

Grade Level **5-11**

Class Periods **2**

Goals/Objective/Student Outcomes:

Students will:

- Learn about methods of transportation used through history.
- Understand about the various types of power used to aid transportation systems.
- Learn about the environmental and ecological effects of different methods of transportation.
- Understand the choices made when implementing certain types of transportation systems.
- Understand the roles of technological invention and natural resources in developing transportation systems.

Materials:

1. Newspapers and magazines, old and new.
2. Catalogs containing illustrations of vehicles.
3. Time to look at television and listen to the radio.
4. Maps of the state and city where you live.
5. Road atlases.
6. Topographical maps of the area where you live.
7. Books containing examples of transportation methods.
8. Salesperson's samples of vehicles for sale.

Background:

Means of transportation have changed dramatically during the past 290 years. In less than a century, technology has carried us from travel by foot or horse to automobile and airplane. Horses and other animals such as oxen, hauled people, produce, and manufactured items in two- and four-wheeled vehicles. The inventions of such mechanical devices as steamships, steam locomotives, railroad tracks, lock and dam systems on rivers, made it possible to move people and goods from place to place much more quickly than before. These inventions had a significant impact on European immigration to the United States as well as on migration within the new country. Steamships traveled from Europe to North America much more quickly than the sailing ships of earlier days. Trains carried passengers and goods to all parts of the country much more quickly and less expensively than wagon or keelboat.

Because of these technological changes, transportation routes also changed. No longer were people confined to rivers, river valleys, or flat land. Railroad tracks were laid through mountain tunnels and on trestles over broad valleys. In the 20th century the invention of the automobile and the airplane brought about additional transportation revolutions. With the aid of these vehicles, it became possible to travel from coast to coast in a matter of hours. Coupled with advances in communication techniques, improved transportation brought both people and information closer together. Even rural communities now became part of the American mainstream.

Procedure:

This thematic lesson plan is intended to introduce this particular topic to students. The activities are intended to introduce students to the process of inquiry that can be applied to the study of Iowa history. In many cases the same activities can be used to explore the topic in a variety of Iowa history time periods. This lesson plan can also be used in conjunction with other topical areas in this curriculum.

These thematic lesson plans underscore basic skills such as reading, writing, communicating orally, and collecting reference sources. Many of the activities will give students practice in using higher skills as in reading, writing, communicating orally, collecting reference sources and using a library; distinguishing between primary and secondary sources; using charts and timelines; and developing vocabulary. The teacher can introduce higher level skills through activities such as collecting information from a variety of sources through observation and questioning; compiling, organizing, and evaluating information; comparing and contrasting; drawing conclusions or inferences from evidence; considering alternative conclusions; making generalizations; recognizing points of view; understanding how things happen and how things change; recognizing how values and traditions influence history and the present; grasping the complexities of cause and effect; developing a chronological sense; and understanding events in context.

Activities:

1. Describe the mode of transportation by which you arrived at school today.
2. Describe all of the types of transportation you have used in the past. Why was a particular type used at a specific time and place or for a certain purpose?
3. Draw or paint a picture of a vehicle used for transportation.
4. Display models of vehicles used for transportation.

5. Build models of vehicles used for transportation at earlier times in our history.
6. Write a story about transportation that does not involve a vehicle.
7. Prepare a bulletin board display using illustrations of various kinds of transportation systems used today.
8. Look at newspapers, television, and films and listen to the radio for examples of how transportation vehicles or methods are being promoted and sold.
9. Discuss the various types of specialized clothing that are associated with certain types of transportation.
10. Discuss the various types of fuel associated with types of transportation—vehicular or otherwise.
11. Read descriptions of travel in literature.
12. Trace routes on maps using a variety of transportation methods.
13. Find examples of fine art that have a transportation theme.
14. Find examples of music that have a transportation theme.
15. Discuss the impact of topography on our transportation choices.
16. What dangers are associated with various transportation systems?
17. Discuss how speed and comfort influence our choices of particular methods of transportation.

Assessment of Outcomes:

1. List different methods of transportation people have used during the last 150 years.
2. Draw or paint a picture of a vehicle or method of transportation that is not used in the area where you live.
3. Display models of types of vehicles and explain where and when they were most commonly used.
4. Draw a map of a practical route from where you live to a destination on the East or West Coast.
5. List the types of materials needed to make a vehicle used for passenger transportation.

Extensions and Adaptations:

Most of the activities listed under procedures can be easily adapted to meet the learning needs of most students at various ages. Many of the listed activities can be used as art, music, writing, math, or science projects. Be sure to draw on teachers within your school and resource people in your community. The folklife section of this curriculum provides a list of community resource ideas.

Resources:

Contact the Iowa History Resource Center at the State Historical Society of Iowa for a list of books, videos, organizations and ideas for studying Iowa history. Write to: Education Coordinator, State Historical Society of Iowa, 600 East Locust, Des Moines, Iowa 50319.