

Tiered Lesson Plan: Westward Movement - Pioneer Life

Objectives or Standards

1. Students will understand reasons for the westward movement and some of the problems pioneers faced.
2. Students will know the various means of transportation used during the westward movement.
3. Students will be able to explain aspects of the social and economic impact of the westward movement.
4. Students will understand what life was like for pioneer families.
5. Students will discuss an historical novel and compare it to other information about the same time period.

Whole Class Activities

1. Read and discuss the book Sarah, Plain and Tall (or another similar book set in pioneer times).
2. View the video of the same story.
3. Brainstorm a list of similarities and differences between the video and the book. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of books and videos as ways to tell a story.
4. Discuss what has been learned about pioneer life and the Westward Movement from reading this book.
5. Read background information about this topic from textbook or other sources.

Assessment

- All students read book and watch video.
- As desired, oral discussion, written questions or notes can be used to assess understanding.
- List has similarities and differences.
- All participate in discussion.
- Notes or outline of basic information.
- Accuracy of information.

Level 1 Activities

1. Each student will create a poster advertising a trip west and telling why people should go.
2. Each student will make a model of a Conestoga wagon, label important parts and write a description of how it was used to transport families to the west.

Assessment

- Follows Poster criteria card.
- Clearly shows reasons for going west.
- Uses persuasive language.
- Follows Model criteria card.
- Important parts labeled.
- Historically accurate.
- Description is clear.
- Explains use of wagon.

Level 2 Activities

Assessment

1. Each student will write an editorial explaining at least three reasons why people should move west.
2. Each student will make a diorama depicting some form of transportation used during the westward movement. Include details regarding dates, how the land looked and the location depicted in the diorama.

- Reasons are logical.
- Uses persuasive language.
- Correct spelling.
- Punctuation and grammar.
- Follows Diorama criteria card.
- Type of transportation clearly shown.
- Includes accurate dates, scenery and location.

Level 3 Activities

Assessment

1. Students will work in pairs to research three problems experienced by the pioneers moving west. They will make a chart listing Problem, Cause, and Possible Solution.
2. Each student will make a map showing one of the routes used by the pioneers as they traveled from the east to the west. Each will research to find out the various forms of transportation used on this route, and include this information on the map using a different symbol for each type.

- Follows Chart criteria card.
- Historically accurate.
- Shows good reasoning.
- Indicates problem, cause and solutions.
- Map is neatly drawn.
- Route and types of transport are historically accurate.
- Symbols show types of transportation used.

Whole Class Culminating Activities

Assessment

1. Each student will write a journal of a trip west, pretending to be a pioneer sometime during the years 1865-1900. Each journal will have a map and at least ten different entries.
2. In heterogeneous groups of four, students will read their journals to each other and discuss different viewpoints of pioneer life.
3. Using information from the journals and other information learned in the unit, each group will write and illustrate a 10 page book about pioneer life to be read to a kindergarten or first grade class.

- Journal has 10 entries.
- Is historically accurate.
- Includes details of pioneer life.
- Written in first person.
- Group discussion and cooperation.
- Follows Illustrated Booklet criteria card.
- Details of pioneer life are shown.
- Accurate information.