

**Name of Teacher:** Veronica Arce

**Date:** 10/22/08

**Subject:** U.S. History

**Grade:** High School

**Lesson Topic:** The First Transcontinental Railroad

**Unit:** The American West

**State Content Standards (Utah):**

S7.O3b. Examine developments in transportation; e.g., expansion of roads and trails, steamboats, railroads.

S10.O1c. Assess the impact of the railroad on western development.

S10.O2c. Assess the impact western settlement patterns had on the Native American Indians

**Lesson Objectives:**

- 1.) Students will be able to describe the events and people involved in the creation of the First Transcontinental Railroad.
- 2.) Students will be able to list reasons why the First Transcontinental Railroad was significant in United States History.
- 3.) Students will simulate the creation of the First Transcontinental Railroad and learn about struggles the workers faced during its construction.
- 4.) Student will apply knowledge found in reading to recall, analyze, and interpret the significance of the information.

**Pre-Assessment:**

- Students must be able to describe the migration to the West throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century including different routes, motivations, the trip's duration, and the conditions migrants faced
- Students must be aware of the tensions that grew between the North and the South throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the reasons for the outbreak of Civil War

**Materials:**

Powerpoint presentation

Notes outline (per student)

Group index cards

Overnight Camp worksheets

Task packets (1 per group for each railroad: color-coded)

- Reading on given topic
- Recall questions
- Analytical question
- Miscellaneous task

Cardboard

Markers/Colored Pencils

Tape or tacks (per group)

Thick tape

Yard Sticks

Calculators

Candy (per student)

## **Preparation:**

- 1.) Create group cards:
  - a. Half are labeled “Central Pacific” and half are labeled “Union Pacific”
  - b. Color code cards with 4 in each group for both sets
  - c. Apply an “S” to one card in each color group to be the supervisor
- 2.) Run two sets of “rails” using tape from the back of the classroom to the front. The rails should be about 6” apart.
- 3.) Copy station readings and task sheets. Cut task sheets in half, so students may fold them horizontally into railroad ties. All of these papers will be color-coded using stickers.
- 4.) Set up four stations (on desks) for each company along their tracks. Task sheets will be in a packet at the first station. Distribute other materials necessary to the proper stations.

## **Lesson Instruction**

### **I. Anticipatory Set/Introduction (~5 minutes):**

- A. Display the first slide of the Powerpoint as students enter the room. They are to begin reading and writing down a short response to the questions as soon as they are seated.
- B. Discuss student answers. Relate this hypothetical example to the historical example of the railroad. Remind students how this invention revolutionized travel.

### **II. Lecture (~30 minutes):**

- A. Distribute an outline for notes to each student. Provide notes for each subject indicated on a tie of the train track.
- B. Run and display Powerpoint presentation with notes and supporting materials for additional information.

### **III. Collaborative Exercise(~40 minutes):**

- A. Divide students into groups of four. Half of the students will work on the Union Pacific Railroad and the other half will work on the Central Pacific Railroad.
  - i. Shuffle index cards and distribute one to each student. Each index card will be labeled “Central Pacific” or “Union Pacific.” They will also be color coded. After the teacher finishes the directions for the simulation, students will find their group members by matching up the company and color.
  - ii. One card in each group will be labeled “S” which stands for “supervisor”. The rest of the members are considered “workers.” At each station, the supervisor is responsible for reading the provided information and assigning jobs to the rest of the members.
- B. Instruct students that they will be building the first Transcontinental Railroad. They will begin in the city where each company originally broke ground, and visit other cities on the way to Promontory Summit after laying the tracks to get there. In order to leave each city, the group must complete certain tasks. The completed tasks must be written on the

provided color coded paper and laid on the rails on the way to the next city.

- i.** Upon arrival at a city, the team will take the reading labeled with their color. They may take the materials anywhere in the room to complete the tasks.
- ii.** The supervisor will then read the information aloud and assign the workers to complete the given tasks. There are Recall questions, Analyze and Interpret questions, and miscellaneous tasks at each station that are to be divided among the workers. The supervisor will help each worker finish their given tasks.
  - 1.** The supervisor is to assign jobs based on who they believe will complete each one most efficiently given the subject of the reading.
  - 2.** The miscellaneous tasks will vary, so the worker assigned to that job will change as well.
- iii.** Once all three tasks are complete at a city, the team will lay their answers on the rails that lead to the next city. Then, they will convene as a group for an “Overnight Camp” where they discuss the main ideas they learned at that station.
- iv.** The teams are to repeat this process at all 5 cities, the last of which is the meeting point of Promontory Summit.
  - 1.** At Promontory Summit, the group will vote on who won the race before receiving their last packet.
  - 2.** The students will read about the meeting at Promontory Summit, then meet up with a member of the opposite railroad to discuss their experiences, acting as reporters.

#### **IV. Assessment:**

- A.** The teacher will collect all railroad ties and assess students on the answers they provided to the questions.
  - i.** The recall questions will be graded based on accuracy.
  - ii.** The higher-level questions will be graded based on the thoughtfulness of the answer and the group’s ability to find the significance of the subject at each station.
  - iii.** The miscellaneous task will be graded based on accuracy and effort.
- B.** Students will jig-saw to meet with a student from the opposite company to compare experiences. Each student will write a reflection that compares and contrasts the obstacles of the two companies and explains their understanding of why the First Transcontinental Railroad was so significant.

## Bibliography

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