

Lesson Extension Ideas

Traveling Trunk: *Letters from Sarah*

**Although this trunk could be used with students as young as Kindergarten, it is recommended that the following activities begin with 2nd grade students. Each activity below is justified with the Kansas Common Core State Standards focusing at the second grade level with a major emphasis on Letter Writing. However, modifications could be made for other levels; it is up to the educational professional to determine appropriate CCSS activities for lower or higher grade levels.*

Reading & Language Arts

Vocabulary: teamster, oxen, midnight, quills, wedding certificate, stagecoach, litter, adobe, harmonica, freight

- With partners or in small teams, **use beginning dictionaries** to check spelling and determine meaning of targeted vocabulary (L2.2e & RI2.4). Using a **projected online dictionary** is fun as well (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/student>); this can give the students another audio free from accents.
- Explore the individual word sounds; apply grade-level phonics in decoding words--Play **Hang-Man** with the words, draw **letter boxes*** for visual connections, have students “**pound/tap/clap** the sound-bites and/or syllables”, have students “**air write**” each word or trace on own hand, students can write and/or illustrate each word on **individual chalkboards** as well (RF2.3).
*letter boxes --box corresponds to shape of letter: mid-line (a,o,n,m,i...), above mid-line (h,l,b,f,k,t), below midline (g,y,j,p,q).
- Target the word “oxen” and add “Indians” and “buffaloes”. Teach a **mini-lesson on irregular verbs** (L2.1b).
- Target the word “stagecoach”. Teach a **mini-lesson on compound words** (L2.4d).

Read the Story

Options: Ranger Visitation upon Request or Teacher-Led

- As the story is read, the leader will stop at appropriate places to share visually artifacts and/or photos (hardcopy or virtual) that enhance the storyline. Students will **participate in a collaborative conversation** (SL2.1a-c).
- Upon completion of the story, students may be paired up with partners and/or small teams. Each student is given 1-3 “**Talking Chips**” (or coins). Students are to take turns recounting key ideas or details from the story. Students are only allowed 1-3 opportunities to share in the discussion (SL2.2; RL2.1).
- For comprehension & retention of historical text, practice of fluency & accuracy, and acknowledgement of differences in characters’ points of view, students could be put into groups of 3. Assign parts: Sarah, Father, narrator; students are to **practice reading the**

story again –taking turns reading the assigned part **while using appropriate voices as dialog is read** (RF2.10, 2.4a-c; RL2.6).

Writing

- **Mini-lesson on the format of a letter.** Target having a comma after the greeting and the closing. You could use one of Sarah's or Father's letters as an example (L2.2b).
- Challenge the students to pretend that: they are Sarah's older brother or sister and they had been old enough to travel with Father. As they were traveling the Santa Fe Trail, what would their letter sound like as they wrote back to Sarah? Have them **write 1-3 narrative letters to Sarah** while demonstrating the command of the conventions of capitalization, punctuation, and spelling (W2.3 & L2.3).
- **Mini-lesson on the format of writing an opinion piece;** include the linking words: *because, and, also*. Give the students a choice on topic: 1.) If you were a pioneer child, would you have wanted to go with Father on the trip to Santa Fe? Why or why not? 2.) If you were Father, what would have been the most challenging about your trip to Santa Fe? Explain (W2.1).

History/Social Studies

- Print off the pictures from the Virtual Trunk: let students take turns with a partner during work time to **practice retelling the story** (SL2.1, 2.2; RL 2.1, 2.7; History Skills-use of historical information & artifacts to investigate the past).
- **Create some mock writing quills** (collect quills from hunters or craft store; insert lead or ink pen tip); allow students time to explore using the quills –assign your own writing topic or have students write 2-3 sentences identifying the main purpose of the text (History Skills-use of historical information & artifacts to investigate the past; RI2.4).
- Print off a map of the Santa Fe Trail; **mini-lesson on map skills.** Highlight and add the following: title, symbols, legend, compass rose, cardinal directions, grid system, measurement/scale; have students trace Father's route from fort to fort; define and explain **duties of a cartographer** (Geography Skills-features of a map).
- **Provide a variety of trade books and nonfiction books** for students to investigate the Life of Native Americans and the Life of Pioneers; encourage students to analyze information gained to **compare & contrast** these two life styles on a Venn diagram; engage in a verbal **dialogue and to make connections between the historical events** of the pioneer lifestyle with that of modern day America (RL2.9; SL2.1, 2.2; RI2.3).

Math

- Print off a map of the Santa Fe Trail with a map scale and have the students **calculate the total distance** between each fort that Father traveled; challenge the students to calculate Father's total distance traveled from Ft. Leavenworth to Fort Union ...and then all the way back again. (2NBT 5)
- Devise some **2-step story problems** such as:

- 1) It takes 8 days for a loaded freight wagon to travel 120 miles. It takes a stagecoach only 2 days to travel that distance. How many more days does the wagon take than the stagecoach? How many days would the stagecoach have traveled if it has gone 480 miles? (2OA1)
 - 2) Each stamp cost Sarah \$.05. How much did she spend writing letters to Father on his trip to Fort Union? If she had \$1.00 to begin with, how much did she have at the end? (2OA1; 2MD8)
- If you have checked out the actual trunk, take out all the objects. **Estimate in inches** how long each object is and **then measure** it with a ruler. After you have explored with inches, then try **centimeters**. (2MD1)

Resources

- Fort Larned Adventures, Dave Webb; Comanche Press, Protection, KS; 1996. (available at www.amazon.com)
- www.ksde.org (Kansas State Department of Education)
- Variety of personal teacher resource materials