

RAILROADING



Post-Visit Activity

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| Activity | Railroad Charades |
| Adapted From | “All Aboard” — A Thematic Unit from Steamtown National Historic Site |
| Setting | Classroom |
| Duration | Approximately 20 minutes should be allowed each time the game is played. |
| Subject Areas | Social Studies |
| Skills | Analyzing, Interpretation, Recall, Inference, Observation |
| Grade Level | 4-5 |

Objectives:

Students will become familiar with the names and descriptions of several types of people who played an important role in the early years of the railroad industry.

WV-IGOs:

Social Studies - 4.13, 4.14, 4.33, 5.10
West Virginia History - WV7

VOCABULARY

See Glossary

MATERIALS

1. Resource Page — Railroad Characters
2. Poster board and markers (optional)
3. Railroad Jargon Worksheet (from earlier activity)

BACKGROUND

There were many occupations associated with the railroad during the height of its activity in West Virginia towns and across the United States. Some of these job descriptions are somewhat the same today, while others have long since been changed or abolished. New River Gorge National River, Steamtown, and Golden Spike are just a few of the national park sites that focus on railroads.

PROCEDURES

1. A student selects a character from the Resource Page — Railroad Characters and proceeds to pantomime this type of character in front of the class.
2. If a student guesses correctly, he or she should state how they knew.
3. Students can be divided into teams to play for points.
4. Teacher may want to write each character name on a sheet of poster board, adding information obtained from the charade to better describe the person listed.
5. Refer to the Pre-Visit Activity “Railroad Jargon” for additional terms.





EVALUATION

Students can be given a creative writing assignment to write a story involving as many characters as they can from their charade list.

EXTENSION

1. The teacher may want to add additional characters to the list based on discussions held in class or information covered by National Park Service staff.
2. Have a volunteer come into your classroom that has been employed by the railroad and tell students more in depth about their job.



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Resource Page — Railroad Characters



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| Fireman | the person who shovels coal or throws wood into the firebox of the locomotive; his job is to provide fuel to burn to make steam pressure so that the engineer can run the train |
| Conductor | the person in charge of the train who communicates with the engineer by using a flag, lantern, or radio; he sells, collects, and punches tickets; as well as tallies accounts and keeps the paperwork for the train's cargo |
| Gandy dancers | (need 4-6 students to act on this part) a group of track workers who repair, replace, and inspect the track |
| Homeguard | the railroad employee who works in the same yard or division all his career |
| Baggage handler | the person responsible for ticketing passengers' baggage and giving the passenger a duplicate number; he also loads the baggage onto the baggage car |
| Brakeman | the person in charge of stopping the train, often a dangerous job |
| Master mechanic | the man who repairs and services the locomotives to keep them running during the day; his work is often done during the night with only the light of kerosene torches |
| engineer | the person is in charge of operating the locomotive |
| News butch | a person, (often a young child at the beginning of the 20 th century), who sells peanuts, popcorn, candy, soda, chewing gum, cigars, and newspapers on the trains or at the station |
| Station master | the person who sells tickets, handles baggage, directs the loading and unloading of cargo, and sends messages to the train's conductor and engineer |
| Telegraph operator | the person who works at a station along the railroad and is responsible for tapping out train orders on a telegraph machine; he relays orders and messages to train conductors and engineers and station masters) |



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Resource Page — Railroad Characters



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| Porter | the person who works in the Pullman cars preparing beds, handling baggage, cleaning cars, and pampering passengers |
| Hobo | a person who rides the trains illegally, going from town to town seeking work |
| Flagman | a worker who uses different colored flags to signal directions to the trains engineer or conductor |

