



Commerce on the Railroad

Pre-Visit Lesson

Grades: 7th grade - High School

Class Time Needed: 45 minutes

Big Idea Students will understand the different ways they are connected to the world.

Maryland Curriculum Standards

Social Studies Framework

- (7th grade): Analyze how technological changes have affected the consumption and production in the contemporary world.
 - Essential Question (8th grade - High School): Did American Westward Expansion challenge and promote national unity?
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Materials Needed

- Post-it notes
 - Internet access
 - Devices for students
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Teacher Resources

Websites for student research:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/inventions-nineteenth-century-4144740>

<https://teachinghistory.org/history-content/ask-a-historian/24470>

<https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/great-inventions-of-the-19th-century.html>



Lesson Procedure

Introduction:

Allow students to brainstorm the ways they connect to the world. What type of technology is used to travel, communicate and trade? Have each student write one example of a way to connect to the world on a post-it note, then stick the post-it onto the board. Some examples include: writing letters, social media, email, texting, phone calls, airplanes, cars, boats, video calls, internet, cell phones, trains, etc.

Once all the post-its are on the board, work as a class to split them into different categories: "Travel", "Communication" and "Trade". Make observations together about the lists - Which category has the most technology available? When was most of this technology created? Which of these do you use daily?

Direct Instruction (Student Activity):

Divide students into three groups. Each group will focus on a different technology category (Travel, Communication or Trade). The students in each group will need to research what types of technology were available in the 19th century to connect people to the world.

Each group will create a slideshow identifying ten pieces of technology used for either travel, communication or trade in the 19th century. Each slide should include a picture of the item, the date it was invented, and a basic description of how it connected people to the world.

Conclusion:

Allow each group to give a short (about 5 minutes) presentation with the information they found. See if any of the same technology appears on different presentations. Discuss possible technology that was not mentioned in any presentations.

