

Lesson Ideas for I. J.'s Incredible Journey

Before you begin

- Since most teachers will complete units on explorers and on the Revolutionary War before beginning this unit, have students complete a map showing which countries claimed which parts of the continental US in 1800. A good blank map is available for download at www.eduplace.com or www.superteacherworksheets.com/maps. There are many uses for these maps throughout the unit.
- Another option is to use Regional Map of the United States, a free download from teacherspayteacher.com. It includes puzzle pieces that students put together to create the entire United States, with notes on each of the various regions of the country.
- A KWL chart regarding the westward movement/migration would also be a strong jumping off point. As students add more information to the chart and eliminate false concepts they originally held, their content knowledge grows.
- Creating a timeline that includes the previous areas of study would be valuable for helping students put the new learning into perspective. A free download is available at www.teacherpayteachers.com.

Chapter One

Map Skills

If you have students who lack experience with geography or who are second language learners, you may want to use a free powerpoint from Teacherspayteachers.com called **Geography Terms Vocabulary Matching Games Powerpoint**. It has excellent photographs to accompany each term.

Using a blank map (you could use a topographical map to make it simpler- sample provided), have students enter the following landmarks. Use of colored pencils makes this task easier.

Rivers- Ohio, Mississippi, Platte, Missouri, Colorado, Snake, Columbia, Humboldt
Other waterways- Great Salt Lake, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, Gulf of Mexico

Mountains- Appalachian, Rockies, Blue, Sierra Nevada

Desert areas- Great Basin

Other areas - Great Plains

Cities- New York, Boston, Washington, D.C., New Orleans, St. Louis, Independence, Mo., Chicago, Sacramento, Portland

** Let students watch the order in which land was acquired at www.the-map-as-history.com, a collection of animated, narrated maps.

Using Text to Support a Position

There were many reasons the pioneers headed west. Make a list of at least three reasons and find text to support each reason. Which do you think was the most common reason? Explain why you chose this answer.

Using New Knowledge

Create a poster that will encourage Easterners to consider moving to the West. Include at least one benefit of moving west. The poster should include both information and graphics or pictures.

Using New Knowledge

Create a timeline using the list of actions that encouraged the westward movement. Add other events as you learn about them.

Give groups of 2-3 students one of the items from the timeline. Ask them to prepare a one minute mini-lesson about their event. Encourage them to look in other books/texts or online for additional information. The focus of the talk should be **“How this action helped make the westward movement successful.”** After the study of the timeline events, ask students to decide for themselves which event was the biggest contributor to making the westward movement a success. In what ways?

Chapter Two

Using What You Have Read

After reading the chapter, ask students to

- write an article for the local newspaper giving advice for how to prepare for the trip west.
- make a list of the important decisions that pioneers made before moving west

Finding out more

- Look for more information about trail guides. Online sites will provide abundant information. Some names to look for are: Jim Beckwourth, John Bidwell, Kit Carson, Tom Fitzpatrick, Jim Baker, Stephen Meek, Joseph Walker, James Bridger, and William Sublette. Students can then use this information to write a persuasive article about why their guide should be hired.

Using Primary Sources

A primary source is an account of an event by a person who saw or experienced it. Sarah Harvey's story about her family leaving for Missouri is an example of a primary source.

A secondary source is written by someone who was not present at the events he or she describes. The rest of the chapter is a secondary source. It contains many facts, but none of it was experienced by the writer.

Questions: If you wrote a story about your vacation, would it be a primary source? Why or why not? What about a biography about President Lincoln? How can both sources help us understand history? Why are secondary sources sometimes inaccurate? Why are primary sources not always a good source of information?

Creating a Wagon

An interesting STEM project has students make wagons. (See attached). If you want to use it, go to www.teacherspayteachers.com. In the same unit are STEM projects for making a raft, a shelter, a water barrel and a game.

Compare and Contrast

Pioneers could go west by land or sea. List the benefits and challenges of each route. Who would probably choose each of the routes? Why? Decide which you would choose and why. *(If you don't want to do this lesson with this chapter, it also fits well in chapter 6.)*

Chapter Three

Ideas to ponder

- Which of the stories from I.J.'s journal was your favorite? What made it memorable?
- Illustrate one of the stories. Your work could be one picture that captures the entire story or a series of pictures that tell the sequence of the story.
- Find examples in the text to support these statements: I. J. was well prepared for his journey
I. J. was a good leader of his group.

- What do you think I.J. learned from his first trip that made the second trip easier for his family?

Fact or Opinion

A fact is something that actually occurred. An opinion is what the writer or observer thinks about what happened. I. J.’s Journal includes many examples of both.

- Find at least two sentences in the chapter that expressed I.J.’s opinion.
- Find two sentences that are factual.

Story Mapping

- Use a story map to “tell” one of I.J.’s adventures. You can use words, sentences, direct quotations or illustrations to retell the story.

Beginning	Middle	Middle	Conclusion
who, what, when, where, why?????			

Writing a Narrative

You are a reporter and are “embedded” with I.J. on his journey. Plan and deliver a one minute TV report or write a one paragraph newspaper article on a story that you enjoyed.

Chapter Four

Ideas to Ponder:

Using the information in the story, create a **daily schedule** for a pioneer child.

Pioneer children had **chores**, much as you do. Create a compare-contrast chart that shows how their chores might compare with yours. If you could choose, would you rather do your chores or theirs? Why?

What **personality traits** of the pioneers helped them be successful on their journey? Why were these traits important?

Cause and Effect

A cause is the force that creates an action or effect. One **cause** of cholera was unclean water. The **effect** was that thousands of people died. Create a cause and effect chart. Use it to record causes and effects in chapter four. Here are some examples for you.

Cause	Effect
There were few places to purchase goods on the trail	<i>Pioneers had to take whatever they needed with them.</i>
Oxen were slower but stronger than mules	<i>75% of pioneers chose oxen</i>
<i>It rained every day for a week.</i>	The wagon wheels got stuck in the mud.

Extending the Learning

As part of Chapter Four or Five, you could include a mini-unit on the Native Americans who the pioneers would have met on their way. An excellent powerpoint is available for free at NativeAmericanOverviewofTribesinNorthAmerica.ppt at Teacherspayteacher.com.

More writing

Another option is to go to WagonsHoASocialStudiesOregonTrailDailyWritingExercise. It is a free download on Teacherspayteacher.com. Each day (10 days that fit with our story) students are given a situation and are asked to respond in writing. Each situation is set at a location along the trail.

Create an App

If modern technology had been available in the 1850s, the westward migration would have been much easier. What kind of apps would have helped the pioneers? Create an app that would make their lives easier.

Chapter Five

Learning More:

Choose one of the major diseases of the trail. Use the internet, encyclopedia or other sources to learn more about this disease. What caused it, how was it spread, what treatments were used in the mid-1800s, and when was a cure found? Share your information in a paragraph or a chart.

Using What You Have Read

You have now read several accounts of the challenges that were met by the pioneers. Create a sequence chart in which you place the first problems they would have met first, then the second and so on. The challenges of crossing the Sierra Nevada could be last. Tell why each challenge was difficult. Here is an example.

Challenge	Why it was hard
Deciding what to take	There were few places to purchase food or supplies along the way
Crossing the Missouri River	After rain, the river ran quickly and the ferries sometimes capsized.

Chapter Six

Ideas to ponder

How were clipper ships different than steamships? What were the benefits of each one?

Compare the benefits of traveling by boat through Nicaragua or Panama with traveling by wagon train. What would be the pros and cons of each method of travel.

Travel by boat	Travel by wagon
Pros:	Pros:

Cons:	Cons:
Best for what kind of traveler?	Best for what kind of traveler?

Using What You Read

How did the railroad affect the wagon trains and the shipping lines? Find text to support your answer.

Three Way Compare/Contrast

What character traits did the pioneers, the 49ers, and the railroad workers have in common?
How do you think they were different?

Putting it ALL Together

Things to Consider.....

How did the westward movement help make the United States into the country it is today?

How did the westward movement change the lives of the Native Americans?

Would you have wanted to travel west by covered wagon? Why/why not? What would have motivated you to go/stay? Free land, hope of gold, religious freedom????

What lessons did you learn from reading about Americans during the westward expansion?

A Musical Extension:

Oh, California (to the tune of Oh, Susanna)

I soon shall be in Frisco and there I'll look around,
And when I see the gold lumps, I will pick them off the ground.
I'll scrape the mountains clean, my boys, I'll drain the rivers dry,

A pocketful of rocks bring home, so brothers don't you cry!

Oh, California, that's the place for me.
I'm bound for San Francisco with my washbowl on my knee.