



# Westward Ho: The Difficulties of Emigrants Moving West

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**Grade Level** 4-5  
**Duration** 2 class periods

## National Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

#### Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

1. How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information

#### Element 4: Human Systems

12. The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement  
13. How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface

#### Element 5: Environment and Society

15. How physical systems affect human systems.

#### Element 6: The Uses of Geography

17. How to apply geography to interpret the past.

## Arizona Geography Strand

### ELA

#### Reading

##### Informational Text

##### Key Ideas and Details

4.RI.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

5.RI.1 Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

##### Craft and Structure

4.RI.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.

5.RI.4 Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 5 topic or subject area*.

##### Writing

##### Production and

##### Distribution of Writing

4.W.4 and 5.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

## Other Arizona Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

#### The use of geographic representations and tools help individuals understand their world.

4.G1.1 Use and construct maps and graphs to represent changes in the Americas over time.

5.G1.1 Use and construct maps and graphs to represent changes in the United States.

#### Human-environment interactions are essential aspects of human life in all societies.

4.G2.1 Compare the diverse ways people or groups of people have impacted, modified, or adapted to the environment of the Americas.

5.G2.1 Describe how natural and human-caused changes to habitats or climate can impact our world.

#### Examining human population and movement helps individuals understand past, present, and future conditions on Earth's surface.

4.G3.1 Explain how the location and use of resources affects human settlement and movement.

5.G3.1 Use key historical events with geographic tools to analyze the causes and effects of environmental and technological events on human settlements and migration.

### HISTORY

#### Cycles of conflict and cooperation have shaped relations among people, places, and environments.

5.H2.1 Use primary and secondary sources to summarize the causes and effects of conflicts, resolutions, and social movements throughout the historical timeframe.

#### Patterns of social and political interactions have shaped people, places, and events throughout history and continue to shape the modern world.

5.H4.1 Use primary and secondary sources to describe how diverse groups (racial, ethnic, class,

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gender, regional, immigrant/migrant) shaped the United States' multicultural society within the historical timeframe.

### Overview

After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and Lewis and Clark's Expedition to explore this unknown land in 1804 through 1806, large numbers of people moved west to take advantage of new opportunities and rich, cheap farmland. These emigrants experienced tremendous difficulties along the route to Oregon.

### Purpose

After reading the letters and diaries written by a fictional family who was moving west along the Oregon Trail, the students will map the journey and understand the causes and effects of some of the difficulties experienced by this family.

### Materials

- A set of National Geographic Society's Reading Expeditions' books *Voices from America's Past: Our Journey West*. A "set" is composed of six books.
- Oregon Trail Map
- Cause and Effect Chart and Answer Key
- Supplemental Vocabulary List
- Blue and red colored pencils
- Friendly Letter Format

### Objectives

The student will be able to:

- read a secondary source on a geographical and historical event.
- locate sections of a route on a map.
- identify cause and effect of a migration.
- write a friendly letter.

### Procedures

**Prerequisite Skills:** Students have previously practiced identifying cause and effect and have written a friendly letter.

1. Divide the students into six groups. Give each group a copy of *Voices from America's Past: Our Journey West*.

2. Distribute the Supplemental Vocabulary List. Discuss this list of words and the vocabulary words on page 40 of the book.
3. Distribute one Oregon Trail map to each group. <https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/ORTRAIL.pdf>
4. Read the Introduction on page 4 and discuss the map on page 5. Instruct students to trace the route of the journey from Sidney, New York to Oregon City in blue. Model this on a projected map.
5. As the book is read, discuss some difficulties the emigrants might have had and the causes and the effects of the difficulties. Have volunteers dramatize the difficulties and then the effects. Record the cause and effects discussed on the board.

### SESSION TWO

1. Assign a chapter from *Voices from America's Past: Our Journey West* to each group. Only assign Chapters 1 through 6. Do not assign Chapter 7.
2. Distribute the Cause and Effect Chart to each group. Model how each group should complete the chart using words from the text. Instruct groups to complete the worksheet and use the map of the United States where they drew the complete route of the emigrants in blue, they should now draw the section of the route that their chapter described in red (next to the blue).
3. At the end of class or as homework, give students these instructions: "You are a 10 year old child of an emigrant family traveling west from Sidney, New York to Oregon City. Write a letter to a friend back in Sidney describing three of the difficulties that you and your family experienced on the trip and what caused these difficulties. Explain to your friend what you would do differently on your next trip west in order to make your trip more successful."
4. Instruct the students to use at least five vocabulary words from the book in their letter.

### Assessment

#### ELA

Use the 6 Traits Writing Rubric to grade the letter. Concentrate on the traits of Sentence Fluency and Conventions. Mastery will be considered 4 or higher. Check to see if at least five vocabulary words are used from the combined vocabulary lists and that

## Westward Ho: The Difficulties of Emigrants Moving West

those words are used correctly. The correct friendly letter format must also be used.

### Geography

Each group's map should be checked for accuracy of the routes to assess geography standards.

### Geography and ELA

The Difficulty/Cause/Effect worksheet can be graded for accuracy to assess reading and geography standards. Each group should have at least four difficulties and their causes and effects on their chart to be considered mastery.

## Extensions

Students could research alternate routes and compare difficulties on both routes.

Students could compare roads and railroad routes used today and see if any of these follow the same route as the Oregon Trail.

Students could research the towns and cities that grew up along this route.

Students could research how many miles were traveled in an average day along the Oregon Trail.

## Sources

National Geographic Reading Expeditions *Voices from America's Past: Our Journey West*.