

4th grade Nevada History Pony Express Discussion Lesson

Topic: Pony Express Riders

Lesson Authors: Angela Gonzalez, Christi Wilson, Veronica De León

Related Essential Questions: How have conflict and compromise shaped Nevada's History?

Related Nevada History Chapters: Chapter 6- Making a place in Nevada

NV Social Studies Standards (Geography, Economics, Civics, History): **H1.4.4** Discuss the interactions of pioneers with the Great Basin Indians **H2.4.1** Discuss examples of compromise and conflict within Nevada

Literacy Standards: **RI.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. **RI.4.3** Explain events in a historical text including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text. **RI.4.7** Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. **RI.4.9** integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Brief Overview of Lesson & Guiding Discussion Question: The students will look at how the Pony Express riders were caught in-between the conflict between white settlers and the Indians in Nevada. After readings, annotating, and discussing students will make a claim; Did the riders have a right to defend themselves against the Indian attacks.

Brief Historical Background: In 1859, Senator William Gwin of California wanted a faster mail service between the eastern and western United States. Therefore on April 3rd, 1860, the Pony Express made its first historic run. With established stagecoach stations every 10-12 miles between St. Joseph, Missouri and Sacramento, California, pony express riders delivered mail with 10 days exchanging mochilas at the stations. In May 1860, conflict arose between the white settlers and the Great Basin Indians in Nevada, which led to Indian attacks on the riders and stations. During this time, many riders (Billy Tate and Emmet McCain) were killed and stations were attacked and burned. On October 24th, 1861 the first transcontinental telegraph which transmitted communications, led to the end of the Pony Express.

Included Materials:

- ✓ Art and Argument: Pony Express by Shannon Stirnweis with graphic organizer
- ✓ Nevada Our Home textbook: Ch. 6 pgs. 108-109 with text dependent questions
- ✓ Fun Facts about Pony Express for background knowledge
- ✓ Pony Bob...the longest ride Teacher led annotations and text dependent questions
- ✓ Lone Tree Legend with teacher lead annotations and text dependent questions
- ✓ Structured Academic Controversy with student self-assessment
- ✓ Writing Rubric for final writing piece.

Lesson Sequence:

Approximate Time Frame	What is the teacher doing?	What are students doing?	Notes (additional scaffolds, logistical considerations, room arrangements, grouping, etc.)
45 minutes	<p>Art Argument with art piece: Lead the students through completing the graphic organizer. 10-15 minutes to collect evidence. Share with class. Have students work with a partner in completing "What I think" for 15 minutes. Have students share with another partnership. Give students 30 minutes to write reasoning with claim. Share with class.</p>	<p>Students will work in partners to complete the art argument graphic organizer.</p>	<p>A copy of the art argument will be provided to each student. The art piece will be displayed or projected on an overhead for all students to access.</p>
45 minutes	<p>Textbook with fun facts: Have students read the document and compare it with the art piece they looked at and discuss how it adds to their comprehension</p>	<p>Partner reading and completing questions</p>	<p>If students are reading below grade level work with a small group to access information</p>
2 days 45 minutes to 60 minutes	<p>Pony Bob: Review annotation symbols before lesson. Monitoring progress on text annotations. Annotate the text together to assess Robert Haslam’s point of view of on his “longest ride” to see how it shapes the content and style of text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find loaded language, hyperbole, or descriptions that are highly interesting. In the margin describe why the narrator used these words. • Choose a sentence that clearly demonstrates the narrator’s point of view. In the margin, rewrite the sentence by changing two or more keywords to modify the tone and/or point of view of the topic. • Students will then answer the questions with partners. 	<p>Provided with a hard copy of the annotation symbols to aide their annotations. If students are reading below grade level work with a small group to access information</p>
2 days 45 to 60 minutes	<p>Lone Tree: Create a cause and effect chart based on events of ideas described in the text.</p>	<p>Students will be discussing what is the most important event in the text? Place a square around it. Make a list of words and phrases from the text that describes it. Note if the description changes over the text.</p>	<p>If students are working below grade level they can work with a partner.</p>
60 minutes plus time to prepare	<p>SAC: Teacher will assign the students a point of view to support, and provide time for students to prepare. Once students are ready teacher will create groups of 4, two students for each point of view. Teacher will time the discussion.</p>	<p>Students will argue their point of view, and listen to the opposing side taking notes on what is being shared. Groups will then reach a consensus. Once the discussion is over, students will complete a writing assignment based on the guided discussion question.</p>	<p>Teacher will provide the graphic organizer, which students will complete and use for the discussion. Room will need to be rearranged for groups of four, two partners per point of view. In the group of four, opposing views will be facing one another.</p>

4-Point Opinion Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-5)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Purpose/Organization	<p>The response has a clear and effective organizational structure, creating a sense of unity and completeness. The response is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opinion is introduced, clearly communicated, and the focus is strongly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas effective introduction and conclusion logical progression of ideas from beginning to end; strong connections between and among ideas with some syntactic variety 	<p>The response has an evident organizational structure and a sense of completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected. The response is adequately sustained and generally focused:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opinion is clear, and the focus is mostly maintained for the purpose, audience, and task adequate use of transitional strategies with some variety to clarify relationships between and among ideas adequate introduction and conclusion adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end; adequate connections between and among ideas 	<p>The response has an inconsistent organizational structure, and flaws are evident. The response is somewhat sustained and may have a minor drift in focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opinion may be somewhat unclear, or the focus may be insufficiently sustained for the purpose, audience, and task inconsistent use of transitional strategies and/or little variety introduction or conclusion, if present, may be weak uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end; and/or formulaic; inconsistent or unclear connections between and among ideas 	<p>The response has little or no discernible organizational structure. The response may be related to the opinion but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opinion may be confusing or ambiguous; response may be too brief or the focus may drift from the purpose, audience, or task few or no transitional strategies are evident introduction and/or conclusion may be missing frequent extraneous ideas may be evident; ideas may be randomly ordered or have an unclear progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text Off-purpose

4-Point Opinion Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Evidence/Elaboration	<p>The response provides thorough and convincing support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes the effective use of sources, facts, and details. The response clearly and effectively expresses ideas, using precise language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive evidence from sources is integrated; references are relevant and specific effective use of a variety of elaborative techniques* vocabulary is clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose effective, appropriate style enhances content 	<p>The response provides adequate support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes the use of sources, facts, and details. The response adequately expresses ideas, employing a mix of precise with more general language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate evidence from sources is integrated; some references may be general adequate use of some elaborative techniques vocabulary is generally appropriate for the audience and purpose generally appropriate style is evident 	<p>The response provides uneven, cursory support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes partial or uneven use of sources, facts, and details. The response expresses ideas unevenly, using simplistic language:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some evidence from sources may be weakly integrated, imprecise, or repetitive; references may be vague weak or uneven use of elaborative techniques; development may consist primarily of source summary vocabulary use is uneven or somewhat ineffective for the audience and purpose inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style 	<p>The response provides minimal support/evidence for the opinion and supporting idea(s) that includes little or no use of sources, facts, and details. The response's expression of ideas is vague, lacks clarity, or is confusing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> evidence from the source material is minimal or irrelevant; references may be absent or incorrectly used minimal, if any, use of elaborative techniques vocabulary is limited or ineffective for the audience and purpose little or no evidence of appropriate style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text Off-purpose

*Elaborative techniques may include the use of personal experiences that support the opinion.

2-Point Opinion Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–5)				
Score	2	1	0	NS
Conventions	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling 	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling 	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text <p>(Off-purpose responses will still receive a score in Conventions.)</p>

Holistic Scoring:

- **Variety:** A range of errors includes formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling
- **Severity:** Basic errors are more heavily weighted than higher-level errors.
- **Density:** The proportion of errors to the amount of writing done well. This includes the ratio of errors to the length of the piece.

Name of Artwork

Evidence From Text: "What I see"	Claims: "What I Think"	Reasoning: "How I know"
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.		
6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.		
12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17.		

Retrieved from: www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/.../ponyexpressquickfacts.htm

The Pony Express: Quick Facts

When it began: April 3, 1860

Where it went: To and from St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California

How many miles: 1966

How many riders: 183

How often a rider changed horses: every 10 to 15 miles

How often a shipment changed riders: every 75 to 100 miles

Pay: \$100 a month

Cost to send mail: \$5 for a ½ ounce (reduced to \$1 for ½ ounce by end of Pony Express)

Fastest full-route ride: 7 days 17 hours (containing text of President Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address)

When it ended: October 24, 1861

Why it ended: Telegraph supplanted it

Total miles covered: 650,000

Source A: Primary Source- Pony Express advertisement



Questions for consideration:

1. What is the poster advertising?
2. Describe the job requirements:
3. Why are orphans preferred for the position?

Source B: Secondary Source- Pony Express by Shoannon Stirweis



Questions for Consideration

1. What are the men in the image doing?

2. Describe the geographical features in the image:

1 Source E: Primary Source: A Thrilling and Truthful History of the Pony Express- Pony
2 Bob...the longest ride

3
4 One of the best known Pony Express riders in Nevada was Robert Haslam, better known
5 as "Pony Bob". Part of Bob's fame came from his ride in May, 1860, at the peak of Nevada's
6 Indian troubles. It was the longest ride of the Pony Express—380 miles—and almost right on
7 schedule.

8 Bob described his experience to author William Lightfoot Visscher:

9 "When I reached Reed's Station, on the Carson River, I found no change of horses as all
10 those at the station had been seized by the whites to part in the approaching battle. I fed the
11 animal that I rode, and started for the next station called Buckland's...fifteen miles further down
12 the river (southwest of present-day Lahontan Reservoir). It was to have been the termination of
13 my journey, as I changed my old route to this one, in which I had many narrow escapes, and had
14 been twice wounded by Indians.

15 "I had already ridden seventy-five miles (from Friday's Station, south of Lake Tahoe):
16 but to my astonishment, the other rider refused to go on. The superintendent, W.C. Marley, was
17 at the station, but all his persuasion could not prevail the rider, Johnson Richardson, to the road.
18 Turning then to me, Marley said:

19 "Bob I will give you \$50 if you will make this ride."

20 "I replied, 'I will go at once.'

21 "Within ten minutes, when I adjusted my Spencer rifle, which was a seven shooter and
22 my Colt's revolver, with two cylinders ready to use in case of emergency, I started. From the
23 station onward it was a lonely dangerous ride of thirty five miles, without a change, to the Sink
24 of Carson. I arrived there all right, however, and pushed to Sand Springs, through an alkali
25 bottom and sand hills, thirty miles farther, without a drop of water all the route. At Sand Springs
26 I changed horses and continued on to Cold Springs, a distance of thirty-seven miles. Another
27 change and a ride of thirty more miles brought me to Smith's Creek. Here I was relieved by J.C.
28 Kelly. I had ridden 190 miles stopping only to eat and change horses."

29 This was the fastest ride made on the entire 2,000 mile route during the Pony Express'
30 history.

31 "After remaining at Smith's Creek about nine hours, I started retracing my journey with
32 the return express. When I arrived at Cold Springs to my horror I found that the station had been
33 attacked by Indians, the keeper killed, and all the horses taken away. I decided in a moment
34 what course to pursue—I would go on. I watered my horse, having ridden him thirty miles on
35 time, he was pretty tired, and started for Sand Springs, thirty-seven miles away. It was growing
36 dark, and my road lay through heavy sagebrush, high enough in some places to conceal a horse. I
37 kept a bright lookout, and closely watched every motion of my poor pony's ears, which is a
38 signal for danger in an Indian country. I was prepared for a fight, but the stillness of the night
39 and the howling of the wolves and coyotes made cold chills run through me at times; but I
40 reached Sand Springs in safety and reported what had happened. Before leaving, I advised the
41 station keeper to come with me to the Sink of the Carson, for I was sure the Indians would be
42 upon him the next day. He took my advice, and so probably saved his life, for the following
43 morning Smith's Creek was attacked."

44 "When I arrived at the Sink of Carson, I found the station men badly frightened, for they
45 had seen some fifty warriors decked out in their in their war-paint and reconnoitering...I rested
46 here an hour, and after dark started to Buckland's, where I arrived without mishap and only three

47 and a half hours behind scheduled time. I found Mr. Marley at Buckland's and when I related to
48 him the story of the Cold Springs tragedy and my success, he raised his previous offer of \$50 for
49 my ride to \$100.00. I was rather tired but the excitement of the trip had braced me to withstand
50 the fatigue of the journey. After a rest of one and a half hours, I proceeded over my own route
51 from Buckland's to Friday's Station, crossing the Sierra Nevada. I had traveled 380 miles within
52 a few hours of schedule time and was surround by perils on every hand.

Source Questions for consideration

1. What is Robert Haslam best known for?
2. Using evidence from the text, what does prevail mean?
3. Why did Johnson Richardson refuse to ride out toward Smith's Creek to deliver the mail?
4. According to Robert Haslam, what perils surrounded him on every hand?

1 Source D: Secondary Source Nevada Our Home Ch. 7 pgs. 108-109

2

3 Riding the Pony Express

4 Sending mail out west took a very long time before trails and airplanes were invented.

5 To speed up delivery, open company started a new service call the Pony Express.

6 About 80 young men were hired to ride from St. Joseph, Missouri to Sacramento,

7 California. Riders had to be small. Most weighed less than 125 pounds. They ranged from ages

8 11 years old to just over 40. The company gave each boy a place to stay and food to eat. Riders

9 were also given a small Bible and asked to swear an oath, or a promise.

10 The trip from Missouri to California was over 2,000 miles long. Riders rode from 75

11 miles to 100 miles each. They carried a leather mail pouch called a mochila. Riders stopped to

12 change horses every 10 to 15 miles at relay stations spread out along the trail. Most relay

13 stations in the East were already being used as stagecoach stops. Out west, many new stations

14 were built. Sometimes tents or dugouts were used as stations. Some stations were built with

15 adobe bricks.

16

17 Carrying the Mail Through Nevada

18 There were 29 relay stations across the Nevada desert. William "Billy" Fisher was one of

19 the first Pony Express riders hired to carry the mail through eastern Nevada and parts of Utah.

20 Once he rode 300 miles in 30 hours to warn stations about coming Indian attacks. Another time

21 he got lost while carrying the mail through a snowstorm.

22 After stopping to rest under some trees, Fisher fell asleep. He awoke when a rabbit began

23 licking his face. Nearly frozen to death, he and his horse made their way toward the light of a

24 distance cabin. When the old man opened the door, Fisher fainted on the doorstep. The old man

25 took him in and let him rest. The next day Fisher got back on his horse and continued on with the

26 mail.

27 The Pony Express lasted only 18 months before the invention of the telegraph put it out

28 of business. Sadly, the owners lost money, but the Pony Express became an important part of

29 history.

Questions to answer after reading the text:

1. Why was the Pony Express created? How long was it in use? And what brought the Pony Express to an end?
 2. How was the life of a Pony Express rider difficult? Use evidence to support your answer.
 3. Were Pony Express riders over worked? Use evidence to support your claim.
-

1 Source F: Secondary source- Lone Tree Legend, Reno Evening Gazette, April 4, 1960, by Myrtle T. Myles

2 During the spring and early summer of 1860 the Paiute Indians were on a warpath, and in May
3 the volunteers under Major Ormsby, who went out to punish them, were defeated with many
4 casualties at Pyramid Lake. Although the uprising was subdued when regulars came to the aid of
5 western Nevada, small bands continued to harry¹ riders and stations to the extent that for a month the
6 Express ceased to run while burned stations were rebuilt and new stock secured. When mail operations
7 were resumed, "Pony Bob" Haslam arrived at old Buckland's station, ending his run from Placerville. In
8 his mochila were important government papers. He tossed his mochila to Emmet McCain, a rider from
9 Churchill to Sand Springs, and the latter² off on the trail, warned to watch sharply for Indians, and to
10 guard the important papers at all cost.

11 McCain made the usual good time of nine or ten miles an hour to Hooten Wells. Here two men
12 came out to meet him, the stationmaster in charge and the men from Sink Station, his next relay. The
13 excited men greeted hi, with news that Indians had run off all stock at the Sink, the stationmaster barely
14 escaping with his life. That meant no fresh pony at the next stop. A hurried conference³ took place and
15 it was decided that McCain should take not the swiftest, but the strongest horse from Hooten Wells, and
16 instead of following the trail around the curve of the hills, he should cut straight toward Sand Springs,
17 thus missing the Sink Station and possibly the Indian raiders⁴.

18 Galloping off on the hastily planned route. McCain made fast time; but when about a third of the way
19 had been covered, his horse pricked up his ears and shield nervously. Looking to his right toward the
20 raided station the rider saw that he was about to be defeated in his purpose—a band of Indians was
21 heading across his trail! Putting his spurs to his brave pony in a desperate attempt⁵ to outdistance
22 them, he raced on. But when he saw that they steadily gained, he was determined to save the mail if
23 not himself. Dropping the mail his mochila in a marshy hole in the slough and trampling the spot over
24 with his horse's hooves, the courageous boy thrust the cottonwood switch he was carrying as a whip
25 into the ground as a marker, trusting that a comrade might find the mail. Racing on he was soon
26 overtaken and although he used his revolver effectively against the enemy, he was overcome in the end.
27 The cottonwood switch, according to legend⁶; grew into a beautiful tree that for over eighty years stood
28 out upon the plain, a monument⁷ to the faithful Pony Express rider.

¹ Harry: adj. attack

² latter: n. the last of the two

³ Conference: to meet for discussion

⁴ Raiders: n. people who surprise attack

⁵ Attempt: n. an effort to do or accomplish something

⁶ Legend: n. a story that cannot be proven true

⁷ Monument: n. something built in memory of a person

Questions for Consideration

1. Why did Emmet McCain have to change his route in order to relay the mail to Sand Springs Station? Use two details from paragraph 2 to support your answer.
2. In paragraph 3, how was McCain “defeat in purpose”? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
3. Using the definition, what synonym would replace “harry” in line 5?
4. Why did the author name the legend “Lone Tree”? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Formalities of the Structured Academic Controversy

I. Choose a topic with two distinct sides/positions.

-Develop (or find) student readings.

- Provide common/shared background information about the topic for all students. Can be done using a text set, read aloud, video analysis, etc.
- Provide distinct texts further detailing specific claims of each side of the argument (for the two halves of the class),

OR

- Provide time with a group of texts that all students read (whole class, small group, read aloud, etc.) but then are only responsible for one side.

2. Divide Students into groups of 4.

A. Split each group into two pairs. Each pair is assigned one side of the argument.

3. Read Documents: Each pair studies one side of the argument by reading the background material, their side of the issue, or the entire article.

A. Each pair identifies claims and reasoning and evidence within the text to support their position.

4. Discussion:

A. Pair #1 advocates their position while Pair #2 takes notes citing specific claims.

1. Pair #2 shares back what they learned and ask clarifying questions about information presented.

2. Students DO NOT exchange papers to complete this task.

B. Pair #2 advocates their position while Pair #1 takes notes citing specific claims.

1. Pair #1 shares back what they learned and ask clarifying questions about information presented.

2. Students DO NOT exchange papers to complete this task

5. Common Ground and Further Questions

A. Students work together as a group of four to synthesize the ideas and come to consensus on at least on major point.

B. Students should also identify at least one area where they agree to need more information or clarification.

6. Whole Class Debrief/Reflection

A. Reflect upon content

B. Reflect upon process

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Determine which vocabulary is essential for understanding the topic.
- DO NOT “kill” the fun in the readings before the discussion with over preparation.
- Important choice: Will all students complete all readings? Or will all students complete the background reading and then only read texts that support their assigned side?
- Allow students to review material prior to SAC (if assigned for homework etc.)
- Provide some type of literacy strategy- annotation, note taker, highlighting, etc.)
- Build comprehension around background knowledge, vocabulary, and layout of documents.

- USE A TIMER. HAVE BREAKDOWN OF TIME SEQUENCE AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS TO SCAN.
- When students are teaching the argument to each other, have them flip their handouts over. They should have to explain, rather than read their most compelling reasons. They cannot just exchange papers.
- Designate a lead facilitator
- WHOLE GROUP DEBRIEF!!! Make time for this!

Discussion Time Frame

(sample should be modified for teacher and student needs)

1 min	Individuals introduce themselves and shake hands.
90 secs	First pair shares their position (claims, evidence, reasoning).
1 min	Second pair shares back what they learned and asks clarifying questions as needed.
1 min	Second pair finishes notes on their handout.
2 min	Second pair shares their position (claims, evidence and reasoning).
1 min	First pair shares back what they learned and asks clarifying questions as needed.
1 min	First pair finishes notes on their handout.
5 min	Group of 4 openly discusses the issue and tries to find some common ground or consensus on the issue and prepares to share common ground with the whole class. These points are listed in the note taker.
4 min	<u>Whole Group Reflection</u> : What are points of consensus and what questions does the group have?
10 min	<u>Individual Content Reflection</u> : What did you learn about _____? Each student will write a paragraph on their final personal position on the issue using three pieces of evidence to explain their ideas.
4 min	<u>Individual Process Reflection</u> : Reflect on your participation in the discussion. What did you do well? What do you need to improve upon?

Structured Academic Controversy

Question: In the conflict between the white settlers and the Native Americans, were the Pony Express riders justified in protecting themselves against Native Americans attacks?

Background Reading	
Vocabulary terms/meanings I should know and use when I speak	Important facts from background reading that support my side
Preparing My Argument	
My Claims (statements that support my arguments)	My Evidence and Reasoning to Support My Claims
1.	
2.	

Reflection & Self-Assessment

Reflect on your participation in the discussion. What did you do well? What will you improve upon in future discussions?

Stating my points /claims clearly:

Using evidence from the text:

Using reasoning with evidence to describe it in my own words:

Working with my partner:

Having eye contact:

Speaking loudly enough for my group to hear me:

Staying focused:

Listening and learning from the other side:

Helping the group to come to consensus:

Other:

I would assess myself with a _____ / 25 for participation in the discussion today.