

Blazing Trails: Discovering Routes through Arizona to California

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Grade Level	3
Duration	1-2 class periods

National Geography Standards

GEOGRAPHY

Element 4: Human Systems

9. The characteristics, distribution and migration of human populations on Earth's surface

11. The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on the Earth's surface

Element 5: Environment and Society

14. How human actions modify the physical environment.

AZ Standards

Mathematics

Measurement and Data

3.MD.B.4 Generate measurement data by measuring lengths using rulers marked with halves and fourths of an inch to the nearest quarter inch.

Arizona Social Science Standards

GEOGRAPHY

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

3.G1.1 Use and construct maps and graphs to represent changes in Arizona over time. **Human-environment interactions are essential aspects of human life in all societies.**

3.G2.1 Explain how people modify and adapt to the Arizona environment.

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

3.G3.1 Describe the movement of people in and out of Arizona over time.

Global interconnections and spatial patterns are a necessary part of geographical reasoning.

3.G4.1 Describe how Arizona has changed over time.

HISTORY

The development of civilizations, societies, cultures, and innovations have influenced history and continue to impact the modern world.

3.H1.1 Utilize a variety of sources to construct a historical narrative exploring Arizona's cultures, civilizations, and innovations.

Overview

Arizona's climate and landscape made it a challenge for people to migrate across it. Finding water to sustain the people and their animals was difficult. Finding flat land without deep valleys or high mountains added to the problem. So how did people cross Arizona during the time period of American history called Westward Expansion?

Purpose

In this lesson, students gain an understanding of the early explorers and the routes they took through Arizona to reach California. The students will also use a map scale to determine the distance of the routes and then compare their findings.

Materials

- Blazing Trails: Discovering Routes Through Arizona to California map

Blazing Trails: Discovering Routes Through Arizona to California

https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/Blazing_Trails.pdf

- Blazing Trails: Discovering Routes Through Arizona to California map (labeled)
https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/Blazing_Trails_Teacher_Key.pdf
- Fact Cards 1-6
- Colored pencils/markers
- Question Sheet and Answer Key
- Projection device

Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Locate the routes taken by the early explorers.
2. Use the map scale to measure the approximate distance of those routes.
3. Answer geographic questions using maps.

Procedures

1. Introduce the lesson by asking students to describe their idea of how early explorers (not native people) crossed Arizona. What would be the things they would absolutely need to have? How long would it take (in days)? How many miles would it be? Project the **unlabeled** Blazing Trails: Discovering Routes Through Arizona to California map. Have students guess if the majority of the routes across Arizona went in the southern part, from north to south, etc.
2. Distribute the Fact Cards 1-6 to partners or small groups as well as at least one unlabeled Blazing Trails: Discovering Routes Through Arizona to California map to the students. Have small groups or as a whole class, read the Fact Cards one at a time. After the card has been read, have a student volunteer come to the projected map and use a marker to locate the route by having students contribute information from the reading so the route is correctly located. (Note: Might be good to have the map laminated and use whiteboard markers so mistakes can be erased.) Be sure to have students color-code the legend with the correct color for each route. Repeat the process until all 6 cards have been read and the routes located.
3. Now project the **labeled** version of the map so students can correct their work.
4. Distribute the Question Sheet and project a map of Arizona's Interstate Highways
<http://ontheworldmap.com/usa/state/arizona/arizona-interstate-map.html>

5. Have students answer the mathematics and geographic questions.

Assessment

The Question Sheet and the Blazing Trails map will be used as assessments. Mastery will be considered 80% or higher.

Geography

Correctly labeling the different routes that were taken and creating the legend on the map (14 points) Questions 1, 3, 4, and 5 on the Question Sheet. (8 points)

Mathematics

Question 1 (10 points) and Questions 2 and 3 (4 points) on the Question Sheet

Extensions

Have students use the Arizona Landforms and Rivers map

http://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/AZ_PHYSICAL.PDF or Southwestern United States: Topography and Rivers map

https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/S_WPHYS4.pdf to find other possible routes from north to south or east to west that could have been good choices for a road/railroad in the west. Have them explain their choice.

Sources

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Wagoner, Jay. *Arizona*. Salt Lake City: A Peregrine Smith Book. 1983.

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