



# Essex Steam Train & Riverboat

## Field Trip Lesson Plan

### Jr. High United States History



#### AIMS

**Before Trip:** How did the Transcontinental railroad promote westward expansion?  
**After Trip:** How did modern transportation technology affect America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century?

#### DO NOWS

**Before Trip:** Describe the experience of moving west as part of a wagon train.  
**After Trip:** Describe the experience of traveling on a steam train.

#### MOTIVATIONS

**Before Trip:** A railroad is being constructed to link the eastern and western parts of the United States! Do you like long car rides? How does that compare to a wagon ride?  
**After Trip:** How will people react to new steam trains? How do you react to new technology?

#### ACTIVITIES

**Before Trip:**

1. Introduce students to the Transcontinental Railroad.
2. Have students understand the importance of railroads in westward expansion.

**After Trip:**

1. Discuss the impact of technology on society, both positive and negative, focusing on steam-powered railroads. Students will be able to use their field trip experiences to accurately describe travel on a steam train.

#### QUESTIONS

**Before Trip:**

1. What were the dangers of wagon travel out west?
2. Why were wagons not able to truly link the eastern and western United States?

**After Trip:**

1. How did railroad travel compare with earlier methods of transportation?
2. How did people react to the Transcontinental Railroad?
3. What were some positive and negatives effects of rail travel?

#### SUMMARY

**Before Trip:** The Transcontinental Railroad provided reliable, fast transportation across America.  
**After Trip:** There were many pros and some cons associated with the modern railroad technology of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### ADDITIONAL LESSONS

1. Industrial Revolution and Steam Power
2. Lives of Railroad Workers in the Industrial Era
3. Impact of Railroads on 19<sup>th</sup> Century America (Time Zones, etc.)
4. Roaring 20s

Jr. High US History  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Field Trip

## STEAM TRAINS: The Force that United America



**YOUR ASSIGNMENT:** *Pay close attention as you travel on the train today. Be sure to complete all of the following tasks. Enjoy your trip!*

1. What type of locomotive is pulling the train today?
2. What type of fuel powers today's locomotive?
3. Step back in history: As a child seeing a steam train for the first time, what would be your reaction?
4. How does train travel compare with a horse and wagon on a dirt road?
5. What are some positive effects of steam trains? Negative?
6. How did railroad affect westward expansion?
7. How did Native Americans react to railroads being built westward?

