

Life as a Pioneer

Grade: Elementary/Middle School

Purpose/Objective: Students will understand what life was like for pioneers in the early settlement of Utah/Cache Valley.

Lesson Plan:

[Use Teacher Resource Information: Pioneer Games, Life as a Pioneer]

Note: This activity may work best as a post activity, so students will be able to include visual details they experience on their field trip.

1. Introduction: Ask students what they already know about the early settlement of Cache Valley. Write the information students share on the board.
2. Explain the early settlement of Cache Valley, the use of “forts” and early homes. Either go over the various aspects of life as a pioneer (pre activity), or review the things the class experienced on their field trip that show what life was like for the pioneers (post activity).
3. Letter: Assuming the same character as the students took on in writing diary entries as they crossed the plains, have students compose a letter to a friend or relative they left back home. In the letter, students should tell this person what life is like for them now that they are settled in their new home. Topics to cover could consist of:
 - a. Type of house (what it looks like, how big it is)
 - b. Chores and work
 - c. Games and fun
 - d. Transportation
 - e. School
 - f. Food and Food Preparation

Alternate writing activities:

- i. Write and illustrate a story showing what life was like for pioneers in the early settlement of Utah/Cache Valley.
 - ii. Continue on with diary entries concerning the same character assumed in the activity about crossing the plains. These diary entries will deal with life in an early pioneer settlement (including the points listed above).
4. Activity 1: Have students make a list of the things that they do each day. Include things such as going to school, what chores they might do, games, playing with friends, etc. Next, have them create a list of what they imagine a child in the pioneer times would do in one day.
 - a. Compare and contrast the lists.

- b. What activities are similar? Which activities are different? Who had to do more physical work? Which time would be harder to live in? Explain your answers.
- 5. Activity 2: Use the Teacher Resource Information: Pioneer Games page and have the students learn a pioneer game. Have them teach another class that didn't go on the field trip how to play the game.
- 6. Activity 3: Dancing was a popular pastime for the pioneers. Have students learn a dance that was popular during the pioneer times, such as the Virginia Reel, quadrilles, waltz, contra dances, or the polka.
- 7. Activity 4: To gain an understanding or appreciation of the modern conveniences that we enjoy today, have students go without as many modern conveniences as they can for one night (or is truly realistic!). These would include: electricity, TV, Radio, CD's, DVD's, computer, microwave, refrigerator, stove, running water, etc. Have students record which things they went without and have them record their feelings about going without these conveniences. Possible competition: See which student can go without the most items.

Standards: SS 4.1.2, 4.2.2, 5.2.2, 7.2.3, 8.7.1

Use in Classroom: Social Studies, Writing, PE