

Joseph's Railroad Dreams

Lesson 2: Vocabulary Game

Focus Questions

- What was train travel like in the 1890s?
- What transportation pathways connected Chicago regionally and nationally?
- What changes did the railroads bring to Chicago, physically, economically, and socially?
- What was it like to work on a train in the 1890s?

Core Understandings

Students will understand that the railroads had a major impact on the development of Chicago and the United States. They will understand why Chicago's geographic location and features made it a trade and transportation hub. They will understand that railroads enabled ordinary people to travel great distances with comfort and style unimaginable before the 1890s.

Knowledge

Students will know that the railroads played a prominent role in transforming Chicago into a local and national transportation hub. They will know the physical characteristics and amenities of 1890s-era trains as well as various jobs on the train, especially that of porter. They will know how people dressed for train travel and what they experienced along the way.

Skills

Students will use their language arts skills to interpret the past and explore different historical perspectives. Students will make observations, create interpretations, and draw comparisons between the past and the present. They will improve their vocabularies while also learning to discern fact from fiction.

Common Core ELA Standards

- CCSSR1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- CCSSR4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- CCSS.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

ISBE Social Science Standards

- Goal 15: Understand economic systems, with an emphasis on the US.
- Goal 16: Understand events, trends, individuals and movements shaping the history of Illinois, the US, and other nations.
- Goal 17: Understand world geography and the effects of geography on society, with an emphasis on the US.
- Goal 18: Understand social systems, with an emphasis on the US.

In This Lesson

By reading the *Joseph's Railroad Dreams* narrative and playing a vocabulary game, students will expand their knowledge of the railroads and train travel in the 1890s. They will also make a Venn diagram to compare train travel of the past to the present day. The story element of setting is addressed. This lesson was researched and written by Hollie Ware.



Activity

Before the lesson begins, consult the vocabulary words for *Joseph's Railroad Dreams*.

<http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/transportation/vocabulary.php>

Write each word large on a piece of construction or butcher-block paper and post them around the classroom. Write the definitions on separate pieces of paper, reserving them until later in the lesson.

Read the story *Joseph's Railroad Dreams* aloud to the class. http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/Josephs_Railroad_Dreams_by_Kris_Nesbitt.pdf

Alternatively you may want to play the story audio. <http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/site/storyaudio/index.html?story=1>

As you read, have students listen for the vocabulary words you have posted and write down what they think the words mean. To enhance the activity, have students write on sticky notes. Afterward, have them stick their notes under the appropriate vocabulary word.

Next, bring out the correct definitions one by one and have students match them to the correct word. They could do this as individual volunteers or as a group by voting.

Finally, have each student create a Venn diagram illustrating the differences and similarities between travel in the 1890s and today. Contrast how most people traveled then as opposed to now, how trains were decorated, and how people dressed to travel. If you'd like, you can distribute artifact printouts that students can add to their diagrams.

http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts_joseph.pdf

Materials & Resources

- **Printouts of the *Joseph's Railroad Dreams* narrative:**
http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/story/Josephs_Railroad_Dreams_by_Kris_Nesbitt.pdf
- **Printouts of the *Joseph's Railroad Dreams* artifact images:**
http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts_joseph.pdf
- **Construction or butcher-block paper**
- **Sticky notes** (optional)
- **Computer access for students in the class** (optional)

Instructional Notes

As you read the story, you may wish to hold up printouts of the artifact images at appropriate points in the story to help students connect the primary source materials to the text. http://www.chicagohistory.org/greatchicagostories/pdf/artifacts/artifacts_joseph.pdf

Extension Activities

Create a simple game in which students are challenged to figure out what artifact goes with what portion of the story. Write plot points (such as “Joseph used this item to order food in the dining room of the train”) on butcher-block paper or on the board. Then divide students into small groups and give each group one or two artifacts. The first group to correctly match their images to the story content wins.

Have students draw their own railroad dining menu.

Have students illustrate how they would decorate an 1890s railroad car interior.