

ACTIVITIES ACROSS THE CURRICULUM



Roughing It on the Oregon Trail

LANGUAGE ARTS

In *Roughing It on the Oregon Trail*, Diane Stanley uses words and language used in the 1800s. Discuss some of these words and phrases and ask students to guess what these things mean. Some suggestions are “mouth organ,” “turn out!,” “slam johns and sowbelly,” “nooning,” and the “register.” Ask students to write a short story or poem using as many of the words as possible.

GEOGRAPHY

Present students with a map of how the United States looked in 1843 and a map of how it looks today. What states would the twins travel through today if they followed the same trail? What kind of obstacles would the landscape have in store for them? When would be the best time of year to make the trip? What would the weather be like?

ART

Ask your students to imagine they are traveling along the Oregon Trail. Their family has stopped at Independence Rock to “register,” to write their names on the rock beside all the other names of people who had been there. Ask them to draw this scene, reminding them to think about the landscape and clothing.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The twins watched a peaceful encounter between their guide and an Indian chief. However, by the mid-1850s, Native Americans and the settlers had begun fighting with each other. Discuss why these conflicts occurred. With the class, construct a timeline of Native American history. Some events may include the Sand Creek Massacre (1864), the signing of the Fort Laramie Treaty (1868), and the Battle of Little Bighorn (1876). Ask each student to write a mini-report on one event in Native American history.

TIMELINE

The 19th Century and the American West

1804 Lewis and Clark begin their two-year journey	1818 U.S. and Great Britain establish a joint claim over “Oregon County”	1837 Banks begin to fail, and a depression hits the United States and Europe	1846 The Oregon Treaty	1846–1848 The Mexican War
1848 Gold discovered at Sutter’s Mill in California	1859 Oregon becomes the 33rd state	1861–1865 The American Civil War	1869 The transcontinental railroad is completed at Promontory Point, Utah	