

- Hold a pioneer game day in your classroom by using a list of games and fun activities like "Pin the Tail on the Donkey" and "Twenty Questions" at curriculum.enoreo.on.ca/socialstudies/pioneer-virtual/games.html. Discuss which games are similar to games played today.
- Using clay and craft sticks, students can design and create their own "soddie." Use lesson plans and photos from the National Endowment for the Humanities site at edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?ID=296 and bring the sodbuster life to the classroom.

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com.

- library.thinkquest.org/6400/default.htm
ThinkQuest offers a glimpse of everyday life for pioneers in the 1800s.
- www.nebraskastudies.org
This site showcases photos, facts and primary sources about pioneers settling in Nebraska in the mid-1800s.
- www.campsilos.org/index.htm
Camp Silos explores the history and importance of farming in Iowa from the past to the present.

Suggested Print Resources

- Bial, Raymond. *Cow Towns*. Children's Press, New York, NY; 2004.
- Fischer, Laura. *Life in a Mississippi River Town*. Heinemann Library, Chicago, IL; 2003.
- Graves, Kerry A. *Going to School in Pioneer Times*. Blue Earth Books, Mankato, MN; 2002.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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COMPLETE LIST OF TITLES

• DAILY PIONEER LIFE

- THE PIONEER JOURNEY WESTWARD
 - WESTWARD EXPANSION IN THE U.S.
-

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Daily Pioneer Life

Grades K-4

In the late 1700s-1800s, the continental United States of America rapidly grew in size from its original 13 colonies to a vast country spanning the North American continent. One reason for this growth can be attributed to the pioneers — a group of courageous men and women who ventured into the western frontier to settle and make a new life and home. *Pioneer Life for Children* examines the events and the effects of establishing the borders of the continental U.S., as well as the purposes, challenges and enduring spirit of the pioneers to establish settlements in this new land.



Program Summary

The American pioneers were a group of brave and strong individuals who carved out homes and settlements in the western frontier of the U.S. in the late 1700s–1800s. Without modern conveniences like electricity and indoor plumbing, daily living was difficult, and each family member had important jobs to do to ensure the survival of the family. Depending on the geography and climate of the area, pioneers molded houses out of natural resources found in the area, such as log cabins in forested areas and sodhouses on the Great Plains. Many children attended school in one-room schoolhouses in between the busy planting and harvesting times of the year. Supplies were hard to come by, and trading posts offered the pioneer a place to buy needed goods and services. During the California Gold Rush, thousands of pioneers lived in mining camps and visited boomtowns for rest and recreation. Pioneers also settled in west coast cities like San Francisco which grew enormously during this time. The cattle boom in the Texas area encouraged many pioneers to live on ranches and the cowboy arose as an important American symbol. The pioneers, through their strength and rugged determination, settled in many different areas in the frontier, faced many difficulties in their daily life and helped to shape the United States.

Vocabulary

pioneer — A person who moves into an area that has previously not been settled.

frontier — An area of land that was unpopulated by American settlers.

root cellar — A room or large hole dug into the ground used for food storage during pioneer times. A root cellar kept food cool and fresh for long periods of time before refrigerators were invented.

smokehouse — A building designed to smoke, dry and preserve meat.

whittle — To carve. Pioneer children whittled toys out of wood or soap.

barn-raising — During pioneer times and in some communities of today, an event where many families help each other to build a barn.

quilting bee — During pioneer times and in some communities of today, an event where many women help each other to sew blocks of cloth together to make a large blanket called a quilt.

trading post — A station where goods from afar are bought, sold or bartered for local goods, usually found in a frontier area.

blacksmith — A person who works with metal, making and repairing objects like pots and pans, horseshoes, wagon wheels, nails and ammunition.

outhouse — Before indoor plumbing was common in houses, a small building that housed the toilet. This structure was built over a deep hole in the ground and, when filled with waste, it could be moved to another hole.

corral — A fenced area for livestock.

prairie — A flat, grassy area of land common on the Great Plains.

sodhouse — A style of house built by the pioneers settling on the prairies. Trees were so scarce that the pioneers cut blocks of grass and roots called sod and stacked the blocks together to make a house. People who lived in these houses were known as sodbusters.

buffalo chips — Dried buffalo manure collected by the pioneers for firewood on the prairies when trees and sticks were unavailable. *(Continued)*

well — A deep hole dug into the ground to reach fresh water contained in underground springs.

mining camp — Temporary tents and shacks set up by miners around a gold or silver mine that was common during the California Gold Rush in the mid-1800s.

boomtown — A city that was quickly built in order to do business with the miners, especially during the California Gold Rush in the mid-1800s.

ghost town — A deserted boomtown. After most of the gold, silver and land was claimed during the California Gold Rush, thousands of miners left the area, and most of the businesses in boomtowns closed and moved away.

ranch — Farms where sheep and cattle are raised.

Pre-viewing Discussion

- How do houses and living conditions reflect the geography and climate of an area?
- Speculate about how living in the United States has changed over time. What do you think the most significant changes have been? Why?
- How did pioneers cook their food? How did they wash their clothes? Brainstorm facts you know about daily living in a log cabin.

Focus Questions

1. Describe the responsibilities each pioneer family member had on the frontier. Who had the easiest jobs? The hardest? Why?
2. What did pioneer children do for fun on the frontier?
3. How is a trading post similar to a supermarket? How is it different?
4. Name four dangers that pioneers faced on the prairies.
5. What is a mining camp? How is it connected to a boomtown?
6. What is a cowboy? Why was this individual important to a ranch?

Follow-up Discussion & Activities

- Which time period is better — pioneer days or modern days? Have students choose the time period they would prefer to live in and write an opinion-based essay on their choice.
- Students often have a hard time thinking about life without a TV or a telephone. Encourage students to imagine spending one night at home without the modern conveniences such as electricity and indoor plumbing. Have them make a list of things they would have to do without, similar to the pioneers, and discuss how difficult it would be.
- The importance of the woman's role in a pioneer family was crucial as witnessed by advertisements placed by widowed fathers for "mail-order brides." Read and share the classic story of a woman who agrees to come to the frontier to live as a new wife and mother in *Sarab Plain and Tall* by Patricia MacLachlan (HarperCollins, 1999).
- Set up a trading post in your classroom. Have students draw pictures of items and supplies during pioneer times — like cloth, ammunition and sugar. Allow students time to practice their bartering skills to acquire supplies needed for their pioneer family. *(Continued)*