



# All Aboard! The Orphan Trains

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**Grade Level** 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

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

#### Element 6: The Uses of Geography

17. How to apply geography to interpret the past

## AZ Standards

### ELA

#### Reading

#### Key Ideas and Details

**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

**5.RI.6** Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

#### Writing

#### Production and Distribution of Writing

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

## Arizona Social Science Standards

### GEOGRAPHY

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

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

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

**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.

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

**5.G4.1** Describe how economic activities, natural phenomena, and human-made events in one place or region are impacted by interactions with nearby and distant places or regions.

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

## Overview

Orphaned or neglected children played a part in America's history of immigration, urbanization, and Western Expansion from 1853 to 1929.

## Purpose

In this lesson, students will understand how orphaned children became part of the settlement of the West by exploring personal stories and the

## All Aboard: The Orphan Trains

railroad routes across the United States to start a new life.

### Materials

- All Aboard: Orphan Train PowerPoint
- New York Times article: Orphans Return to a City They Left on Sad Trains”
- Graphic Organizer
- Placement of Orphan Train Riders and The Arizona Story
- Orphan Train Railroad Routes map
- Atlases
- Colored pencils/markers

### Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Locate places on a map.
2. Create a legend on a map.
3. Use primary and secondary sources to learn about immigration, Western Expansion, and urbanization.

### Procedures

*Prior Knowledge: Students have been studying Westward Expansion and immigration in the 1800s and understand what life was like in rural America as well as eastern, urban cities during this time period.*

#### SESSION ONE

1. Begin the lesson by partnering students and giving each group one sheet of paper. Then project Slide 1 and 2 of the All Aboard: Orphan Train PowerPoint. Read the directions and have students complete the tasks. After 2 minutes, have them stop.
2. Then project Slide 3 and explain the directions. Allow them 2 more minutes to complete the tasks.
3. Project Slide 4 and read the Orphan Train Background Info.
4. Project Slide 5 and read the definition of a waif. Discuss what it meant to be a poor, orphaned child. Draw on their knowledge of urban, eastern cities to describe the life of a homeless child in that setting.
5. Project Slides 6-8 and read the Only a Waif poem.
6. Distribute the New York Times article: Orphans Return to a City They Left on Sad Trains” to partner groups. Have partners read to each other or silently the article.

7. Distribute the Graphic Organizer. Instruct partners to complete the organizer. Then have the class discuss their answers and add new ideas to their graphic organizers.

#### SESSION TWO

8. Begin class by having students describe life for an orphan in the eastern, urban areas in the late 1800s to early 1900s. Then project Slide 9. Why are the children protesting? Then share that this image is from the 1930s. Did things get much better in New York?
9. Project Slide 10. Have students comment on what they see in the image and can read in the Wanted poster.
10. Project Slide 11-12. What would the train ride have been like? Did any orphans come to Arizona?
11. Project Slide 13 and read the Arizona story.
12. Project Slide 14 and hand out the railroad map to each student. Read and explain the directions on the slide.
13. Allow time for students to create their maps.
14. End the session with a class discussion of how life in Clifton/Morenci (mining area) would compare to life in a rural setting in the Midwest (farming area).

### Assessment

#### Geography

The map work can be graded for accuracy and completeness. Students will get a score of 80% or higher to be considered mastery.

#### ELA

The graphic organizer can be graded for accuracy and completeness. Students will get a score of 80% or higher to be considered mastery.

### Extensions

Visit Orphan train websites to gather more stories of the children

<https://orphantraindepot.org/history/orphan-train-rider-stories/>

<http://www.kancoll.org/articles/orphans/>  
<https://onlyinark.com/culture/orphan-train-riders-arkansas/>

<https://www.darcymaulsby.com/blog/iowas-orphan-train-heritage/>

### Sources

Gordon, L. (1990). *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*. 1990 Cambridge: Harvard University Press.  
"Orphans Return to a City They Left on Sad Trains"  
[www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

Library of Congress [www.loc.gov](http://www.loc.gov)  
University of Oregon <http://www.uoregon.edu/>