

## **Lesson Plan: *The Oregon Trail* (8<sup>th</sup> Grade US History)**

**Enduring Understanding:** How does taking a risk and moving out West to The Oregon Country relate to achieving the American Dream? Also think about the items you would have to leave behind on a trip of this sort. How might you decide what the most important things to bring along if moving away and starting a new life today and what items you could do without?

- Essential Question:** Why did so many people risk the dangers of the Oregon Trail to move west? How does this play into Manifest Destiny?

### **Objectives:**

- **Students will** understand the concept of *Manifest Destiny* and the political implications that this ideal led to in expanding the country West even though it was already occupied by Native Americans and Spanish.
- **Students will** be actively engaged in lecture and discussion.
- **Students will** participate in a group activity at the end of class involving eliminating items you are able to take with you on your wagon on the Oregon Trail.
- **Students will** understand the difference between travel in the 1840s and travel today; including the brutal conditions of life on the trail.

**Standard:** **SSGLCE 8 – U4.2.3** Westward Expansion: The idea of Manifest Destiny

**Rationale:** This lesson is important to students' further understanding of the United States role in Global/International Politics. This information is vital in understanding the principle of imperialism in our nation's history. This lesson also has economic undertones to it during the activity at the end of class. It forces students to critically analyze the importance of bringing certain items on the journey with you and what you can survive without. Also during the activity it involves opportunity cost in taking a journey of such magnitude; the promise of a new prosperous future vs. the fear of not making it to Oregon alive. By giving students a chance to place themselves in the shoes of the pioneers that traveled on the trail it allows them to think critically about the consequences that followed. If we are developing the land and taking it as ours, then others who may have already been there are losing it. This is a valuable critical thinking tool for future social studies instruction.

**Resources:** Computer, Powerpoint presentation (resource: textbook and various historic websites), smartboard or projector, enough copies of the activity for each group to have 1 copy, enthusiastic teacher, and engaged students.

**Procedure:**

Activity Element	Procedures and management	Students	Academic, social & linguistic adaptations, resources, and support
<b>&amp; Time</b> (in minutes)	<i>Step-by step procedures including questions and main points.</i>	<i>Describe what the students will be doing as a result of your instructions.</i>	<i>How will you support ALL students' learning?</i>
Introduction:	Begin Powerpoint presentation – tell students the essential question and introduce the topic.	Sitting quietly paying attention	Offer many visuals along with lecture.
Activity 1	Lecture material. Use Smart Board to show different maps and routes the pioneers took and problems they encountered with crossing the mountains.	Answering questions and actively participating in class discussion/lecture.	Direct instruction/audible learners.
Transition	Show video about Manifest Destiny and life on the trail.	Watch video.	Visual.
Activity 2	<b>GO WEST</b> – in class group activity. Simulation: Family going on the Oregon Trail – What items can you fit on wagon?	In groups go through the list of items you would keep/eliminate if you were going on trail.	Hands on learners.
Transition	Debrief the activity. Ask each group which item they got rid of.	Check off items they eliminated on the smart board.	Kinesthetic learners
Activity 3	Discuss the items which were left out most often. Allow students to provide legitimate reasons for not bringing those items...talk about their importance.	Allow students to discuss their reasons for eliminating their items.	Linguistic learners
Conclusion:	Debrief what was taught in class including essential question and key terms	Put chairs back where they belong. Return to seats. Answer final questions.	

**Assessment:** Formative assessment during *GO WEST* activity and also during lecture and debrief at the end of class.