

Northwest History Consortium

Who Were the Most Successful Pioneers?

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8th Grade

National Standard

Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861) / Standard 2

Standard 2: How the industrial revolution, increasing immigration, the rapid expansion of slavery, and the westward movement changed the lives of Americans and led toward regional tensions.

Standard 2E: Students will understand the settlement of the West.

BACKGROUND

The Louisiana Purchase, completed in 1803, opened up vast lands west of the Mississippi River, and this was quickly followed by the Lewis and Clark Expedition which provided America much useful information about the territory. Settlers had been moving steadily westward since the 1600s. But, as a result of the United States owning more land, the stream of pioneers turned into a flood in the early 1800s. By 1820 so many people had moved west that the population in some of the original thirteen states had actually declined!

Many pioneering Americans traveled west for different reasons and went with varying resources, beliefs, and desires. In addition, different groups of Americans had unique experiences as they traveled and settled the West. Some of these pioneers include:

1. Fur trappers—"Mountain Men"
2. Missionaries in the Oregon Country
3. Oregon-bound families
4. Settlers in Texas
5. Mormons who settled in Utah
6. "49ers" who raced to California for gold

SCENARIO

A private foundation has earmarked funding to construct a commemorative plaque and memorial in honor of a singular group deemed to have made the most significant successful contributions in American history during the age of westward expansion. The memorial will be constructed and displayed at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. Whom this grant, valued at \$500,000, will honor is up to you.

You are to be part of a focus group that will be given the task to research and evaluate how successful one of the above six groups was in American history. As you determine how successful your pioneers were, you will need to consider (but are not limited to) the following guiding questions:

- What were these pioneering Americans' relations with the Native Americans like?
- Did they build community?
- How were their relations with other minority groups (other than Native Americans)?
- Did they make economic gains?

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- Did they plan for the future?
- Did they better America through their actions and decisions?

TASKS

Your focus group is to put together a written summary, PowerPoint, or other method of synthesizing your information and recommendation. Your findings are to be presented to the other focus groups, as theirs will be presented to you. Your findings must include a summary of your research and a recommendation as to the level of success your targeted pioneers achieved. This means that your focus groups must determine what equates success. How is success measured?

After all presentations have been delivered, you are to gather again in your focus group to ponder and discuss which of the researched pioneers were the most successful in comparison to all the others. Each group will work to come to a consensus and then present their opinion, with rationale, to all the other focus groups and to the Director of the American Folklife Center. Once each group has communicated their stance, further discussion and debate can occur to allow you to question one another's point of view, evaluation, and conclusion. The Director of the American Folklife Center will be taking your input into consideration in making this memorial a reality.

RESOURCES

Books

Hakim, Joy. A History of Us: Liberty for All? 1820-1860. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 13-77.

Davidson, James West. The American Nation. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003. p. 337-341, 380-402.

Internet

"American Experience: The Gold Rush." Public Broadcasting System (WGBH). ©1997 – 2010. Boston, MA. 7 July 2010 <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/goldrush/>>.

Beckham, Stephen Dow. "Missionaries See Souls to Save" from *The Oregon Blue Book 2007-2008*. Oregon State Archives (Crafting the Oregon Constitution Framework for a New State). ©2009 – 2010. Salem, OR. <<http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/exhibits/1857/before/lee.htm>>.

Guterba, Linda. "Pioneers and Westward Expansion." ©2009 – 2010. Kid Info. Canfield, OH. 7 July 2010 <http://www.kidinfo.com/American_History/Pioneers.html>.

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“Jason Lee’s Mission to Oregon.” Historic Oregon City (End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center). ©2008 – 2010. Oregon City, OR. 7 July 2010 <http://www.historicoregoncity.org/HOC/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=96&Itemid=75>.

Lindeblad, Bengt. “The Mormon Trail.” AmericanWest.com. ©2003 – 2010. San Diego, CA. 7 July 2010 <<http://www.americanwest.com/trails/pages/mormtrl.htm>>.

“Marcus Whitman (1802-1847) Narcissa Whitman (1808-1847).” Public Broadcasting System (New Perspectives on the West) (WETA). ©2001 – 2010. Arlington, VA. 7 July 2010 <http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/whitman.htm>.

“Pioneer Families.” Historic Oregon City (End of the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center). ©2008 – 2010. Oregon City, OR. 7 July 2010 <http://www.historicoregoncity.org/HOC/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=89&Itemid=110>.

“The Pioneer Story: The Mormon Pioneer Trail.” Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. ©2000 – 2010 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Salt Lake City, UT. 7 July 2010 <<http://www.lds.org/gospellibrary/pioneer/pioneerstory.htm>>.

Trinklein, Mike and Boettcher, Steve. “The Oregon Trail.” Idaho State University. 2010. Pocatello, ID. 7 July 2010 <<http://www.isu.edu/~trinmich/Oregontrail.html>>.

Zimmerman, Emily. “The Mountain Men: Pathfinders of the West 1810-1860” from *Virgin Land* by Henry Nash Smith. University of Virginia (American Studies Project). ©2010. Charlottesville, VA. 7 July 2010 <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/hns/Mtmen_home.html>.

ASSESSMENT

Each group’s synthesis and stance will be measured by a rubric which will be given to the students prior to the development and presentation of their findings. The rubric will be one that parallels the PBL Rubric and pin-points measurable objectives as follows:

- Teams articulate a summary of research.
- A recommendation is included as to the level of success your targeted pioneers achieved.
- A set of group-designed criteria was developed and determined how members measured or weighed success.
- Teams come to a consensus and orally present their opinion on the overall most successful pioneer group, with rationale and specific historical examples to back up their opinion.

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REFERENCES/CITATIONS

Gabrielson, Alicia. "Who Were the Most Successful Pioneers?" NWESD Organization. 2008. Anacortes, WA. 7 July 2010 <http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/4.2_Successful_Pioneers.Gabrielson.8.pdf>.

"History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States." UCLA National Center for History in The Schools. 2009. University of California, Los Angeles, CA. 7 July 2010 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5-12.html>>.