

# Open Up the Textbook (OUT)

*Enlarge*

*Complicate*

*Contest*

*Vivify*

Title: Mountain Men of Nevada

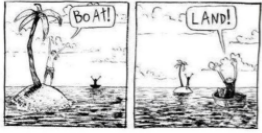


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In this OUT analysis, 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will study early Nevada pioneers called mountain men in order to better understand the following essential questions:

- How do physical geography and natural resources affect the settlement of people and the development of culture?
- How have conflict and compromise shaped Nevada's history?

This OUT analysis provides students with documents that are meant to deliberately **complicate** and **vivify** the textbook.

This strategy is implemented most effectively when students collaborate to analyze the texts in small, heterogeneous groups or when document analysis is modeled by the teacher with the whole class. The texts that accompany the textbook are complex and often include difficult vocabulary and syntax. (For a few words that are likely unknown to students and unidentifiable based upon context clues, helpful synonyms are provided in the footnotes.) Students should first annotate each text and then collaborate to answer the text dependent and specific questions that follow. Questions will highlight sourcing and perspective of the author, close reading of key details from the document that enlarge, complicate, contest, or vivify the textbook, as well as questions that help students corroborate (or not) the accuracy of individual documents. The writing task that follows is an independent activity wherein students will employ evidence from multiple sources to justify their analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

<p><b>ENLARGE:</b> include unrepresented groups; hear voices of silenced people and groups</p>	 <p>Perspective...</p>
<p><b>COMPLICATE:</b> offer a different point of view that makes a piece of the text seem more complex</p>	 <p>Simplicity → Complexity</p>
<p><b>CONTEST:</b> build knowledge from primary sources that challenge the facts of the textbook</p>	<p>I am thinking, I suspect you are still young and simple and discover with slight geometry. The few men know the world beyond their feet is enormous. Why what else, what are you're looking for? I am thinking, I am thinking of you that you have missing, the greatest</p>
<p><b>VIVIFY:</b> breathe life into the textbook version with rich details; make the history come alive</p>	

## Teacher Tips:

- Model document analysis with students.
- Ensure that students stay on task in their small groups. Stop regularly to check for understanding and have groups report out on their findings.
- At the end of each document analysis, have students answer the question: Does this document enlarge, complicate, contest, or vivify the textbook? How?

### **Mountain Men**

Mountain men were trappers who often spent long periods of time hunting in the mountains. They lived off the land, finding their food and shelter in the mountains and deserts of the West.

Mountain men often hunted where Indian tribes lived. Many of them became friendly with native people. Sometimes they traded food and supplies with each other. Some mountain men even joined native tribes and married Indian women. But many native people didn't like trappers. They saw them as invaders of the land. This caused many problems between the mountain men and Indian tribes. Some of these problems turned into battles that later became legends of the West.

### **The Rendezvous**

Each year mountain men, friendly Indians, and trappers came together for a rendezvous. Rendezvous is a French word that means "a place and time of meeting." A rendezvous was like a long, wild party. The men played games and competed in contests. They raced to see who could eat cooked buffalo intestine the fastest. They even shot cups of whiskey off of one another's heads to prove their bravery.

Gambling games were popular with both trappers and Indians. Trappers loved to bet on all kinds of things, from foot races to horse races. They especially liked playing the Indian hand game.

Sometimes a rendezvous lasted an entire week. After most their money was spent, trappers went back to their work in the mountains for another year. The mountain men of the West and their yearly rendezvous soon became legends in American history.

### **Source A Questions for Consideration**

1. What do you learn about the lifestyle of mountain men from paragraphs 1-2?
2. Which word would you use to describe the relationship between native people and mountain men: friendly, violent, complicated? (Circle one. In the space below, provide three pieces of evidence from the text for your answer.)
3. Which modern activity best resembles a mountain man rendezvous: birthday party, family reunion, state fair, other? Why? What evidence from the text supports your answer?

**Source B: Secondary Source - Mountain Men (from Digital History at the University of Houston; articles compiled by various historians)**

Traders and trappers were more important than government explorers in opening the West to white settlement. The "mountain men" blazed the great westward trails through the Rockies and Sierra Nevada Mountains and stirred the popular<sup>1</sup> imagination with stories of redwood forests, geysers, and fertile valleys in California, Oregon and other areas west of the Rocky Mountains. These men also undermined<sup>2</sup> the ability of the western Indians to resist white incursions<sup>3</sup> by encouraging intertribal warfare and making Indians dependent on American manufactured goods, killing off the animals that provided a major part of their hunting and gathering economy, distributing alcohol, and spreading disease.

**Source B Questions for Consideration:**

1. The author states that fur trappers “were more important than government explorers in opening the West to white settlement.” Based on the first paragraph, what did these men do that helped attract more white settlers?
2. The phrases “blazed the great westward trails” and “stirred the popular imagination” use figurative language because the words “blazed” and “stirred” help us build a picture in our minds of what is happening. Discuss the pictures your mind makes with these two phrases.
3. In what five ways did mountain men help keep Indians from resisting white settlement?

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<sup>1</sup> The public's or people's

<sup>2</sup> Weakened

<sup>3</sup> Fight back against white settlers taking land

**Source C: Primary Source – *Journal of a Trapper, Nine Years in the Rocky Mountains 1834-1943*  
by Osbourne Russell**

A Trappers equipment in such cases is generally one Animal upon which is placed...a riding Saddle and bridle a sack containing six Beaver traps a blanket with an extra pair of Moccasins<sup>4</sup> his powder horn<sup>5</sup> and bullet pouch with a belt to which is attached a butcher Knife a small wooden box containing bait for Beaver a Tobacco sack with a pipe and implements for making fire with sometimes a hatchet fastened to the Pommel of his saddle his personal dress is a flannel or cotton shirt (if he is fortunate to obtain one, if not Antelope skin answers the purpose of over and under shirt) a pair of leather breeches<sup>6</sup> with Blanket or smoked Buffalo skin, leggings, a coat made of Blanket or Buffalo robe a hat or Cap of wool, Buffalo or Otter skin. His hose are pieces of Blanket lapped round his feet which are covered with a pair of Moccasins made of Dressed Deer Elk or Buffalo skins with his long hair falling loosely over his shoulders complete the uniform.

**Source C Questions for Consideration**

1. In the first line, “one animal” is mentioned as a part of a trapper’s equipment. What type of animal would this likely be? What clues from lines 1-2 help you infer this?
2. This paragraph only contains two sentences which form a long list of equipment. The first sentence is a run-on sentence.
  - a. Based on the source of this information, why might there be many grammatical errors?
  - b. With your partner(s), go back through the first sentence and add additional punctuation and make grammatical changes that make the sentence easier to understand.
3. The word “hose” is used differently in this passage than we often see it. Read the second sentence again and use context clues to decide what “hose” refers to.
4. How does this passage help you understand the food that trappers ate and how they got it?

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<sup>4</sup> Soft, leather shoes

<sup>5</sup> Container for gun powder

<sup>6</sup> pants

**Source D: Secondary Source - Portrait of Joseph Walker on his 1833 Voyage through the Great Basin to California**



**Source D Questions for Consideration**

1. Compare this painting of trapper Joseph Walker to the description of trappers and their equipment in Source C. What is the same? What is different?

2. Portraits are posed events created by an artist to capture a person and provide meaning. Talk with your partner(s) about the following questions that can help us analyze a portrait.

*Describe the subject's age, clothing, expression, and pose (laying down, standing, sprawling, pointing, etc.).*

*Does the subject appear to be looking at the viewer or at something else? If something else, at what is the subject looking? How does the subject's gaze make you feel about the subject?*

*Describe the setting or background. Is the background a backdrop (as in a modern-day photographer's studio or most school photos) or a specific place?*

*If the painting is not completely realistic, what parts are not realistic?*

*What colors stand out in the painting? What objects are included in the painting? Why do you think they were included? What do the objects lead you to think about?*

3. Write down the most interesting idea your group discussed.

**Source E: Secondary Source - *The Stuff of Legends: The Ways of the Mountain Men* by Emily Zimmerman, University of Virginia, 1996**

The legends and feats of the mountain men have persisted largely because there was a lot of truth to the tales that were told. The life of the mountain man was rough, and one that brought him face to face with death on a regular basis--sometimes through the slow agony of starvation, dehydration, burning heat, or freezing cold and sometimes by the surprise attack of animal or Indian.

The mountain man's life was ruled not by the calendar or the clock but by the climate and seasons. In fall and spring, the men would trap. The start of the season and its length were dictated by the weather. The spring hunt was usually the most profitable<sup>7</sup>, with the pelts still having their winter thickness. Spring season would last until the pelt quality became low. In July, the groups of mountain men and the company suppliers would gather at the summer rendezvous. There, the furs were sold, supplies were bought and company trappers were divided into parties and delegated to various hunting grounds.

The tradition of the rendezvous was started by General William Ashley's men of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company in 1825. What began as a practical gathering to exchange pelts for supplies and reorganize trapping units evolved into a month long carnival in the middle of the wilderness. The gathering was not confined to trappers, and attracted women and children, Indians, French Canadians, and travelers.

**Source E Questions for Consideration:**

1. What dangers did mountain men face?
2. Describe the lifestyle of mountain men in the different seasons. What information about this does the author leave out?
3. The word party is at the end of the second paragraph. What is the best synonym for this word in this sentence: gathering, group, celebration? What word could you use to replace "delegated"?
4. What new information did you learn about the rendezvous from this source?

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<sup>7</sup> Made the most money



## Source F: Secondary Source/Map - Travels of Jedidiah Smith 1825-1831



### Source F Questions for Consideration

1. What features do you notice on this map? What do they tell you?
2. Were Jedidiah Smith's travels peaceful or violent? How do you know? Be specific.
3. When did Jedidiah Smith travel through the Great Basin in Nevada? How did you figure this out when there are no state boundaries on the map?
4. What might the cross at the end of the Santa Fe Trail symbolize? Why?

**Source G: Primary Source - *Adventures of a Mountain Man: The Narrative of Zenas Leonard***

(journal of years 1831-1835; published in 1839 – The following section is about traveling through the Humbolt Sink in Nevada in 1833.)

The Indians of this area are totally naked with the exception of a shield of grass, which they wear around their loins<sup>8</sup>. They are generally small and weak, and some of them very hairy. They subsist upon grass-seed, frogs, fish. In warm weather there is a fly, about the size and similar to a grain of wheat, on this lake, in great numbers. When the wind rolls the waters onto the shore, these flies are left on the beach --- the female Indians then carefully gather them into baskets and dried for winter provender. These flies, together with grass seed, and a few rabbits, is their principal food during the winter season.

A great many Indians were seen in this vicinity, and it was decided to fortify<sup>9</sup> the camp. A breastwork<sup>10</sup> was made by piling up the baggage and saddles. Before everything was completed, eight- to nine-hundred Indians marched straight toward the camp. About one hundred and fifty yards away, the Indians stopped, and five of their chiefs continued on to the camp. They indicated their people wanted to come into camp and smoke.

Capt. Walker refused to let the Indians enter the camp. To frighten them off, he had some of the men shoot at ducks on the lake. The ducks were killed, which astonished the Indians a good deal, but the noise of the guns caused them to fall flat to the ground.

A few days later, large numbers of Indians were moving in the tall reeds<sup>11</sup> around camp. A party of eighty to one hundred approached in a threatening manner. The boldness of the Indians alarmed Capt. Walker. When he gave his consent to show them the strength of our rifles, thirty-two men mounted<sup>12</sup> and surrounded the Indians. Thirty-nine Indians were killed and the remainder ran into the high grass in every direction, howling in the most lamentable manner. Capt. Walker then gave orders to some of the men to take the bows of the fallen Indians and put the wounded out of misery. Our object was to strike a decisive blow.

**Source G Questions for Consideration**

1. In paragraph one, what do we learn about the lifestyle of the Indians from this account?

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<sup>8</sup> Area below the stomach and above the thighs

<sup>9</sup> Strengthen against possible attack

<sup>10</sup> Wall about four feet high that protects and allows men to shoot over at the enemy

<sup>11</sup> plants

<sup>12</sup> Got up on horses



## Source G Questions for Consideration, continued

2. According to paragraph 2, why did the group of white men fortify the camp? Was there good reason to?
3. Describe the way that Captain Walker (the same Joseph Walker from Source D portrait) treated the Indians.

## Source H: Secondary Source – Painting, *The Trapper's Bride*, by Alfred Jacob Miller, 1850

1. Make a list of the details you notice in this painting.
2. How does this painting depict native and trapper relationships?



3. What other sources support this the image in this painting?
4. What other sources do not support the image in this painting?

## Student Writing Task:

This is an informational writing task based on NVACS standards: W.4.2, W4.4, W.4.6, W.4.8, W.4.9. Students will demonstrate their understanding of the texts as well as the ways in which the textbook was enlarged, complicated, and vivified.

**Create a better version of the textbook paragraphs on mountain men and the rendezvous by including details from the sources you just analyzed. Write approximately one typed page that includes evidence from at least five of the sources you analyzed. When you quote or paraphrase the evidence, be sure to cite the source at the end of the sentence in parentheses like this: *Mountain men had a complicated relationship with Indians. Some trappers were friends with the Indians and married native women (Source H). Others, like, Joseph Walker, attacked the Indians and killed many (Source G).***

### Action Steps:

1. Reread Source A – The Textbook. With a partner, refer back to each source and find details/evidence that is important to add to the textbook version of the story. Write each piece of evidence down on a strip of paper and include the source letter in parentheses. (You must have at least six pieces of evidence to add to the textbook version.)
2. With a partner, move your strips of evidence around to put them in an order that makes sense. Group similar ideas together (e.g. rendezvous, relationships with natives, lifestyle of mountain men). Decide how many paragraphs you will have and give them titles (like the textbook in Source A).
3. Make sure you use at least eight of the words below in your writing and that you include context clues that demonstrate your understanding of the word.

trapper	trade	native	equipment	pelt
invader	explorer	tribe	rendezvous	legend
peaceful	violent	lifestyle	mountain man	trail

4. Write a draft of your new textbook chapter. Have another student(s) check your draft to make sure your ideas flow and are correct. They should check to make sure you are using linking words and phrases and precise vocabulary from the box above.
5. Finalize your writing and type it using 12 point font.
6. Title your paper. Draw a picture that shows some of your details. Label your picture with a caption.