

Oregon's Early Explorer Routes

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OVERVIEW:

Students work in groups to identify and research the route of an early Oregon Territory Explorer. With this information, students will speculate on the affect the topography and forest or Oregon had on the explorer's routes and analyze how these early routes have influenced current settlement pattern across the state.

GEOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS:

1. How did the topography and forests of the Oregon Territory influence the routes of Oregon's first explorers?
2. How have these early explorer routes influenced actual population distribution in Oregon today? Why?

CONNECTION TO THE CURRICULUM:

4th and 5th Grade students in the State of Oregon learn about Oregon's physical features, early explorers and settlement in the region. This lesson could be taught as a follow-up to Lewis and Clark or as a leadoff to the Oregon Trail. For this lesson, students may need previous experience in interpreting the differently scaled maps to approximate locations of the routes and physical features encountered along the way.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STANDARDS:

- #1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
- #9 The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.
- # 17 How to apply geography to interpret the past.

OREGON STATE CONTENT STANDARDS AND BENCHMARKS:

Geography Benchmark 2:

- Define basic geography vocabulary such as concepts of locations, direction, distance, scale, movement, and region using appropriate words of diagrams.
- Locate and identify on maps the continents of the world, the 50 states of the United States, and the major physical features of Oregon.
- Identify patterns of migration and cultural unteraction in the United States.

US History Benchmark 2:

- Understand how individuals changed or significantly influenced the course of the Oregon state history.

GRADE LEVEL: 4th or 5th Grade

OBJECTIVES:

- Research the purpose and path of an early Oregon explorer, and plot his route on an Oregon map

- utilize other Oregon maps and resources to learn about the physical features encountered by the explorer and plot these on an Oregon map;
- develop and present a visual poster and report summarizing how Oregon's physical features (mountains, forests, and rivers) influenced the explorer's route;
- participate in a class discussion comparing the routes of the early explorers and the settlement patterns (roads and cities) across Oregon today.

MATERIALS:

Loy, William G. et al. Atlas of Oregon, University of Oregon Press, Oregon. 2001.

Packets of the following Atlas of Oregon maps for each group: (potential for 7 groups)

- Exploration, pg. 12-15
- Timber, pg. 92-93
- Landforms: Elevation, pg. 118-119
- Rivers, pg. 162-163
- Ecoregions, pg. 172-173
- Cities, pg. 28-31
- Development of the Road Network, pg. 104-105

3x5 index cards, paper, markers, overhead sheets with an existing outline map of Oregon

PRESENTATION STEPS:

Anticipatory Set:

Show students a map of Oregon and ask them if they were an explorer, what part of the state would they want to map and explore? Why?

Day 1:

Students will work in groups to research and map out the path of one early Oregon explorer:

The Astorians (1810-1812) Nathaniel

Wyeth (1832-1833)

Peter Skene Ogden (1824-1830) Ewing

Young (1834)

Jedediah Smith (1822-1831) John

Fremont (1843-48)

Benjamin Bonneville (1832-1835)

Provide each group with the packet of maps and the following instructions:

- Use the first five maps and informational pages (pg. 13) to research the specific explorer's route, locating the names of the mountains, rivers, valleys and forests the explorer encountered on his journey:
- Use a system of index cards to take notes on the purpose, time line, and location of route including the current names of the physical features (mountains ranges, valleys, and rivers) they passed along the way.
- Transfer the physical features and route information to an overhead sheet with an existing outline map of Oregon.
- With the group, create a description of what the physical features might have looked like at the time of the exploration. Record this on index cards.

Day 2:

Demonstrate to students how to develop a 3-5 minute presentation on their explorer's route including the location, purpose, historic events, and the variety of physical features encountered along the journey. Work with students to develop a rubric for their group presentation.

Post-discussion

After all groups have presented their information, encourage students to consider the similarities and differences between the location of the various routes and the physical features the exploring parties encountered. How did the physical features of Oregon's landscape influence the explorer's routes and events of their journey?

Using the maps depicting *Cities* and the *Development of Road Networks* in Oregon, ask students to compare the routes of early explorers with the stage/wagon routes, paved roads and the location of cities in Oregon. What do they notice? Help students make the connections of how the routes of early explorers influenced the roads and populations distribution in Oregon today. Discuss how and why Oregon's physical features have played a role in our state's population distribution.

ASSESSMENT:

Students will be assessed on how well:

- They work together in their group
- They utilize a variety of maps to infer information
- They develop a visual and verbal presentation for the class based on a rubric they've created.

ADAPTATIONS AND EXTENSIONS:

This lesson can easily be adapted for lower level students by limiting the amount of maps for students to compare as well as the variety of explorers researched.

Alternatively, this lesson can be adapted to challenge advanced students by requiring students to research more information on the explorer's journey. Many web sites can be found on each of these explorers and their explorations by simply searching the explorer's name.