, and other conventions of standard English appropriate for grade-level.

LA 8.4.1 Information Fluency: Students will evaluate, create, and communicate information in a variety of media and formats (textual, visual, and digital).

12

LA 12.1.6 Comprehension: Students will construct meaning by applying prior knowledge, using text information, and monitoring comprehension while reading increasingly complex grade-level literary and informational text.

LA 12.2.2 Writing Modes: Students will write in multiple modes for a variety of purposes and audiences across disciplines.

Nebraska Department of Education Content Area Standards

■ Science Standards

8

8.1.1 Students will design and conduct investigations that will lead to descriptions of relationships between evidence and explanations.

8.3.3 Students will describe populations and ecosystems.

12

12.3.3 Students will describe, on a molecular level, the cycling of matter and the flow of energy between organisms and their environment.

12.4.2 Students will investigate the relationships among Earth's structure, systems, and processes.