

## The United States and Westward Expansion

**WebQuest Description:** This webquest is designed to help 5th grade students understand the hardship and prosperity that was encountered during westward expansion in the 1860

**Grade Level:** 6-8

**Curriculum:** Social Studies

**Keywords:** United States 1865 to the Present; Westward expansion, The Oregon Trail, The Homestead Act.

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### Introduction

The year is 1865, you and your family are currently living in Missouri. You just received a letter from your cousin who lives in Washington. The letter reads; Dear Cousin, Under the Homestead Act of 1862, the government has granted me a piece of land near Fort Vancouver, Washington. I am in need of some help cultivating the land, and building a farm. Please come as soon as you can and bring your family. Your Cousin, John Fredricks You feel that this is a good opportunity for you and your family and decide to leave as soon as possible.

### Tasks

You will need to prepare for your trip across the west to Washington. You will be in a group of 4 people; each person will have a job of preparing for the trip. Together with your group, you will each study different parts of westward migration: You will need to research what supplies you will need for the trip, how long the trip will take, how far you will travel, and how to prepare for any difficulties you may come across, such as food shortage, weather, Native Americans, wild animals, etc. After you have gathered all your research, your group will be creating a travelers' journal that you will present to the class considering the following information; What it was like and what you saw traveling on the Oregon trail, the difficulties that you came across, and what you needed to bring for survival on the trip. The journal should be written in a journal format such as, "Dear Journal...it is day 6 of our journey, today we ran into a bear..." Be creative as possible and have fun!

### Process

Step 1: Decide which role each group member will play. Mr. William Jones is the head of household, currently he works in a small meat factory bringing home barely enough money to feed his family. He hopes by moving west, he will be able to help his cousin with his farm and provide a better life for his family. Mr. William Jones is in charge of planning out the trip. You will need to estimate how long it will take you to travel to Washington and how many miles you will be traveling. This information will be important for planning on the amount of supplies you will need. Mrs. Patsy Jones & her 5 young children, the wife and children of Mr. Jones. Mrs. Jones is very nervous to leave her home behind, she is also worried about traveling with her young children, ages 7, 5, 4, 3, and 1. Mrs. Patsy Jones will be researching difficulties that could make traveling on the trail challenging. You should consider what people or animals you may meet, the weather, illnesses and any other possible problems. Junior Jones, Junior is 14 and the oldest child of Mr. and Mrs. Jones. Junior Jones will be in charge of transportation and shelter. How will you get there? Ox or horse cart, backpacking, etc. What will you sleep in along the way? Tent, cart, sleeping bags etc. Think through and be able to explain which transportation and shelter you chose; Will you need to make repairs along the way? Can this transportation get you all the way across the west? Will the method of transportation serve dual purposes? Neighbor Clem Patterson, Clem Patterson is traveling along with the Jones' family. Clem Patterson will research what supplies are needed for the trip, how will you store the supplies, and how much the supplies will cost. You should also consider if you have access to the supplies, or will you need to track them down. Step 2: Individually research and take notes on the links below to learn about your assigned task. Step 3: As a group discuss your results. It might be a good idea to consider all rewards and risks on traveling west, each member of the group should contribute ideas. Step 4: With your group use the provided journal to create a travelers' journal that you will be presenting to the class about all your conclusions.

### Evaluation

This project is worth 45 points with an optional 5 points extra credit. This is a group project and all students within the group are required to make an equal effort. You will submit a group travelers' journal at the end of the project. The journal should include all the following information; All the key components should be well researched & addressed. (5 points each, 25 points total) An estimated amount of time to reach the destination. Be able to explain why you think this is how long it will take. An estimated amount of miles you will have traveled. What types of hardships did your family face on the trip? (Must include 2) Be able to explain in detail how the hardships affected the family and if you were able to recover, why or why not. What type of transportation will you be using? Why did your group choose this form of transportation? What will you be using for shelter? List of supplies that you will bring with you, why you chose to bring them. An estimated cost of the supplies and how the supplies will be stored on the trip. The key components

should be well researched and supported with sources. You will give a 5-10 minute presentation to the class about your trip. (15 points) For the presentation you may choose to read passages from your traveler's journal, or just briefly explain your key components. Groups will be given extra credit for presentation creativeness. (up to 5 extra points) Your final journal must be written without grammar and spelling errors. (5 points)

Category and Score	Not included in project	Low Quality and missing major key components	Quality but missing few key components	Quality	Score
All key components are researched & addressed (5 points each)	0	10	15	20	___/20
Explanations are backed up with evidence from research	0	2	4	5	___/5
Presentation (+ optional extra credit)	0	5	10	15	___/15
Grammar & spelling	0	2	4	5	___/5
				Total Score	___/45

## Conclusion

Congratulations! You survived your venture across the west. What have you learned about westward expansion? What types of difficulties would you have expected to face? If you had lived during that time period would you have decided to make the trip across the west? Why or Why not? If you would like to continue reading about the Oregon Trail and more real-life adventures, check out the links below.

## Teacher Page

This webquest is designed to help 5th grade students understand the hardship and prosperity that was encountered during westward expansion in the 1860's and beyond. This webquest is introduced as a group project that can be expected to take 3-5 class periods. The students will be doing individual research and also collaborating with their group members to agree on travel aspects. Additional resources can be found below.

### Standards

SC State standards: GRADE 5

United States Studies: 1865 to the Present

Standard 5-2: The student will demonstrate an understanding of the continued westward expansion of the United States. Enduring Understanding People moved west seeking economic opportunities. To understand the challenges faced by migrants and immigrants as they moved West and the impact of this movement on the native peoples of the region, the student will utilize the knowledge and skills set forth in the following

Indicators:

5-2.1 Analyze the geographic and economic factors that influenced westward expansion and the ways that these factors affected travel and settlement, including physical features of the land; the climate and natural resources; and land ownership and other economic opportunities.

5-2.2 Summarize how technologies (such as railroads, the steel plow and barbed wire), federal policies (such as subsidies for the railroads and the Homestead Act), and access to natural resources affected the development of the West.

5-2.3 Identify examples of conflict and cooperation between occupational and Ethnic groups in the West, including miners, farmers, ranchers, cowboys, Mexican and African Americans, and European and Asian immigrants.

5-2.4 explain the social and economic effects of westward expansion on Native Americans; including opposing views on landownership, Native American displacement, the impact of the railroad on the culture of the Plains Indians, armed conflict, and changes in federal policy

### Credits

### Other