

Trade and Travel on the Overland Trails

Overview

This lesson is designed to compare and contrast the Oregon-California and Santa Fe Trails. Students will read two *Read Kansas* cards on the trails. Then students will complete a compare and contrast worksheet. The lesson is designed to take one class period.

Standards

Current standards can be found on kshs.org.

Objectives

Content:

- The student will identify the routes for both trails.
- The student will identify the main purpose for each trail.

Skills:

- The student will identify three ways the trails were similar and three ways the trails were different.
- The student will use text features and maps to locate information.

Essential Questions

- Why do people move?
- Why do people want to trade with other people in other countries?
- How has travel changed in the last 150 years?

Activities

This activity uses the following *Read Kansas* cards:

- **Traveling the Oregon-California Trail**
- **Traveling the Santa Fe Trail**

Day 1

1. Introduce the topic of trails. What is a trail? How is it similar and different from a modern road? (similar: leads to a destination; different: made of dirt, not paved)
2. Explain that this lesson is about two important trails used by many people to cross the United States. Both trails went through Kansas.
 - If you have a classroom map, identify the Oregon-California Trail and the Santa Fe Trail on the map. If you don't have a map, make a transparency of the map on the *Read Kansas* card.
 - Ask the students why they think people long ago would have wanted to use these trails? (A simple answer is families going to the West Coast to start new farms and businesses used the Oregon-California Trail. Merchants trading between Mexico and the United States used the Santa Fe Trail.)
 - Students will be comparing and contrasting these two trails.
3. Distribute a copy of the **Traveling the Oregon-California Trail** *Read Kansas* card to every student.
 - Review the text features of the card, such as title, subtitles, author, photographs, and maps.
 - Have the students read the card.
4. Distribute the **Traveling the Santa Fe Trail** *Read Kansas* card and repeat the activities of reviewing the text features and reading the card.
5. As a class, or working in small groups, have the students complete the **Compare and Contrast the Trails** worksheet.
 - Have the class come back together to share their answers. Record the answers on an overhead transparency.
 - Summarize the lesson by having the students explain the major difference between the two trails (one was for families, one was for traders).

Assessment

1. Evaluate the students' ability to complete the **Compare and Contrast the Trails** worksheet.

For the Teacher

For more information about the Oregon-California Trail and Santa Fe Trail see the Kansas State Historical Society's website at www.kshs.org and *Adventures on the Santa Fe Trail* by Dave Webb, published by the Kansas Heritage Center.

Suggested answers for the worksheet:

	Oregon-California Trail	Santa Fe Trail	Similar	Different
1. What was the length of the trail?	<i>2,000 miles</i>	<i>900 miles</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
2. How much of the trail went through Kansas?	<i>140 miles</i>	<i>500 miles</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3. Where did the trail go?	<i>Oregon, California, Washington</i>	<i>Santa Fe</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
4. What form of transportation was used on the trail?	<i>Wagon</i>	<i>Wagon</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Who were the main travelers on the trail?	<i>Farmers</i>	<i>Traders</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
6. Why did people use the trail?	<i>To go to the gold fields; to start new farms</i>	<i>To sell merchandise and to make money</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
7. When did trail travel begin?	<i>1843</i>	<i>1821</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
8. How much could a wagon hold?	<i>2,000 pounds</i>	<i>6,000 pounds</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
9. What was packed in the wagons?	<i>Food and supplies for the family</i>	<i>Goods to be sold</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
10. What animals pulled many of the wagons?	<i>Oxen</i>	<i>Oxen and mules</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
11. Approximately how many miles did people travel each day?	<i>15 miles</i>	<i>15 miles</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. How long did the trip take?	<i>Four to six months</i>	<i>50 to 60 days</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
13. When did travelers begin the trip?	<i>Mid-April</i>	<i>Spring, summer, fall</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
14. What was a starting point for the trail?	<i>Independence, MO</i>	<i>Independence, MO</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. What country was at the end of this trail?	<i>U.S.</i>	<i>Mexico</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
16. What caused the use of the trail come to an end?	<i>The railroad</i>	<i>The railroad</i>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. About what year did trail travel end?	<i>1869</i>	<i>1880</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>

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Resources for this lesson are from:

- Kansas State Historical Society collections

Name: _____

Compare and Contrast the Trails

	Oregon-California Trail	Santa Fe Trail	Similar	Different
1. What was the length of the trail?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. How much of the trail went through Kansas?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Where did the trail go?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. What form of transportation was used on the trail?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Who were the main travelers on the trail?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Why did people use the trail?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. When did trail travel begin?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. How much could a wagon hold?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. What was packed in the wagons?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. What animals pulled many of the wagons?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Approximately how many miles did people travel each day?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. How long did the trip take?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. When did travelers begin the trip?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. What was a starting point for the trail?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. What country was at the end of this trail?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. What caused the use of the trail come to an end?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. About what year did trail travel end?			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In your words, what was the major difference between these two trails?