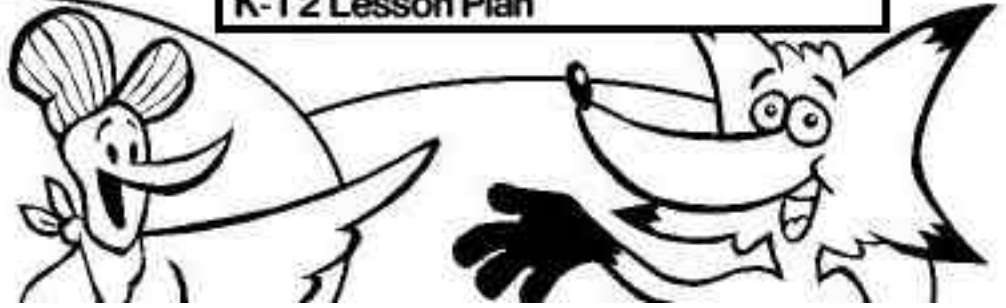




## K-12 Lesson Plan



### ALL ABOARD!

Grade: Sixth Grade

Subjects:



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### OVERVIEW

This lesson helps students learn about rail safety by planning a trip to a city of their choice in the United States. They also use skills in map reading, math, reading, organization, problem-solving and creative writing as they plan their train trip. Students work in small groups for the planning piece of the activity and individually for the writing activities.

### SAFETY MESSAGE:

■ Stay alert and pay attention around train tracks.

### SUGGESTED TIME ALLOWANCE

Five 50-minute periods

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Apply railroad safety messages to their travel activity.
- Read a map and make decisions based upon it.
- Synthesize research they have done on a city in the U.S. in order to plan a trip.
- Create literature that incorporates railroad safety messages.
- Write about a fictional experience that they have created.

National Academic Content Standards addressed by this lesson.

## **MATERIALS**

For each pair or small group:

- Map of the United States
- Map of the city of choice
- Amtrak schedule and map <<http://www.amtrak.com/index5.html>>
- Copy of the Safety Messages
- Journal Worksheet
- Internet-Connected Computer(s)

## **VOCABULARY**

Use the glossary included in Teacher Resources for any unfamiliar words students find in the safety messages or in class discussions.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **TEACHER PREPARATION:**

Read the background information on general rail safety and trespassing. Preview the websites used by students in this lesson so that you can guide them when they get on the Internet.

### **MOTIVATION:**

Ask the students to brainstorm U.S. cities that they would like to visit and tell reasons why they've selected that particular city. *Have you ever visited this city? How did you get there? Have you ever traveled by train? What do you know about traveling by train?* Tell students that they will be working together to plan a trip by train to the city of their choice.

### **ACTIVITY:**

1. Give students the assignment. They can work in pairs or small groups of 3-4. They must select the nearest departure town to their community that has rail passenger service (Amtrak). Then, they should select the city to which they will travel (they will need to make sure there is Amtrak service to this city).

- They will be planning a trip by rail between these two places.
2. Give students a budget -- a fictional amount of money that they must keep in mind as they plan their trip. Tell students to research fare for a round-trip ticket (considering different options with sleeper car, dining car, etc.), compare the fares, and make a choice of which options to include.
  3. Next, they should plan an itinerary for the train trip (schedule of arrival, departure times) and daily tours, including time, location and cost. If time allows, include this option activity: Research and select hotel/motel costs, as well as money that will be needed to eat. What should the daily food allowance be? Students might visit local chain restaurants to obtain menus with prices to help determine a budget for food.
  4. Students should keep a daily journal of their trip, writing as if they were actually traveling and touring the points of interest. Students should write about each day of their trip. They can design their own journal cover. Students could cut out a shape of an engine and have all the sheets of the journal the same shape. A possible title page might be:

ALL ABOARD!  
Journal each day  
While you're away  
So when you return  
There'll be a lot we can learn!

5. Once the trip has been planned, have students design a railroad safety brochure for their trip that would be handed to all passengers. They might also make posters advertising the trip and incorporating railroad safety slogans and messages.

## **CONCLUSION:**

Have students organize a presentation for the rest of the class (or other grades at the school) speaking about their particular trip, including railroad safety messages used in their brochures, poster,

journals, etc.

## HIGHER ORDER THINKING

To assure students are using critical thinking skills, present challenges such as these at an appropriate place within the lesson: *Choose more than one city to visit; keep track of travel arrival, departures and costs of meals and rooms. Then compare and contrast the cost per city by drawing graphs and charts. Write a daily budget, as well as a budget for the entire trip, including transportation cost, hotel, food, activities and souvenirs.*

## ASSESSMENT

- Finished travel itinerary, brochure and poster (Apply railroad safety messages to their travel activity.)
- Finished travel itinerary that is logical and journal entries (Read a map and make decisions based upon it.)
- Decisions made for travel itinerary and journal entries (Synthesize research they have done on a city in the U.S. in order to plan a trip.)
- Brochure and poster (Create literature that incorporates railroad safety messages.)
- Journal (Write about a fictional experience that they have created.)
- Completion of invention project, alone or with a partner (Design a new invention to solve the problem of vehicles driving around lowered gates.)

## EXTENSIONS

**Social Studies:** Research the history of railway signs. When was the first active or flashing lights warning device?

**Arts:** Design a poster that would help sell your invention/idea to your community and its leaders.

## TEACHER RESOURCES

Background information on general rail safety and background information on trespassing

Operation Lifesaver website: <<http://www.oli.org>>

Amtrak website: <<http://www.amtrak.com>>

Byron's Last Day video

*Byron's Last Day* video clips (Quicktime required):

- Hopping a Train
- Headphones on the Tracks
- Crossing Between Tracks

Video utilization tips for *Byron's Last Day*

## **NATIONAL ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS**

These standards are provided by the Mid-continent Regional Educational Laboratory (McREL) online publication, Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education. <<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>>

The following standards are addressed by the activities of this lesson:

### **Arts: Visual Arts:**

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 5-8)

Standard 1: Understands and applies media, techniques and processes related to the visual arts

Benchmark: Understands what makes different art media, techniques and processes effective (or ineffective) in communicating various ideas

### **Geography**

Level II: Upper Elementary (Gr. 3-5)

Standard 1: Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes and other geographic tools and technologies

Benchmark: Uses map grids (e.g., latitude and longitude or alphanumeric system) to plot absolute location

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 2: Knows the location of places, geographic features and patterns of the environment

Benchmark: Knows the relative location of, size of, and distances

between places (e.g., major urban centers in the United States)

## **Language Arts**

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 1: Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Benchmarks:

- Uses style and structure appropriate for specific audiences (e.g., public, private) and purposes (e.g., to entertain, to influence, to inform)
- Writes expository compositions (e.g., presents information that reflects knowledge about the topic of the report; organizes and presents information in a logical manner)
- Writes narrative accounts (e.g., engages the reader by establishing a context and otherwise developing reader interest; creates an organizational structure that balances and unifies all narrative aspects of; etc.)

Standard 2: Demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

Benchmark: Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas (e.g., establishes tone and mood, uses figurative language)

Standard 4: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Benchmark: Uses a variety of resource materials to gather information for research topics (e.g., magazines, newspapers, dictionaries, schedules, journals, phone directories, globes, atlases, almanacs)

## **Life Skills: Self Regulation**

Level IV: (Gr. K-12)

Standard: Considers risks

Benchmarks:

- Weighs risks in making decisions and solving problems
- Uses common knowledge to avoid hazard or injury

- Applies preventative measures prior to a task to minimize security or safety problems

### **Life Skills: Thinking and Reasoning**

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 6: Applies decision-making techniques

Benchmark: Analyzes personal decisions in terms of the options that were considered

### **Life Skills: Life Work**

Level IV: High School (Gr. 9-12)

Standard 3: Manages money effectively

Benchmarks:

- Prepares and follows a budget
- Uses sound buying principles for purchasing goods and services

### **Technology**

Level III: Middle School (Gr. 6-8)

Standard 2: Knows the characteristics and uses of computer software programs

Benchmark: Knows the common features and uses of desktop publishing software (e.g., documents are created, designed, and formatted for publication; data, graphics, and scanned images can be imported into a document using desktop software)

To see related standards for your state, search [Achieve's Clearinghouse](http://www.achievetest.org/achievetest/achievestart.nsf/Search?OpenForm):  
< <http://www.achievetest.org/achievetest/achievestart.nsf/Search?OpenForm> >

information storage and retrieval system, or by license from any collective or licensing body, for any commercial purpose without permission in writing from Operation Lifesaver, Inc.