

## STORYPATH

# The Oregon Trail



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# ABOUT STORYPATH

## THE STORYPATH STRATEGY

Storypath offers both a structure for organizing the social studies curriculum and an instructional strategy for teaching. The structure is a familiar one: the story. The strategy is grounded in a belief that children learn best when they are active participants in their own learning, and places students' own efforts to understand at the center of the educational enterprise. Together, the structure and the teaching strategy ensure that students feel strongly motivated and have meaningful and memorable learning experiences.

Originally developed in Scotland during the 1960s, Storypath draws support from decades of experience with teachers and students. The approach has its roots in these beliefs about children and learning:

- The world is complex and presents many layers of information. Children know a good deal about how the world works and have a reservoir of knowledge that is often untapped in the classroom.
- When children build on that knowledge through activities such as questioning and researching, new understandings are acquired. Because children construct their own knowledge and understanding of their world, their learning is more meaningful and memorable.
- Problem solving is a natural and powerful human endeavor. When children are engaged in problem-solving, they take ownership for their learning.
- The story form integrates content and skills from many disciplines and provides a context for children to gain a deeper, more complex understanding of major concepts.

## AN INQUIRY APPROACH

Questioning, by both teacher and students, is a key component of Storypath. Through the story structure and the discourse it creates, the teacher guides students in their search for meaning and understanding as they acquire new knowledge and skills. Your questions, and the discussions they engender, cause students to:

- ask their own questions and think critically about what they know;
- use their prior knowledge to make sense of new information;
- connect personally to important social studies concepts.

The story structure and inquiry guided by unit goals provide the framework for students to integrate skills and complex content through problems they encounter. As they do so, their understanding of important concepts is extended and key connections are made.

## THE STORY STRUCTURE

For thousands of years, stories have helped us create order and make connections between events. Storypath's narrative structure helps students understand concepts that they often find difficult to comprehend in the traditional social studies curriculum.

Each Storypath unit centers on a unique and engaging story that provides a concrete context for understanding the social science content. This story may be based on actual historical events, as developed in *Struggle for Independence*. Or the story might instead be based on typical community or business structures, as developed in *Families in Their Neighborhoods* or in *Understanding the Marketplace*. From all of these structures, students develop a meaningful context for developing understanding of the topic.

### Typical structure of a Storypath unit

#### CREATING THE SETTING

Students create the setting by completing a frieze or mural of the place.

#### CREATING THE CHARACTERS

Students create characters for the story whose roles they will play during subsequent episodes.

#### BUILDING CONTEXT

Students are involved in activities such as reading, writing, and research to stimulate them to think more deeply about the people and the place they have created.

#### CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Characters confront problems typical of those faced by people of that time and place.

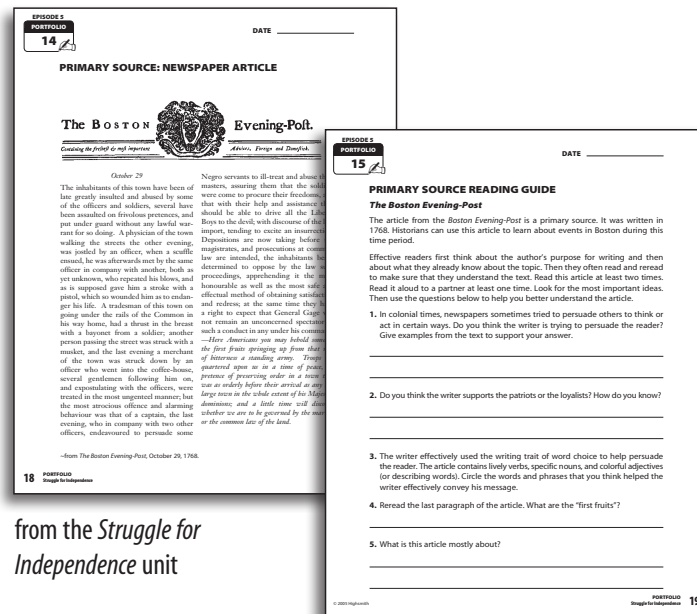
#### CONCLUDING EVENT

Students plan and participate in an activity that brings closure to the story.

from the *Struggle for Independence* unit

## STUDENT PORTFOLIO

Students use the Portfolio to read, write, conduct research, and complete other activities crucial to the specific Storypath unit. The Portfolio helps students manage their work throughout the unit. And when completed, the Portfolio becomes an authentic assessment tool.



from the *Struggle for Independence* unit



from the *Struggle for Independence* unit

## CONTENT SLIDE SETS & HANDOUTS

Each unit includes sets of Content Slides and Handouts that offer flexibility in how they are used to support student learning. The number of sets varies from unit to unit. The slides and handouts in each set provide focused non-fiction content and can be used for independent, paired, or small group reading.

Students use the slides to build context and deepen their understanding of the unit's content. You can use the slides as most appropriate to your situation along with the handouts. For those with laptops, display the appropriate slides for student reading and discussion or reproduce the slides as needed for each episode for individuals, pairs or small groups. The handouts may also be used without the slides.

In the overview of each episode, slide sets needed are listed and specific suggestions are provided for how to use the slides as you proceed through the episode. Best practice is for the slide to be available to the students either on a laptop in front of them or in hard copy. Then the teacher can use a large screen to display and support discussion related to the slide.

A "reading tips" chart in PDF format (located on the CD) provides quick reminders of key reading strategies. Reproduce "reading tips" for each student or group.

Note that the slides and handouts are conveniently available in a printable format on the CD.

# LITERACY AND STORYPATH

With the Storypath strategy, students deepen their understanding of major social studies concepts. Storypath provides literacy support to help students access and make sense of the social studies content. Students apply literacy skills such as reading comprehension, prewriting and writing skills, speaking and listening skills, and vocabulary development.

## Reading

Content Slide Sets and Handouts present opportunities for students to engage in focused content reading. Students can use the slides and handouts to engage in shared reading or listen as a teacher or another student reads.

**Colonial Exports**

Most of the colonies' exports were natural resources, or useful things from the land. Imports from Great Britain were mostly manufactured goods, or useful things made by people. Britain also sent ships and soldiers to protect the colonies.

Most colonies imported more than they exported. This was good for Britain, which profited from what it sold to the colonies.

Colony	Export
New England	fish, whale products, lumber, tar
Middle colonies	grain, iron
Southern colonies	cotton, tobacco, rice, indigo (a plant that produces a blue dye for coloring fabric)

**SET 6**

**SLIDE 3**

**3. Identify items exported to Britain and imported to the colonies. How are these items different? (understanding visuals)**

**British Colonies in North America, 1765**

The British colonies were divided into three regions.

- New England:** Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire
- Middle Colonies:** New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware
- Southern Colonies:** Maryland, Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia

**SET 1**

**SLIDE 2**

**Colonial Government**

In 1765, British citizens had the right to elect the people who governed them. British citizens living in England voted for members of Parliament, who passed laws for all of Great Britain. In the colonies, British citizens voted for an assembly. The assembly made laws, raised money through taxes, and decided how that money should be spent. Most colonies also had a governor who was appointed by the king of Great Britain. The governor's job was to make sure the colonies followed British laws. The governor could veto, or strike down, an assembly's law if it went against a British law.

In order to vote for the assembly, a colonist had to be a white male Christian who owned property. Because it was relatively easy to own land in the colonies, voting was more widespread than it was under other governments. However, Jews, slaves, free African Americans, Native Americans, and all women were barred from voting.

**SLIDE 2**

**CONTENT HANDOUT**  
The struggle for independence 3

## Comprehension

Questions in each Content Slide Set help students focus on important content. Questions are labeled with suggested reading strategies.

## Visual Literacy

Each unit offers numerous opportunities to evaluate and respond to visuals such as photographs, maps, diagrams, and illustrations.

## Reading Tips

For easy reference, Reading Tips for using the reading strategies are included on the CD.

Struggle for Independence		
Reading Tips		
Reading Strategy	When do I use the strategy?	How do I use it?
Main idea/s supporting details	Use it to find the big idea, and then identify the facts and details that support it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think about what you want to know and what you already know.</li> <li>2. Read the text and think: "What is the 'big idea' here?"</li> <li>3. Look for information that is important to the big idea. Some facts are interesting but not important.</li> <li>4. The details you find may cause you to change your big idea.</li> </ol>
Comparing and contrasting	Use it to find information that tells you how two or more ideas are alike and different.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think about what you want to know.</li> <li>2. Choose two events or ideas to compare and contrast.</li> <li>3. List important information about one event or idea.</li> <li>4. For each item on the list, look for information about how the other idea is the same or different.</li> <li>5. Look for clue words such as "similarly," "also," and "however."</li> </ol>
Making inferences	Use it to understand information not stated directly in the text, or to "read between the lines."	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think about what you want to know and what you already know.</li> <li>2. Look for clues in the text that give you new information.</li> <li>3. Compare this new information with what you already know to figure out what the author is saying.</li> </ol>
Connecting	Use it to understand new information by connecting it with what you already know.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think about what new information you want to remember.</li> <li>2. Think about what you already know.</li> <li>3. Look for connections between the new information and what you already know from experience or reading.</li> <li>4. These connections will help you remember the new information.</li> </ol>
Scanning	Use it to quickly find the specific information you need.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think about what information you need to find.</li> <li>2. Move your eyes over the page looking for subheadings, italicized or bold print words, and key ideas.</li> <li>3. When you find what you're looking for, slow down and read carefully.</li> </ol>
Understanding visuals	Use it to find information presented in visual form, such as maps, graphs, photographs, diagrams, and timelines.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Think about what you want to know and what you already know.</li> <li>2. Look for information that explains the visual. For example, look at labels, captions, axes, or map keys.</li> <li>3. Search for the specific information you want.</li> <li>4. Put the information into words to help you understand the visual.</li> </ol>

from the *Struggle for Independence* unit





# EPISODE

## CREATING THE CHARACTERS THE PEOPLE TRAVELING WEST

### INTRODUCING WESTWARD MOVEMENT

page 15

Students discuss reasons behind westward movement in America in the 1840s.

**Materials** Content Slide Sets 1 and 2

**Grouping** Whole class

**Schedule** Approximately 1 hour

### CREATING THE FAMILIES

page 16

Students create the families who will travel along the Oregon Trail.

**Materials** Teaching Master 1, *Wagon Train Application*, TH\* p. 56  
Portfolio 1, *Creating Family History*, p. 4  
Portfolio 2, *Making a Character*, p. 5

For the characters:

- various colors of construction and tissue paper
- thick black markers, crayons, colored chalk, glue or paste, scissors
- yarn, fabric and wallpaper scraps, wool fiber, doilies, ribbon, lace
- buttons, cotton balls

**Grouping** Divide the class into groups of 3–6 members each. These groups will form the families traveling west on the Oregon Trail.

**Schedule** 2–3 hours

### CONCLUDING EPISODE 1

page 17

Students introduce their characters, meet the other members of the wagon train, and reflect on their experiences.

**Materials** Portfolio 3, *Character Introductions*, p. 6  
Portfolio 4, *Active Listening Guide*, p. 7  
Pocket folders or sturdy paper to make folders (one per student)

**Grouping** Whole class participates in the introductions over several days.

**Schedule** Approximately 1 1/2 hours

### EPISODE OBJECTIVES



- **Culture/Social Interaction** *Determine how the traits of a character will help that character survive the environment on the Oregon Trail.*
- **Culture/Social Interaction** *Demonstrate how people are influenced by their setting and family circumstances by creating characters that are appropriate to a time and place.*
- **History** *Identify how the circumstances of the 1840s could have motivated people to move west.*
- **Social Skills** *Organize, plan, and make decisions while determining the characteristics of family members.*
- **Critical Thinking** *Organize ideas from group work and apply those ideas to create a believable character.*
- **Literacy** *Present characters to the class; listen actively and take notes during oral presentations.*



## INTRODUCING WESTWARD MOVEMENT

### AUTHOR NOTE

#### Historical Accuracy

Before Oregon became a U.S. territory in 1848, it was known as "Oregon Country." Oregon became a state in 1859.

### AUTHOR NOTE

#### Emigrant Mindset

Typically the emigrants in the 1800s had pre-conceived fears and little actual knowledge about the American Indians they would meet. Emigrants generally viewed the Indians as obstacles to overcome, rather than members of a rich culture.

### CUSTOMIZE

**ELL** In whole class discussions such as this one, allow ELL students to

- contribute words, phrases, or simple sentences;
- use visuals to make concepts more concrete;
- share their prior knowledge related to the topic;
- draw or write their ideas.

### Launch the unit

Explain to students that they will be creating a story about westward movement to the Oregon Country in America in the 1840s. Review the elements of a story: setting (where and when the story takes place), characters (the people in the story), and plot (the critical incidents in the story). In this episode, students will create families and decide why the families have decided to move to the Oregon Country.

### **ELL** Activate prior knowledge about traveling west

Students can discuss conditions of the mid-1800s to help them understand the motivations of the emigrants and their characters. If you find students don't have specific knowledge about events from this time period, refer them to Content Slide Sets 1 and 2. Direct students' attention to the map and timeline in Content Slide Set 1, as well as the newspaper excerpt that appears in Content Slide Set 2, "Why did people want to move west?" Guide them in reading the article and other information in these slides. After students have read the Content Slide Sets, use questions like the following to help students develop an understanding of this time period.

- ❓ Why might people sell their businesses and farms to travel to the Oregon Country? (*Lead students to consider financial reasons, such as cheap land, bank failures at home, and abundant resources in the West, and personal reasons, such as a spirit of adventure and a clean start.*)
- ❓ What might be dangerous and difficult about traveling west on a wagon train? (*Students might suggest such problems as bad weather, mountains and rivers that are difficult to cross, illness, finding food, becoming lost, and encounters with American Indians.*)
- ❓ What types of jobs did people have in the 1840s? (*Guide the discussion so that students understand the terms for unfamiliar occupations such as "wheelwright" [builds and repairs wheels], "cooper" [makes wooden barrels and tubs], "blacksmith" [makes iron tools and horseshoes], and "peddler" [travels to sell things]. Students may also include familiar occupations, such as farmer, teacher, doctor, and banker.*)
- ❓ In what ways would families of the 1840s be different from families of today? Why? (*Students might suggest that families in the 1840s were less mobile, more focused on home and family life, harder working because of the lack of technology, and more focused on crafts and handworking skills.*)

Continue to discuss what life was like in the 1840s, encouraging students to draw comparisons between "then" and "now."



### LITERACY

#### Vocabulary

As students discuss life in the 1840s and people's desire to move west, introduce and discuss vocabulary related to that time period:

- blacksmith
- cooper
- emigrants
- peddler
- pioneer
- wheelwright

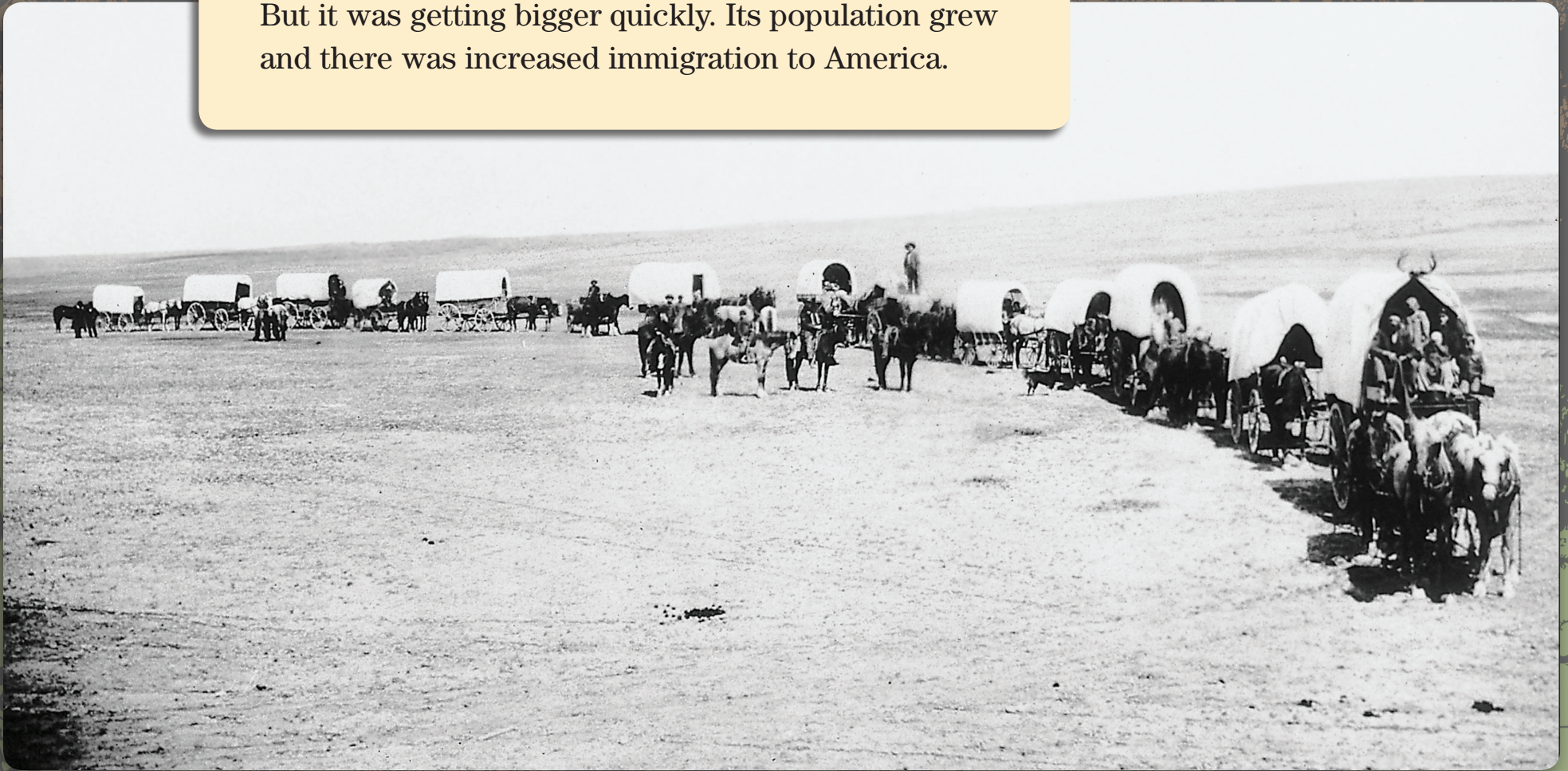


SET 1

SLIDE 1

## Why did America grow?

In 1800, the United States was only 24 years old and occupied less than one-third of the land it does today. But it was getting bigger quickly. Its population grew and there was increased immigration to America.







## Dateline

*continued*

### **1776** **In the Beginning**

The United States is formed as a nation of 13 colonies along the East Coast, with a population of about 4 million.

### **May 2, 1803** **Louisiana Purchase**

President Thomas Jefferson pays France \$15 million for the land between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, known as the Louisiana Territory. This new land almost doubles the size of the United States and people begin to think about moving west.

### **1804–1806** **Lewis and Clark Expedition**

Meriwether Lewis and William Clark explore the Louisiana Territory. They travel beyond the Rockies into the Oregon Country and return with stories of a beautiful region filled with fertile land and abundant game.