



Dear Family Member,

During the next several days your child will be learning about the westward expansion of the United States. S/he will learn about how and why settlers moved west, as well as the many innovations of the 1800s that helped make expansion possible, including the steamboat and the Erie Canal. Your child will also learn how the lives of Native Americans, namely the Cherokee, were adversely affected by this expansion and innovation. Below are some suggestions for activities that you may do at home to reinforce what your child will be learning about westward expansion.

1. Quilts

Your child will be illustrating quilt squares about what s/he learns about westward expansion. These quilt pieces will eventually be attached together to form a “quilt.” Have your child recreate a favorite quilt piece to show you and ask him/her to write a sentence describing the information represented by the picture. Show your child any homemade or store-bought quilts you may have at home, and discuss why the settlers made their own quilts rather than buy them in a store. Ask questions to encourage your child to use the vocabulary learned at school.

2. Sayings and Phrases: Back to the Drawing Board

Your child will learn the saying “Back to the drawing board” in relation to a man named Sequoyah, who endured many struggles to create a written language for the Cherokee. Make sure your child understands that people use this saying when something they’re doing doesn’t work out, and they feel the need to start over from the beginning. Ask your child how this saying relates to Sequoyah’s life and achievements. You may also wish to ask him/her how the sequoia tree is connected to this story. Talk with your child about other situations where one might use the saying “back to the drawing board.”

3. The Trail of Tears

Your child will learn about the forced relocation of the Cherokee from their homes in Georgia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas to what is now the state of Oklahoma. Have your child show you these areas on a U.S. map (assisting them when necessary). Discuss what it must have been like to be forced from your home and made to travel so far without enough food or supplies. Share with your child that sometimes in the study of history s/he will have to learn about events like the Trail of Tears that are terrible and sad. Ask your child why it is important to study events like these, and emphasize that it is important to remember the sadder parts of history in order to hopefully prevent them from happening again.

4. The Erie Canal

Your child has listened to the song “The Erie Canal” while learning about this new means of travel. You may wish to find a version of this song and listen to it with your child, encouraging your child to sing the words s/he remembers.

5. Transportation Today

Your child will learn how the transportation of both people and freight during the era of westward expansion included horses and wagons, trains and railroads, steamboats, and canals. Discuss with your child the vehicles we have today that transport people and freight and how these changes have allowed people to live differently than they did in the 1800s.

6. Words to Use

Below is a list of some of the words that your child will be learning about and using. Try to use these words as they come up in everyday speech with your child.

- *pioneers*—The pioneers coming from the crowded East were surprised by the vast, open prairie of the West.
- *steamboats*—Steamboats were much faster and more reliable than sailboats, because they depended on their steam engines for power rather than on the weather.
- *Erie Canal*—The Erie Canal, the most famous canal built during the Canal Era, joined the Hudson River in New York to Lake Erie, one of the Great Lakes.
- *encountered*—Native Americans encountered many changes to their way of life during the westward expansion of the United States.

7. Read Aloud Each Day

It is very important that you read with your child every day. Try to set aside time to read to your child and also time to listen to your child read to you. I have attached a list of recommended trade books related to westward expansion that may be found at the library.

Be sure to let your child know how much you enjoy hearing about what s/he learned at school.



Recommended Trade Books for Westward Expansion

Trade Book List

1. *Americans Move West*, edited by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (Pearson Learning, 2002) ISBN 978-0769050195
2. *Buffalo Before Breakfast (Magic Tree House, No. 18)*, by Mary Pope Osborne (Random House, 1999) ISBN 978-0679890645
3. *The Buffalo Storm*, by Katherine Applegate and illustrated by Jan Ormerod (Clarion Books, 2007) ISBN 978-0618535972
4. *Daily Life in a Covered Wagon*, by Paul Erickson (Puffin Books, 1997) ISBN 978-0140562125
5. *Dancing Teepees: Poems of American Indian Youth*, selected by Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve and illustrated by Stephen Gammell (Holiday House, 1989) ISBN 978-0823407248
6. *Dandelions*, by Eve Bunting and illustrated by Greg Shed (Sandpiper, 2001) ISBN 978-0152024079
7. *Food and Recipes of the Westward Expansion*, by George Erdosh (The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 1997) ISBN 978-0823951154
8. *Frontier Women Who Helped Shape the American West*, by Ryan Randolph (The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2005) ISBN 978-1404255470
9. *Ghost Town at Sundown (Magic Tree House, No. 10)*, by Mary Pope Osborne (Random House Books for Young Readers, 1997) ISBN 978-0679883395
10. *Going West*, by Jean Van Leeuwen and illustrated by Thomas B. Allen (Puffin Books, 1992) ISBN 978-0140560961
11. *Going West*, by Laura Ingalls Wilder and illustrated by Renee Graef (HarperCollins, 1997) ISBN 978-0064406932
12. *If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon*, by Ellen Levine and illustrated by Elroy Freem (Scholastic Inc., 1992) ISBN 978-0590451581

13. *I Have Heard of a Land*, by Joyce Carol Thomas and illustrated by Floyd Cooper (HarperCollins, 2000) ISBN 978-0064436175
14. *Life in the West (A True Book)*, by Teresa Domnauer (Scholastic Inc., 2010) ISBN 978-0531212462
15. *Life on a Pioneer Homestead*, by Sally Senzell Isaacs (Heinemann Library, 2001) ISBN 978-1588103000
16. *Mailing May*, by Michael O. Tunnell and illustrated by Ted Rand (Greenwillow Books, 1997) ISBN 978-0064437240
17. *Meet Kirsten*, by Janet Shaw and illustrated by Renee Graef (American Girl, 1988) ISBN 978-0937295014
18. *A Pioneer Sampler: The Daily Life of a Pioneer Family in 1840*, by Barbara Greenwood and illustrated by Heather Collins (Houghton Mifflin, 1994) ISBN 978-0395883938
19. *Pioneer Cat*, by William H. Hooks (Random House, 1988) ISBN 978-0394820385
20. *Rachel's Journal: The Story of a Pioneer Girl*, by Marissa Moss (Sandpiper, 2001) ISBN 978-0152021689
21. *The Santa Fe Trail*, by Ryan P. Randolph (The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., 2003) ISBN 978-0823962921
22. *Twister on Tuesday (Magic Tree House, No. 23)*, by Mary Pope Osborne and illustrated by Sal Murdocca (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2001) ISBN 978-0679890690
23. *Wagon Wheels*, by Barbara Brenner and illustrated by Don Bolognese (HarperCollins, 1984) ISBN 978-0064440523
24. *Westward Expansion (A True Book)*, by Teresa Domnauer (Scholastic Inc, 2010) ISBN 978-0531212493

Erie Canal

25. *The Amazing Impossible Erie Canal*, by Cheryl Harness (Aladdin Paperbacks, 1999) ISBN 978-0689825842

Robert Fulton

26. *Making It Go: The Life and Work of Robert Fulton*, by Don Herweck (Teacher Created Materials, 2008) ISBN 978-0743905787

27. *Robert Fulton*, by Lola Schaefer (Pebble Books, 2000) ISBN 978-0736887311
28. *Robert Fulton: Engineer of the Steamboat*, by Don Herweck (Compass Point Books, 2009) ISBN 978-0756539610
29. *Robert Fulton's Steamboat*, by Renée C. Rebman (Compass Point Books, 2008) ISBN 978-0756533519
30. *What's So Great About . . . ? Robert Fulton*, by Jim Whiting (Mitchell Lane Publishers, 2007) ISBN 978-1584154785

Oregon Trail

31. *Apples to Oregon*, by Deborah Hopkinson and Nancy Carpenter (Aladdin Paperbacks, 2004) ISBN 978-1416967460
32. *Clara Morgan and the Oregon Trail Journey*, by Marty Rhodes Figley and illustrated by Craig Orback (Millbrook Press, 2011) ISBN 978-0761358787
33. *Facing West: A Story of the Oregon Trail*, by Kathleen Kudlinski (Puffin, 1996) ISBN 978-0140369144
34. *Life on the Oregon Trail (Picture the Past)*, by Sally Senzell Isaacs (Heinemann Library, 2001) ISBN 978-1575723174
35. *Roughing It on the Oregon Trail*, by Diane Stanley and illustrated by Holly Berry (Joanna Cotler Books, 2000) ISBN 978-0064490061

The Pony Express

36. *Buffalo Bill and the Pony Express*, by Eleanor Coerr and illustrated by Don Bolognese (HarperTrophy, 1996) ISBN 978-0064442206
37. *Off Like the Wind!: The First Ride of the Pony Express*, by Michael P. Spradlin and illustrated by Layne Johnson (Walker Publishing Company, 2010) ISBN 978-0802796523
38. *They're Off!: The Story of the Pony Express*, by Cheryl Harness (Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002) ISBN 978-0689851216
39. *Whatever Happened to the Pony Express?*, by Verla Kay and illustrated by Kimberly Bulcken Root and Barry Root (Putnam, 2010) ISBN 978-0399244834

Sequoyah and the Cherokee

40. *The First Strawberries: A Cherokee Story*, retold by Joseph Bruchac and illustrated by Anna Vojtech (Puffin Books, 1993) ISBN 978-0140564099
41. *If You Lived With the Cherokees*, by Peter and Connie Roop and illustrated by Kevin Smith (Scholastic Inc., 1998) ISBN 978-0590956062
42. *Rainbow Crow*, retold by Nancy Van Laan and illustrated by Beatriz Vidal (Alfred A. Knopf, 1989) ISBN 978-0679819424
43. *Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing*, by James Rumford (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004) ISBN 978-0618369478
44. *Trail of Tears*, by Joseph Bruchac and illustrated by Diana Magnuson (Random House, 1999) ISBN 978-0679890522

Transcontinental Railroad

45. *American History Ink: The Transcontinental Railroad*, by Glencoe/McGraw-Hill—Jamestown Education (McGraw-Hill, 2007) ISBN 978-0078780288
46. *The Building of the Transcontinental Railroad*, by Nathan Olson and illustrated by Richard Dominguez and Charles Barnett III (Capstone Press, 2007) ISBN 978-0736896528
47. *Coolies*, by Yin and illustrated by Chris Soentpiet (Puffin, 2003) ISBN 978-0142500552
48. *The Railroad: Life in the Old West*, by Bobbie Kalman (Crabtree Publishing, 1999) ISBN 978-0778701088
49. *Railroad!: A Story of the Transcontinental Railroad*, by Darice Bailer and illustrated by Bill Farnsworth (Soundprints Division of Trudy Corporation, 2003) ISBN 978-1592490172
50. *The Transcontinental Railroad (True Books: Westward Expansion)*, by John Perritano (Children's Press, 2010) ISBN 978-0531212486

Websites and Other Resources

Family Resources

1. **Interactive Map: Westward Expansion**
<http://bit.ly/XYmKBy>
2. **The Invention of the Steamboat**
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/newyork/laic/episode1/topic7/e1_t7_s3-is.html
3. **“Trail Kids”**
<http://on.doi.gov/Z71RQE>
4. **“Inventions: Transportation” Pictures**
<http://bit.ly/YYaFeC>
5. **The Erie Canal**
<http://bit.ly/ZjpiMJ>

Audio with video:

6. **“The Erie Canal Song,” by Thomas S. Allen**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HcNJ2RMOd3U>
7. **“The Erie Canal Song,” by Thomas S. Allen**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQE2sNfYXpg>
8. **“I’ve Been Working on the Railroad”**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IDfDtJYF8>