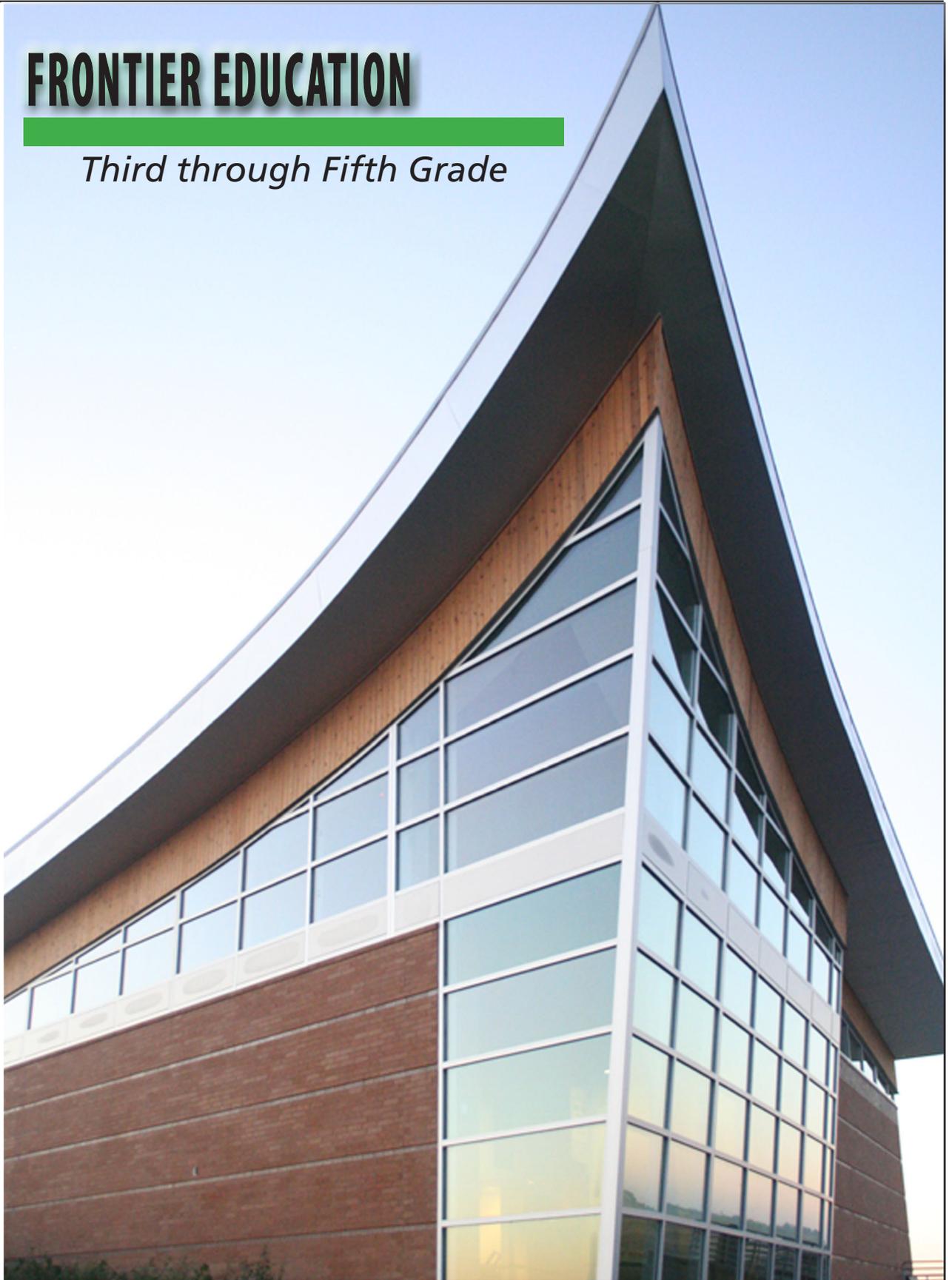


Free Land was the Cry!

FRONTIER EDUCATION

Third through Fifth Grade



Homestead

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Homestead National Monument
of America, Nebraska



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Some of the ideas in this lesson may have been adapted from earlier, unacknowledged sources without our knowledge. If the reader believes this to be the case, please let us know, and appropriate corrections will be made. Thank you.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



The Freeman School stands as a reminder of the role schoolhouses played on the prairie frontier. Officially known as School District 21, the Freeman School was a center for the education of children from 1872 until 1967. At that time, it was

one of the oldest continuously operating schools in Nebraska. During its long history, the school served as a meeting place for the First Trinity Lutheran Church, a polling place for Blakely Township, and a gathering place for many organizations and clubs.

Homesteaders placed a high value on public education. Simple one-room schoolhouses were often built before their permanent homes.

Unlike many of the more typical wood or sod-walled schools found west of the Missouri River, the Freeman School was constructed of locally-baked brick. According to school records, Thomas Freeman was paid \$100.15 “on account of brick.” Furnishings were usually handmade, but the Freeman

It seemed, as I recall it, a lonely little house of scholarship...But that humble little school had a dignity of a fixed and far off purpose...It was the outpost of civilization. It was the advance guard of the pioneer, driving the wilderness farther into the west. It was life preparing wistfully for the future.

James Rooney in 'Journey from Ignorant Ridge,' 1976

School was furnished with desks shipped from Indiana.

Teachers were young, often younger than their oldest students. Salaries were meager and many teachers collected a large portion of their wages in room and board. It was not uncommon for a teacher to rotate from one

prairie community to another to be housed and fed.

Books were precious. Many students had to supply their own texts. Family Bibles were often used. Different editions and often different titles added to the teacher's woes. When more money was available, McGuffey readers reduced this problem. In 1881, the Freeman School provided textbooks for its students, ten years before schools were required to by the Nebraska legislature.

The schoolhouse was often the focal point for a young community. Many homesteaders saw their children baptized in the schoolhouse, heard friends eulogized there, and shared a box supper with their neighbors at the Saturday night social.

CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

- Students will experience life in an 1880's one room school.
- Students will read literature typical of an 1880's school.
- Students will practice Spencerian penmanship skills.
- Students will examine the role of recitation in learning.
- Students will compare today's schools with those in the 1880's.
- Students will pack an 1880's lunch.
- Students will learn about school yard games from the 1880's.

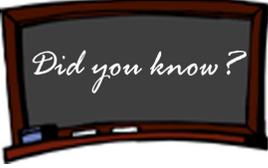
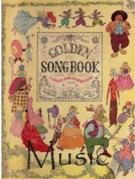
NATIONAL STANDARDS

NL-ENG.K-12.1 READING FOR PERSPECTIVE

Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

NL-ENG.K-12.5 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

SPECIAL ICONS	 Homestead Handout	<i>Enrichment Activities</i>	 Math	 Did you know?	 Music	 Language Arts
	Indicates a reproducible handout is included	Indicates advanced lessons	Indicates an additional math lesson	Indicates a little known fact about the subject	Indicates an additional music or art activity	Indicates an additional language arts lesson

Pre-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)



Congress passed the Land Ordinance of 1785 to establish a uniform system for surveying the western lands of the republic. The land was divided into ranges and townships, like a checkerboard. Each six-square mile township had 36 sections. Each section contained 640 acres and was one-mile square. When homesteaders filed a claim, they filed for 160 acres or a quarter of a section in a township. The income from section 16 was reserved for public schools. As a class find out what township your school is located in.

LET'S VISIT THE FREEMAN SCHOOL



Students were often required to memorize and recite poems. Have students memorize and recite a poem either alone or in a group.

See Additional Resources for more poems.

My Shadow by Robert Louis Stevenson

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow-
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.
He stays so close behind me, he's a coward you can see;
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

Other Activities

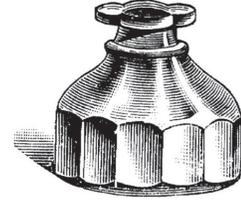
McGuffey's Reader was often used in the early schools. Take turns standing and reading from a McGuffey's Reader.



LET'S VISIT THE FREEMAN SCHOOL

Pre-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)

Enrichment Activities

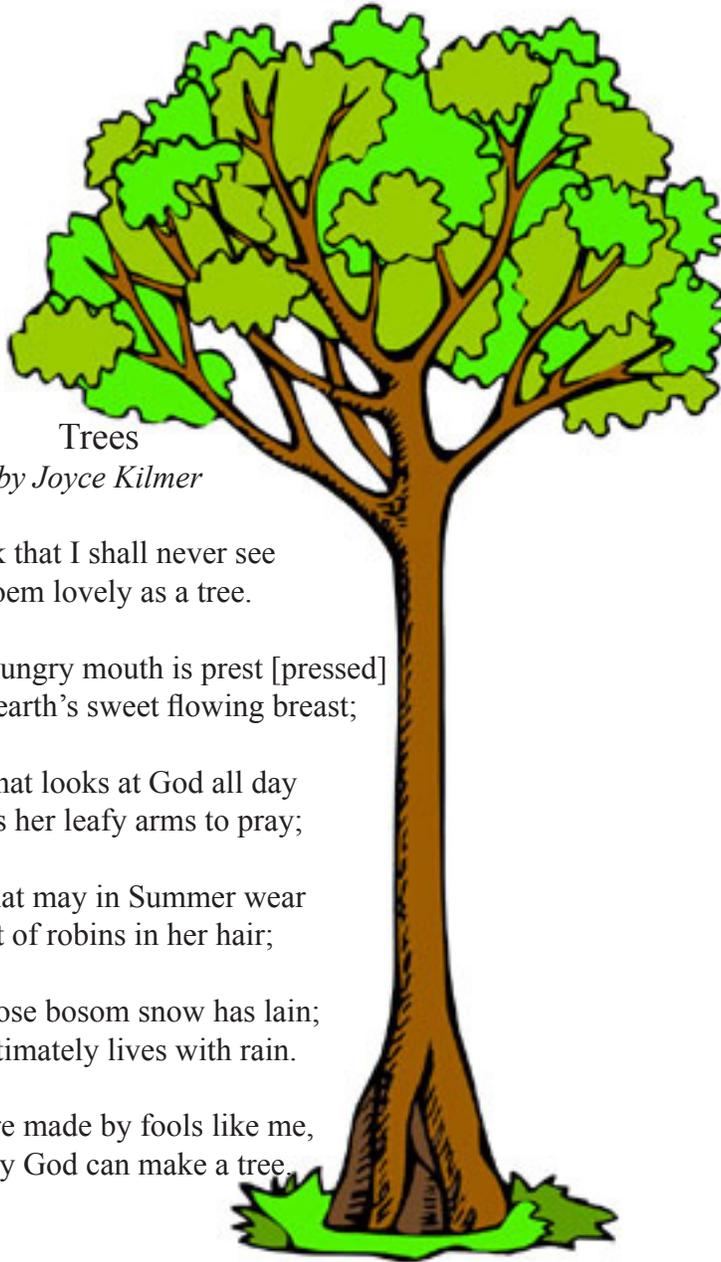


Many teachers used songs and rhymes to teach grammar and spelling. Try this activity and see if it makes learning more fun.

First and last letters

How many words do you know that begin with the letter “b” and end with the letter “t.”

Ask your friends to write down as many of these words as they can. As each list is read aloud, everyone checks off the same words from his or her list. Players score one point for each word that the other players did not have. Change the first and last letters until someone scores 25 points.



Trees
by Joyce Kilmer

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

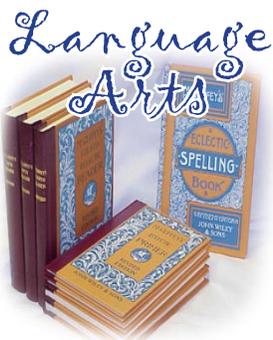
A tree whose hungry mouth is prest [pressed]
Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in Summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.



Today it is common to learn the alphabet by memorizing it from A to Z but in the 1800's it was also common to have students learn it backwards. Try saying the alphabet from Z to A.

Other Activities

Pre-Visit Activity #2 (suggested)



Platt Rogers Spencer grew up loving graceful lines and beautiful writing. As a young child he drew letters on birch bark and on the sandy shores of Lake Erie. He admired the elegant signature of John Hancock on the “Declaration of Independence.” Thus he seemed destined for the distinguished career in penmanship which became his. He developed a system of handwriting which dominated the schools for almost a century and he spent his life teaching it.

- *Theory of the Spencerian System of Practical Penmanship*

SPENCERIAN PENMANSHIP

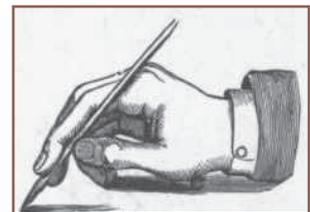


Correct posture was emphasized by teachers. This drawing shows incorrect posture on the left and correct posture on the right. Teachers were encouraged to have all students use the same position. Students learned to sit upright and to keep the shoulders square.

The correct manner of holding the pen was also important.

“Take the pen between the first and second fingers and the thumb, observing, 1st, that it crosses the second finger on the corner of the nail; 2d, that it crosses the fore finger forward of the knuckle; 3d, that the end of the thumb touches the holder opposite the lower joint of the fore finger; 4th, that the top of the holder points towards the right shoulder; 5th, that the wrist is above the paper, and the hand resting lightly on the nails of the third and fourth fingers; 6th, that the point of the pen comes *squarely* to the paper.”

-*Theory of the Spencerian System of Practical Penmanship*



Other Activities

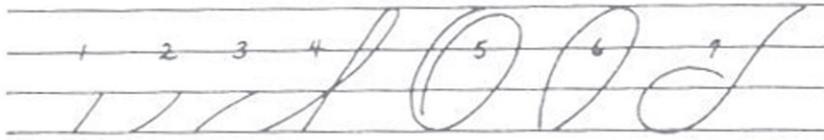
Interview someone who attended a one-room school. Grandparents, great-grandparents and individuals living in assisted living facilities and nursing homes are possible interviewees.

See Homestead Handouts for a Reproducible Worksheet of questions.



SPENCERIAN PENMANSHIP

EXAMPLES.



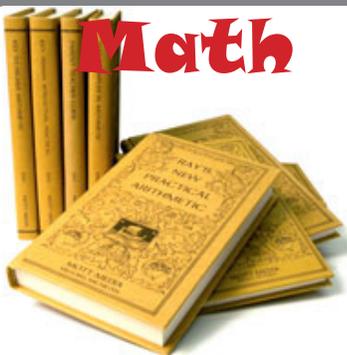
In the Spencerian Penmanship System seven principles were used.

Principles were the basic parts of letters. Students began learning the style of writing by practicing these strokes over and over. They were:

- The 1st is a straight line.
- The 2nd is a right curve.
- The 3rd is a left curve.
- The 4th is an extended loop.
- The 5th is a direct oval.
- The 6th is a reversed oval.
- The 7th is the capital stem.

Once students had mastered the seven principles and learned how to write each letter they would practice by writing sentences which also taught a moral lesson. Practice writing one of the following sentences in cursive penmanship. A student in the 1800's would have been expected to write each sentence at least thirty times before going to the next sentence.

- Angels are guardian spirits.
- Better to live well than long.
- Criticize your own writing.
- Doing nothing is doing ill.
- Exercise strengthens the body.
- Freedom is a precious boon.
- Gaming has ruined many.
- Hold truth in great esteem.
- Industry increases wealth.
- Justice holds equal scales.
- Kind words can never die.
- Let your promises be sincere.
- Modesty always charms.
- Opinion misleads many.
- Reputation is not character.
- Time present is our only lot.
- Virtue commands respect.



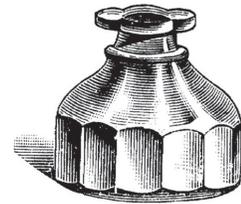
Math

Spencerian Penmanship was done at a 52 degree angle. Why do you think a 52 degree angle was selected?

The greatest speed is obtained with the 52 degree slant.

Pre-Visit Activity #2 (suggested)

Enrichment Activities



Up through the middle of this century, steel pens fulfilled many of the same roles that ballpoints fill today. Using these highly flexible points, writers of the 19th century learned to write in very stylized cursives including Spencerian.

Try using a steel pen and inkwell to write.



Other Activities

RANGER-LED EXPERIENCE



Welcome to the Freeman School

As students enter the Freeman School they will each be given a laminated sign with a name (taken from the 1886 Freeman School roster) and an age on it. They will be asked to sit at a desk.

Welcome to Freeman School. We will begin today much like children 100 years ago did with Morning Exercises. We would have started with a song. So join me as we begin the day at Freeman School.

An opening song is sung. It begins “We meet again ‘mid festive joys...”

Now we will have our first recitation. Recitation was used a great deal in these one room school houses. Early textbooks even had examples of how to recite. Please join me as we recite this selection by Longfellow.

The poem “Roll Call” is recited. It begins “Corporal Green!” the orderly cried...”

How many of you could tell me all the presidents in order? Well, a student 100 years ago probably could because they would have recited this next poem each morning. Please join me.

RANGER-LED EXPERIENCE

The poem “The Presidents” is recited. It begins “George Washington first to the White House came,”

Next would have been a poem about America, another recitation about the value of hard work, and a song called “The Song of the Bee.” Then morning exercises would have ended with individual recitations by selected students.

As you can see, memorizing and reciting were essential in morning exercises. But reciting did not stop with morning exercises. Sometimes parents were invited on Friday afternoon to hear the students. These were often referred to as “speaking a piece.” Students could read an essay they had written or recite something they had memorized from a book. These were referred to as “readings.”

Students were encouraged to “get their verses by heart first and their meaning later.” Today schools stress the reverse. The student needs to understand it first and then memorize it.

And sometimes the teachers were not happy with the student’s selections. For example, “Had a little owl, stuck it in the wall, and that’s all.”

Or this one...

*“Had a little wooden gun
Shot a rabbit on the run,
Skinned him on the Sabbath day,
Oh what will my teacher say?”*

To celebrate the end of the year an event called an “exhibition” was often held. These would, of course, include recitations and might also include debates. One of the topics a school debated was “Resolved that Bachelors Should Support Old Maids.”

To close I would like to offer a challenge. How many of you can say the alphabet? Now keep your hand up if you can also say the alphabet backwards as quickly as you can say it forward?

A hundred years ago all of you would have been able to keep your hand up.

Let’s close by reciting it backwards.

Thank you for joining me as we turned back the clock and began the day at Freeman School.

Depending on time a spelling bee could be conducted or students could try some playground games.

Source: Lessons from The Michigan Moderator, 1884-85



Homestead National Monument of America is proud to be a pioneer in distance learning technology.

Contact the Education Coordinator at (402) 223-3514 to schedule your virtual field trip on Frontier Education.

Post-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)



The Freeman School also served as a church for seven years. On Sundays from 1872 to 1879 church hymns reverberated from the four walls. First Trinity Lutheran Church, now located three miles west of Homestead National Monument of America, traces the early history of its congregation back to the 1860's. According to the early church history, occasional services were conducted in the Freeman School by visiting pastors between 1872 and 1875. In August 1875, a permanent pastor, C.H. Lentzsch, was installed in the Freeman School. He conducted regular services in the brick school until the first church building was constructed in 1879.

LET'S HAVE A PICNIC



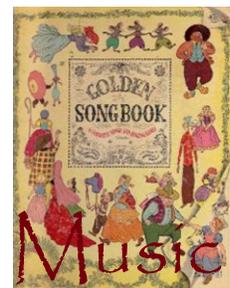
Many one-room schools ended the school year with a school picnic. This picture was taken at Freeman School in 1911. The students are around a Maypole. Have students bring a box lunch with simple food pioneer children might have brought in their lunches, such as bread and butter sandwiches and apples. Follow the lunch with games.

Suggestions for Pioneer Lunches

- Corn muffins, cold pancakes, homemade bread
- Cheese
- Jelly or jam sandwiches
- Meat sandwiches
- Dried meat, jerky
- Hard boiled egg
- Fresh fruits
- Fresh vegetable
- Cookies
- Wrap lunch items in a box or pail

Other Activities

Sing songs such as 'School Days' or songs from the Golden Songbook. Other songs from this period are "She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain," "Annie Laurie," "Whistle, Mary Whistle," "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean," and "Polly Wolly Doodle."



See lyrics to some songs at the end of this unit.

LET'S HAVE A PICNIC

Suggestions for Pioneer Games

Dare Base

Any number of children may play this game, but the two teams must have the same number of players. Two bases are made about 30 yards apart. The teams are called A and B. Members of team A see how close they can get to the base of team B without getting tagged. This is continued by each team alternately with the opposite team. Any person tagged must go to the opposite base as a penalty. The object of each team is to see how many members or players they can get for their base. The team capturing the largest number of players at the end of a given time wins.

Blindman's Bluff

A blindfolded player is led into the center of the circle. As the player turns around three or four times, the people in the circle chant:

“How many horses has your father got?”

“Three.”

“What colors are they?”

“Black, blue and gray.”

“Turn about, and turn about, and catch whom you can.”

The blindfolded player then tries to capture someone and guess their name. If the player does not guess the right name, they must try again with a new person. When successful the person captured and named correctly, must in turn be blindfolded.

Cat and Rat

Two players are selected, one as the Cat and one as the Rat. The other players stand in a circle holding hands, with arms outstretched and held high. The Cat and the Rat start on opposite sides of the circle. The following exchange precedes the game:

Cat: I am the Cat

Rat: I am the Rat

Cat: I will catch you

Rat: You can't

Rat: Ready

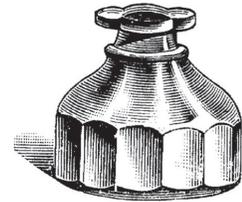
The chase begins. The Rat runs in and out of the circle of players, underneath their arms. The Cat must follow the exact course of the Rat or he is “crowned” and another Cat is chosen. If the Rat is caught, the Cat becomes the Rat and chooses another Cat.

Follow the Leader

One player is the leader and runs at the head of the line. He runs in and out, hopping and clapping his hands. Any player who fails to follow the leader and do as he does must drop out of the game. The game continues until all have been eliminated.

Post-Visit Activity #1 (suggested)

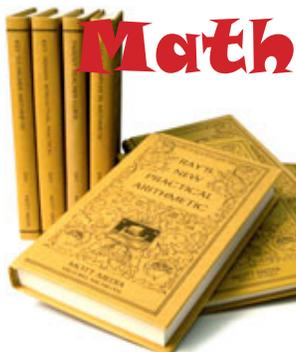
Enrichment Activities



Even though, early homesteaders were busy “proving up,” they still found time to raise money for education.

William Scheve, landowner and grandson of Steve Scheve that donated the land Freeman School stands on, said in a 1973 interview, “The school teacher would have box socials at night to raise money for the school. There would be one or two of those a year. I forget what these proceeds would go for, but you would buy these boxes that the girls would fix. You would bid on them and paid \$6 to \$7. That was high, usually \$1 to \$1.50. Everybody looked forward to the box socials.”

Do you think this idea would work today? What would you pack if you had to make a lunch for a box social?



Solve problems on slates. (May use construction paper, chalk and facial tissue if slates are unavailable.)

Other Activities

CHARACTER EDUCATION

RESPONSIBILITY

Students who are responsible are doing their part and taking care of themselves. They no longer rely on others to do things for them or give things to them. They are able to accept blame without making excuses. They are growing up.

5 Minute Focus

Most early pioneer schools did not have specific grades. Children progressed through different levels of readers, spellers and arithmetic at their own pace.

- How would this affect you?
- Would it change your study habits?
- How could it make you more responsible?
- What subject would you do the best in?
- What subject might you struggle with?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

A One-Room School by Bobbie Kalman; Crabtree Publishing Company, 1994.

Games From Long Ago by Bobbie Kalman; Crabtree Publishing Company, 1994.

The Nebraska Adventure by Jean A. Lukesh; Gibbs Smith; 2004

Little House on the Prairie by Laura Ingalls Wilder; HarperCollins; Unabridged edition (May 6, 2008)

I Heard a Bird Sing
by Oliver Herford

I heard a bird sing,
In the dark of December
A magical thing
And sweet to remember:

“We are nearer to Spring
Than we were
in September.”
I heard a bird sing
In the dark of December.

The Swing
by Robert Louis Stevenson

How do you like to go up in a swing,
Up in the air so blue?
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,
‘Til I can see so wide,
Rivers and trees and cattle and all
Over the countryside-

‘Til I look down on the garden green,
Down on the roof so brown-
Up in the air I go flying again,
Up in the air and down!

School Day Memories

Interview someone who attended a one-room school. Grandparents, great-grandparents and individuals living in assisted living facilities and nursing homes are possible interviewees.

Name _____

1. What is your name?
2. How old were you when you started school?
3. Describe your school building and/or room.
4. What school supplies did you have?
5. How did you get to and from school?
6. What do you remember about Reading, Writing, Spelling, or Math classes?
7. How did you start the school day in the morning?
8. Describe a typical school day. (What time did you start and end the day?)
9. What did you eat for breakfast?
10. What did you eat for lunch?
11. What did you do for recess?
12. What happened if you did not follow the school rules?
13. Did you do something special at your school for holidays, such as Halloween, Christmas, or Valentine's Day?
What did you do?
14. Did your school have a Christmas program? If so, describe what it was like.
15. What did you wear to school? Do you remember a certain outfit you wore?
16. Did you go on field trips? If so, where did you go?
17. What did you do the last day of school?
18. Do you have any other special memories about your school days to share?

She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain

Written By: Unknown
Copyright Unknown

She'll be coming round the mountain
When she comes
(Toot, toot!)

She'll be coming round the mountain
When she comes
(Toot, toot!)

She'll be coming round the mountain,
She'll be coming round the mountain,
She'll be coming round the mountain
When she comes
(Toot, toot!)

She'll be driving six white horses
When she comes
(Whoa back!)

She'll be driving six white horses
When she comes
(Whoa back!)

She'll be driving six white horses,
She'll be driving six white horses,
She'll be driving six white horses
When she comes
(Whoa back! Toot, toot!)

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her
When she comes
(Hi babe!)

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her
When she comes
(Hi babe!)

Oh, we'll all go out to meet her,
We'll all go out to meet her,

We'll all go out to meet her
When she comes
(Hi babe!

Whoa back! Toot, toot!)

She'll be wearing red pajamas
When she comes
(Scratch, scratch)

She'll be wearing red pajamas
When she comes
(Scratch, scratch)

She'll be wearing red pajamas,
She'll be wearing red pajamas,
She'll be wearing red pajamas
When she comes
(Scratch, scratch, Hi babe!
Whoa back! Toot, toot!)

She will have to sleep with Grandma
When she comes
(She snores!)

She will have to sleep with Grandma
When she comes
(She snores!)

She will have to sleep with Grandma,
She'll have to sleep with Grandma,
She will have to sleep with Grandma
When she comes
(She snores!

Scratch, scratch, Hi babe!
Whoa back! Toot, toot!)

Polly Wolly Doodle

Southern

Written By: Unknown

Copyright Unknown

Oh, I went down South
For to see my Sal
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
My Sal, she is
A spunky gal
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Oh, my Sal, she is
A maiden fair
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
With curly eyes
And laughing hair
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Behind the barn,
Down on my knees
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
I thought I heard
A chicken sneeze
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

He sneezed so hard
With the whooping cough
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
He sneezed his head
And the tail right off
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Oh, a grasshopper sittin'
On a railroad track
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
A-pickin' his teeth
With a carpet tack
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Oh, I went to bed
But it wasn't any use
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day
My feet stuck out
Like a chicken roost
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.

Fare thee well,
Fare thee well,
Fare thee well my fairy fay
For I'm going to Lou'siana
For to see my Susyanna
Sing Polly wolly doodle all the day.