



Essex Steam Train & Riverboat

Field Trip Lesson Plan

Jr. High United States History



AIMS

Before Trip: How did the Transcontinental railroad promote westward expansion?
After Trip: How did modern transportation technology affect America in the late 19th century?

DO NOWS

Before Trip: Describe the experience of moving west as part of a wagon train.
After Trip: Describe the experience of traveling on a steam train.

MOTIVATIONS

Before Trip: A railroad is being constructed to link the eastern and western parts of the United States! Do you like long car rides? How does that compare to a wagon ride?
After Trip: How will people react to new steam trains? How do you react to new technology?

ACTIVITIES

Before Trip:

1. Introduce students to the Transcontinental Railroad.
2. Have students understand the importance of railroads in westward expansion.

After Trip:

1. Discuss the impact of technology on society, both positive and negative, focusing on steam-powered railroads. Students will be able to use their field trip experiences to accurately describe travel on a steam train.

QUESTIONS

Before Trip:

1. What were the dangers of wagon travel out west?
2. Why were wagons not able to truly link the eastern and western United States?

After Trip:

1. How did railroad travel compare with earlier methods of transportation?
2. How did people react to the Transcontinental Railroad?
3. What were some positive and negatives effects of rail travel?

SUMMARY

Before Trip: The Transcontinental Railroad provided reliable, fast transportation across America.
After Trip: There were many pros and some cons associated with the modern railroad technology of the late 19th century.

ADDITIONAL LESSONS

1. Industrial Revolution and Steam Power
2. Lives of Railroad Workers in the Industrial Era
3. Impact of Railroads on 19th Century America (Time Zones, etc.)
4. Roaring 20s

Jr. High US History
Date: _____

Name: _____
Field Trip

STEAM TRAINS: The Force that United America



YOUR ASSIGNMENT: *Pay close attention as you travel on the train today. Be sure to complete all of the following tasks. Enjoy your trip!*

1. What type of locomotive is pulling the train today?
2. What type of fuel powers today's locomotive?
3. Step back in history: As a child seeing a steam train for the first time, what would be your reaction?
4. How does train travel compare with a horse and wagon on a dirt road?
5. What are some positive effects of steam trains? Negative?
6. How did railroad affect westward expansion?
7. How did Native Americans react to railroads being built westward?

