

**TAH
Electronic
Lesson Plan**

By Virginia May

Class: History/Social Studies – 45 minutes
Grade Level: 5 - 8

Unit: “Uniting America along the Rails”

Massachusetts History and Social Science Standards:

Learning Standard 1: Chronology and Cause. Students will understand the chronological order of historical events and recognize the complexity of historical cause and effect, including the interaction of forces from different spheres of human activity, the importance of ideas, and of individual choices, actions, and character.

- Students understand cause and effect, the relations between events.
- Students understand multiple causes, how forces from different spheres of life can cause or shape an event.
- Students understand the power of ideas behind important events.
- Students recognize the importance of individual choices, action, and character.

Topic 2: The Construction of the Transcontinental Railroad as an enormous engineering achievement.

Statement of Purpose: Through class discussions, Internet research, analysis of primary sources and reflection, students will develop an understanding of the immense undertaking of the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Learning Objective/s:

1. Within a class discussion, students will be able to understand how to retrieve information from political and physical maps in order to answer questions.
2. With an analysis sheet, students will examine primary source documents for personal perspectives of historical events.
3. Through the analysis of a timeline, students will come to appreciate and offer an explanation for the time expended on construction of the railroads.

Materials:

Laptops or Computer lab
Survey and Political maps transparencies
CPRR and UPRR museum websites
Copies of William A. Bell and Albert D. Richardson’s accounts of the railroad
Butcher Paper
Markers

Schedule: 2 days - **Note to Teacher** - The teacher will need to bookmark websites before presentation of the lesson.

Day 1 - 45 minutes

Time

Activity: Anticipatory Set

15 minutes

The teacher will pass out survey maps from the 1850's and political maps from the 1860's. Students will examine and discuss each to understand the necessity for advance surveyors who would determine the favorable paths for the railroad.

30 minutes

Students will create larger replicas of the survey and political maps complete with timelines of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroad Companies.

Day 2 -50 minutes

Time

Activity: Diaries as Primary Sources

40 minutes

For the beginning of this part of the lesson, the teacher will assign students to work gangs such as the Jehus, Spikers, Gaugers and Bolters.

The teacher will provide handouts of the accounts of William A. Bell and Albert D. Richardson describing the transcontinental railroad construction. The teacher will then pass out laptops with websites bookmarked for the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific Railroad museums. The students will be given a primary source analysis and website analysis sheets to record information about each document and website.

The students will be directed to read and highlight portions of the accounts that might include the comparisons of the railroad work crews to that of armies, or the coordinated process of laying the rails by work gangs in one minute, "Jehus", the young horse riders charged with driving the light rail car at great speed to reload it with more rail, and reference to the "Anvil Chorus" of spikers, gaugers and bolters. On the websites of each railroad museum, students will look for the names of the central figures of the endeavor including the surveyors, engineers and owners of each railroad as well as any other pertinent information.

With this information, students will create a Transcontinental Railroad alphabet book. The book's components will be dispersed among the work gang members according to their interests and talents (researcher, designer, writer, publisher, illustrator). The book will include construction terms, central figures, and locations, a definition or diagram, photographs with captions and government legislation that contributed to the completion of the railroad.

Time

10 minutes

Closure:

Students will share and review each others books.

Assessment: Correct use of primary source document and website analysis sheets, teacher observation of appropriate group dynamics, and finished book product.

Resources:

1. Central Pacific Photographic Museum

<http://cpr.org/Museum/index.html>

2. Emord Dawn and David Bushong. The Transcontinental Railroad Different Faceshind "The Work of the Age" The Workers of the Central Pacific

<http://bushong.net/dawn/about/college/ids100/workers.shtml>

3. Hawes, J.H. Map of the Public Land Status and Territories. Washington: General Land Office, 1864

<http://alabamamaps.ua.edu/historicalmaps/unitedstates/1850.html>

4. Milner, Clyde A. II, et al. Major Problems in the History of the American West. Houghton Mifflin company. Boston. 1997. Chapter 9 *Railroad and Mining Labor*. Pgs. 304-308.

5. National Council of Teachers of English. *Read Write Think*. Website Analysis Sheet

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson915/WebSiteAnalysisWorksheet.pdf

6. PBS American Experience. *People & Events: Workers of the Central Pacific Railroad* http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tcrr/peopleevents/p_cpr.html

7. Sacramento to Ogden 1856-1869 original construction dates of the Central Pacific Railroad route

<http://www.uprr.com/aboutup/maps/cpcon.pdf>

8. The National Archives. *Photo Analysis Worksheet*

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/photo.html>

9. Union Pacific End of Track Dateline 1865-1869 – historic construction timeline of the original Union Pacific overland route

<http://www.uprr.com/aboutup/maps/goldspik.pdf>

10. Union Pacific Railroad Museum.
<http://www.uprr.com/aboutup/photos/index.shtml>

11. Central and Union Pacific Railroads
http://www.cpr.org/Museum/Maps/USPRC_Map_2_1887.html

12. Central Pacific Railroad. Profile/elevations map
http://www.cpr.org/Museum/Engravings/PacRR_Profile_1867.html#Big