

April 7, 2008

American History 10

The Expansion of American Industry, Lesson 2

Essential Question: How did new technologies and inventions change the lives of average Americans?

I. New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards

- A. 6.4.12 H.1 – Analyze the development of industrialization in America and New Jersey during this period and the resulting transformation of the country, including the construction of the transcontinental railroad, the introduction of mechanized farming, the rise of corporations and organized labor, and the growth of cities.

II. Pennsylvania Academic Standards for History

- A. 8.3.9 A - Identify and analyze the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to United States history from 1787 to 1914.
- B. 8.3.9 C – Analyze how continuity and change has influenced United States history from 1787 to 1914.

III. Lesson Objectives

- A. All students will be able to explain why the transcontinental railroad was created.
- B. Most students will be able to argue for or against government aid to help build the transcontinental railroad.
- C. Most students will be able to identify major challenges to building the transcontinental railroad.

IV. Materials

- A. Excerpts from the Pacific Railway Act of 1862
- B. Overview of transcontinental railroad reading
- C. Decision making activity
- D. Map of the United States

V. Motivation

- A. Students will be asked to discuss the following question: What are the benefits to having a national highway system? How does it make transportation easier? Instructor will use student answers to this question to explain why the transcontinental railroad was created.

VI. Instruction and Activity

- A. After completion of motivational activity, the instructor will explain that the transcontinental railroad was built to quickly transport goods across the country and to create new business opportunities.
- B. Students will be placed in cooperative learning groups of 3-4 students. In these groups students will read and summarize excerpts from the Pacific Railway Act of 1862. Possible discussion questions include:
  - A. What major things did the Pacific Railway Act accomplish?
  - B. Do you think this act is a good idea?
  - C. What did it give railroad companies to make the transcontinental railroad possible?
  - D. Was it right for the government to get involved?

1. Possible extension: Students could have a short debate on this issue. Half the class could argue in favor of government aid and half the class could argue against government aid.
  - E. What problems do you think might occur during construction?
  - F. What physical obstacles are there to building a transcontinental railroad?
    1. At this point a map of the United States will be shown to students to help them better understand the physical features of the United States and to visualize what obstacles the railroad had to pass through.
  - G. Where are railroad companies going to get laborers to build the railroad?
  - C. In their cooperative learning groups, students will then be asked to read the decision making activity about Chinese labor on the transcontinental railroad and to complete the decision making model. Some groups will be selected to share their answers with the class.
  - D. Instructor will then explain that many towns in the 1800's set their clocks independently of each other, based upon solar time.
    - A. Why would this create a problem?
    - B. How could this problem be solved?
  - E. In order to fix this, a system of time zones was adopted in 1883. This split the US into four time zones. Within each time zone, the time would be the same in every location. This made it easier for passengers to catch their trains on time. Possible discussion questions include:
    - A. Is this system a good idea?
    - B. Could you think of any other alternatives?
  - F. At the conclusion of class the instructor will explain that tomorrow the students will be conducting research in the computer lab to help them write a newspaper article about the completion of the transcontinental railroad.
- VII. Special Education Modifications
- A. Instructor will repeat and/or write down directions as needed.
  - B. Allow extra time for students to process information.
  - C. All materials will follow COLA procedures.
- VIII. Homework
- A. Brainstorm ideas about how life may have changed for average Americans once the transcontinental railroad was completed.
- IX. Assessment
- A. End of chapter assessment
  - B. Class discussion
  - C. Decision making activity