

LESSON TITLE: Railroads: Economic and Cultural Significance Across the Continents
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DURATION, CLASS, GRADE LEVEL, NUMBER OF STUDENTS

World History, 9th Grade, 70 Students over three class periods. 3 day lesson plan with a weekend to complete assessment podcast.

LOCATION

Los Angeles, California

KEY VOCABULARY

Industrial Revolution
Transcontinental railroad
Population concentration
Economic growth
Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway
Terminus
Vladivostok

INSTRUCTIONAL

MATERIALS

Internet capable device for students.
Powerpoint.
Word document packet of resources.

**ENDURING UNDERSTANDING
(BIG IDEA)**

Students will analyze the importance of the railroads in the Industrial Revolution and the current landscape of the United States.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION/S

How was the United States able to use the Industrial Revolution to rapidly urbanize and develop into a world power? Why is Los Angeles a large city? Why is Vladivostok not as large as Los Angeles? Was the Tran-Siberian Railway as effective in industrializing Russia as the American transcontinental lines were for the United States?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to analyze the impact of railroads in the Industrial Revolution in Europe, America, and Russia by creating a podcast comparing the great transcontinental railroads of the late nineteenth century.

STANDARDS

California History Standards 10.3 and 11.2

BACKGROUND

Teachers should be familiar with the transcontinental railroads of America and Russia. He or she should also be aware of some Los Angeles History. I would recommend *Rival Rails: The Race to Build America's Greatest Transcontinental Railroad* by Walter R. Borneman in order to fulfill both these requirements.

Students prior knowledge should be the basic characteristics of a civilization and trade. They should also be familiar with general trends in American history. This lesson is built for a World History class, so we will be going over American history very generally.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

Day 1

- After viewing several satellite images from space and a population map of the United States, students will be posed the question, “Why is LA here?” They will answer using **Chalktalk**.
- Drawing on previous knowledge of city location, students will most likely point to the Port of Los Angeles being important to the city’s location. Challenge students using the **Socratic Method** by asking students how LA was connected to the rest of the country. Emphasize the importance of transportation in trade and commerce.
- Show students a graph of LA’s population from 1870-1910. Ask students to **research** what important events in LA history occurred during these years to cause such a dramatic spike in population. Students will likely identify the importance of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway’s completion.
- Lecture briefly and use **Socratic Method** to introduce the railway’s importance in the Industrial Revolution. Play off students’ knowledge of canals to talk about rail transport’s importance to industrialization.
- Students will examine two **maps** of Manchester, paying particular attention to the growth of the city and the new railways that help spur growth. Teacher will briefly lecture on the role railroads played in the foundation of new industrial centers in England, Germany, the Low Countries, and the Eastern United States. What does this have to do with the West and LA? Here is where the transcontinental railroads will be introduced.
- Lecture briefly about the first transcontinental railroad. Mention Promontory, Utah and the long term negative effects the South suffered due to a lack of railroad funding during the Civil War. Have students **make a “Metro” map** of the main transcontinental lines in the United States. Pay particular attention to the AT&SF

Day 2

- Students will examine the cultural impact the railroads had on American thought through an **analysis of artwork**. Students will look at artwork from perspective of Caucasian settlers and from Native American perspective. Students will watch short clip on American artwork. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6QlgBKWoHg>
- Students will confirm the supposed connection between the AT&SF and the population boom in Los Angeles by examining railroad advertisements for Southern California.
- Students will be given a short description of how Europeans view the United States in 1800 and compare it with their previous knowledge of the United States’ status as a major world power by the middle of the twentieth century. In a **silent discussion**, students will write about how the US undergoes this major change from a backwater to a force to be reckoned with. Teacher should guide students towards the answer of expansion, the unifying force of the Civil War, and industrialization and urbanization of the nineteenth century.
- In order to understand the Federal Government’s role in the expansion of railroads, students will **jigsaw** two acts from Congress concerning westward expansion.
- Students will create a **graphic organizer** detailing the NATIONAL effects of the transcontinental railroads, with a particular emphasis on the local effects the railroad had in building the city of LA. Students will consult trade records from Los Angeles, along with excerpts from *Santa Fe: The Railroad Gateway to the American West* by Donald Duke and *Rails through the orange groves* by Stephen E. Donaldson and William A. Myers.

Day 3

- Students will be asked if they know of any other transcontinental railroads. Teacher will introduce the Trans-Siberian Railroad using a map.
- Students will use **Chalktalk** to think of why the Russian Czars wanted to build this railway.
- Students will read a short history and present challenges of the Trans-Siberian Railway.
- In groups of three, students will conduct a **research** project analyzing the effects of the Trans-Siberian Railway. They will use the Internet to find similar cultural impact that was seen in the American transcontinental railways and will examine the economic consequences of the Trans-Siberian Railway.
- Students, while in their groups, will begin assessment.

EVALUATIONS (ASSESSMENT)

-Assessment: Students will plan and **record a podcast** episode concerning the importance of the railroads in the Industrial Revolution. They will sum up what they learned in this lesson and inform listeners why the railroad helped Los Angeles develop into the sprawling metropolis of today. Students will also look at the terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Vladivostok, and compare it to Los Angeles. (Vladivostok is a city of 500,000 people today.) Did the trans-Siberian Railway have the same effects on Vladivostok that the AT&SF had on Los Angeles? Why or why not? Could history have unfolded differently?

EXTENSIONS

If one wanted to go into further depth about the world's railroads' importance in industrialization and urbanization, with a particular emphasis on the city of Los Angeles, a teacher could take his or her class to the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach. This is where the western terminus of the current BNSF line is and it links the Western United States to the largest ports on the West Coast. Students being able to see the massive amounts of trade going from the tanker ships to the railcars. This could be linked to the students' previous experience of seeing trains moving up the Cajon Pass on their way out of the Los Angeles Basin over the San Gabriel Mountains.

RESOURCES

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6QlgBKWoHg>

Santa Fe: The Railroad Gateway to the American West by Donald Duke

Rails through the orange groves by Stephen E. Donaldson and William A. Myers

Rival Rails: The Race to Build America's Greatest Transcontinental Railroad by Walter R. Borneman