

Diary of a Trip from Boerne, Texas, to Matamoros

Exploring New Territory

Goals

Students will use information from historic and modern maps as well as an 1864 diary to identify and discuss how people traveled long distances in the 19th century.

Content Area, Grade Level

Social Studies, Geography

Grade 7

Time Allotment

Two 45- to 50-minute sessions

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

Social Studies 113.23

7.8 Geography. The student uses geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data. The student is expected to:

(A) create thematic maps, graphs, charts, models, and databases representing various aspects of Texas during the 19th and 20th centuries;

7.9 Geography. The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions in Texas. The student is expected to:

(A) locate places and regions of importance in Texas during the 19th and 20th centuries;

(B) compare places and regions of Texas in terms of physical and human characteristics;

Resources Needed

- A copy of *Diary of a Trip from Boerne, Texas, to Matamoros, Mexico: Dec. 21, 1864- Jan. 4, 1865* and glossary of terms (<http://library.uta.edu/K12/historyLessons/>).
- A reproducible copy of *J.H. Colton's Map of Texas, 1864* with journey highlighted (<http://library.uta.edu/K12/historyLessons/>).
- A modern Texas map. Printable versions are available at <http://www.nationalatlas.gov/printable/reference.html#Texas> or you may copy a page from an atlas in your library. You may also use online resources like MapQuest (<http://www.mapquest.com>).

Note: Other Texas maps, including historical ones, can be found online at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/texas.html>.

- Diary of a Trip from Boerne, Texas, to Matamoros—Exploring New Territory worksheet (<http://library.uta.edu/K12/historyLessons/>)
- Colored pencils

Implementation

Class Discussion

1. Have students (singly or in pairs) complete Section 1 of the Exploring New Territory worksheet in preparation for the class discussion.
2. Invite students to discuss what they know about southern Texas. In addition to the weather, the terrain, the people, and animals, encourage them to share how they know about the area – books, TV, movies, maps, magazines, travel, etc.
3. Explain that people already lived in much of the area that the group from Boerne traveled through and that people taking a journey would have at least basic information about where they were going. Sources could include maps, newspapers, and reports from earlier travelers.
4. Invite them to compare the ways that travelers in modern times get information about where they are going to the resources available at 1864.
5. Have them discuss what they would do to prepare for a journey to the Texas/Mexican border. Remind them that there was limited room in the wagon for supplies and use inappropriate suggestions, such as a Game Boy, to explain the difference between lifestyles in 1864 and now.

Life and Geography at the Time of the Journey

1. Have students read *Diary of a Trip from Boerne, Texas, to Matamoros, Mexico: Dec. 21, 1864-Jan. 4, 1865* and suggest that they notice what the travelers brought with them as well as what type of country they traveled through.
2. Have students (singly or in pairs) complete Section 2 of the worksheet before discussing this information.
3. Using the colored pencils, instruct the students to trace the Boerne group's journey on their copy of the modern map of Texas.
4. Have them compare the journey on the 1864 map with the modern map.
5. Have students (singly or in pairs) answer the related questions in Section 3 and Section 4 of the worksheet.

Evaluation

As a formative assessment instrument, the student fills in worksheets about the diary and journey. Teacher can also use classroom questioning to verify progress. Evaluate students on the following aspects of performance. The student:

- Thoughtfully and accurately completed the worksheet.
- Accurately placed the route on the map.
- Participated in the classroom instruction.

Extensions/Adaptations

- Have the students research the origins of town and river names on the 1864 map.
- Local history is fascinating. Ask the students to research the history and origins of local cities, rivers, and geological features near their home.
- Bring in a speaker or re-enactor to talk about life and travel in the pioneer days. Contact your local historical society or history museum for speaker suggestions.

Online Resources

Handbook of Texas — <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/>

The Handbook of Texas Online is a multidisciplinary encyclopedia of Texas history, geography, and culture sponsored by the Texas State Historical Association and the General Libraries at UT Austin. It is possible to find the history of the towns as well as information about rivers and regions the Boerne group journeyed through.

Geographic Education Sites (Texas Water Development Board) — http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/mapping/GIS_101/GisLinks.htm#lessonplans

Geography can be used to illustrate lessons in math, geology, science, and history. This site offers a list of useful geographic education websites. Many include interactive lessons and activities.

Conclusion

This lesson will give the students an opportunity to learn how travel is different today from 150 years ago. It will also give them exposure to historic maps and primary sources like diaries.