

# HEADING FOR THE GOLD FIELDS

By Pamela Jones

US History/8

## OVERVIEW

Students will use their knowledge of pioneer travel to make their way from St. Louis, MO to the gold fields near San Francisco, CA.

**TEKS/TAKS:** 8.1a, 8.6b,c,d,e; 8.10a,b; 8.11a; 8.12a,b

## OBJECTIVES:

TLW analyze and then calculate the expenses and equipment pioneers needed to emigrate west. TLW use a copy of an original map to trace their route from St. Louis, MO, to the gold fields of California

**TIME REQUIRED:** 1 class period

## MATERIALS NEEDED

Map of the west (attached at bottom of this document)

Map pencils

Pioneer equipment list

## PROCEDURES:

1. Students will be pioneers with a spouse and 4 children. They have sold all they own in their hometown of St. Louis, Missouri and must now buy all the supplies and equipment they will need to survive their journey and to start a new home in California near the gold fields.
2. Explain to students that after studying westward expansion and the gold rush, they now have enough background knowledge to make the trip themselves using the materials that were available in 1849.
3. Using the Pioneer equipment list, students will calculate their necessary expenses to make the trip.
4. Using a map pencil, students will trace their route from St. Louis to the gold fields on the map.

**MODIFICATIONS** for lower level students, allow them to work with partners and use a calculator.

**EXTENSION FOR PRE-AP:** students can research an additional stop along their trail to California—a trading post, an army fort, etc.

## TAKS RELATED QUESTION:

What territory acquired by the United States was California a part of? Ans: Mexican Cession.

**DOCUMENT SOURCE:** Library of Congress, American Memory at:

<http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/Maps/image/40.htm>

## Heading for California and the Gold Fields

1. It is 1849 and you've heard that gold has been discovered in California. While some men leave for the gold fields without their families, you have decided to take yours with you. Your family (6 people including yourself) will travel from St. Louis, Missouri to California. You already have a wagon and oxen to pull it. You have sold your home and everything too big for your wagon. You have raised about \$515, which you will need to buy supplies for your trip. Your wagon can only carry 2000 lbs. Remember these are supplies that will help you on your journey and start your new life in California.

If no price is listed, then you do not have to pay for these items as they were already in your possession.

2. After you have calculated your supplies and costs, use a map pencil to trace your route to San Francisco on the map.

SUPPLIES	COST	WEIGHT
1 extra wheel for wagon	\$15	100 lbs.
1 gun with ammunition	\$8	12 lbs.
1 lantern and kerosene	\$12	65 lbs
Anvil (used to repair iron tools, etc)	-----	80 lbs
Axe	-----	10 lbs
Axle grease (to prevent friction on the wheels)	-----	20 lbs
Bacon	\$20	120 lbs
Barrel of cornmeal	\$10	100 lbs
Barrel of flour	\$15	100 lbs.
Barrel of water	\$5	100 lbs.
Barrel of wheat	\$12	100 lbs.
Canned goods	\$15	100 lbs
Cast iron stove (from your home)	-----	550 lbs
Chains, ropes	-----	50 lbs
Coffee and tea	\$10	40 lbs
Cookware (pots, pans), knives, etc.	-----	30 lbs.
Dried beans	\$10	160 lbs
dried meat	\$30	120 lbs.
dried vegetables	\$10	82 lbs.
farming tools—pick, saw, hammer, shovel, saw, etc.	-----	30 lbs.
Flour and cornmeal	\$25	200 lbs
Horseshoes	-----	40 lbs

Household items (what you have left after you've sold your home, etc) blankets, pillows, clothing, etc.	-----	150 lbs.
Medicine chest	-----	8lbs
nails (to build new home, make repairs, etc)	\$15	10 lbs.
Oak bedstead (big enough for 2 adults)	-----	300 lbs
Oak chest	-----	250 lbs
Piano	-----	500 lbs
Plow	-----	60 lbs
potatoes	\$10	60 lbs.
Rocking chair	-----	35 lbs
seeds	\$15.00	100 lbs.
soap	\$5.00	10 lbs.
Spices and seasonings (pepper, etc)	\$18	25 lbs.
Sugar and salt	\$25	100 lbs
tools to repair wagon	-----	20 lbs.
Washtub	-----	25 lbs

