

Exploring America's Frontier Resource List for Grades 5 through 8

The Resources in this document can be used with the Exploring America's Frontier Curriculum Packet for grades 5 through 8.

Books

Non-fiction and Biography

- Best Shot in the West: The Adventures of Nat Love, 2012 by Patricia C. McKissack (Author), Frederick L. McKissack (Author), Randy Duburke (Illustrator).
This is a biography of an unforgettable man told in graphic novel form. Born into slavery in 1854, Nat Love, also known as Deadwood Dick, grew up to become the most famous African-American cowboy in the Old West. A contemporary and acquaintance of Bat Masterson and Billy the Kid, Nat was widely known as an expert roper and driver, a crack shot, and a real Wild West character.
- The Boy Who Became Buffalo Bill: Growing Up Billy Cody in Bleeding Kansas, 2015 by Andrea Warren (Author).
This biography concentrates largely on Cody's years growing up in the Kansas Territory, which at the time was known as "Bloody Kansas" because of the violence between pro-slavers and abolitionists. Before he was 17, Cody had worked on wagon trains, ridden for the Pony Express, prospected for gold, been an Army scout on the Santa Fe Trail, and joined the Union Army. Cody's extraordinary childhood adventures should fascinate readers.
- Children of the Wild West, 1990 by Russell Freedman (Author), George Buctel (Illustrator).
Historical photographs show what life was like for pioneer and Indian children growing up in the American West during the late nineteenth century.
- The Chumash (Native American Histories), 2007 by Liz Sonneborn (Author).
For thousands of years, the Chumash people have made their home on California's rich coast. Their story is one of survival and strength. Forced to work in Spanish missions in the 1700s, the Chumash lost much of their original way of life. After many years of hardship, the Chumash have regained some of their traditions.
- Conestoga Wagons, 2000 by Richard Ammon (Author), Bill Farnsworth (Illustrator).
Gives the history of the Conestoga wagon, the 18-wheeler of its time. Used to long-distance hauling from 1750-1850 and produced in Pennsylvania.
- Daily Life in a Plains Indian Village: 1868, 1999 by Terry, Michael Bad Hand (Author).
A photographic look at life in a Plains Indian Village during the 19th century. More than 130 full-color photographs adorn this handsome re-creation of daily life in a Plains Indian village in 1868.
- Exploration of the California Coast: The Adventures of Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Francis Drake, Sebastian Vizcaino, and Other Explorers of North America's West Coast (Exploration & Discovery), 2002 by Clarissa Aykroyd (Author).
Discusses the sixteenth-century exploration of California's coast, including the adventures of

such Spanish explorers as Cortes, Juan Rodr iguez Cabrillo, and Sebasti an Vizca ino, as well as Englishman Sir Francis Drake.

- Getting There: Frontier Travel Without Power, 1980 by Suzanne Hilton (Author).
Describes what it was like to travel by horseback, stagecoach, canal boat, flatboat, covered wagon, and sailing ship before the days of motorized travel.
- Missions and Presidios (American Community), 2005 by Raymond Bial (Author).
Takes readers back to a time when colonial villages, cow towns, frontier settlements, longhouses, missions, and presidios thrived, due in part to the amazing spirit of the many different people who carved uniquely American towns from the rugged land.
- Native American Resistance (Primary Sources of Westward Expansion), 2017 by Zachary Deibel (Author).
Describes the United States government's efforts to remove Native Americans from their land and drive them west to allow white settlement, the breaking of treaties, and the ways in which Native Americans resisted being forced out.
- A Primary Source History of Westward Expansion, 2015 by Steven Otfinoski (Author).
Throughout the 1800s millions of people pushed into the western United States. They went for gold, opportunities, and a chance for a better life. But as settlers moved in, American Indians were often pushed out. Hear the words they spoke. Read the words they read. And see the differing points of view about westward expansion through the eyes of the people who lived it.
- Settling and Unsettling the West, 2017 by Teacher Created Materials (Author).
Primary source documents provide an intimate glimpse into what life was like during the 1800s. This nonfiction reader can be purposefully differentiated for various reading levels and learning styles. It contains text features to increase academic vocabulary and comprehension, from captions and bold print to index and glossary.
- Sylvia Stark: A Pioneer, 1992 by Victoria Scott (Author), Ernest Jones (Author), Karen Lewis (Illustrator).
Chronicles the life of a woman who was born a slave in Missouri in 1839, moved with her family to California, and later lived on a small island off the coast of British Columbia until she was 105.
- A Timeline History of the Transcontinental Railroad (Timeline Trackers: Westward Expansion), 2015 by Alison Behnke (Author).
In the early nineteenth century, much of the land west of the Mississippi River was not yet part of the United States. Many people dreamed of settling this huge area, but the journey to get there was long and dangerous. By the mid-1860s, a bold plan had taken shape: the country had decided to build a single railroad stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Spanning North America, it would be the first railway to cross a continent.
- Westward Expansion (True Books), 2010 by Teresa Domnauer (Author).
Journey west with America's pioneers on foot, on horseback, and in covered wagons-from the Mississippi River to the Oregon Trail-in these true stories of courage and survival that shaped our nation.
- Westward Expansion and Migration, Grades 6 - 12 (American History Series), 2011 by Cindy Barden (Author), Maria Backus (Author).
This book explores history, geography, and social studies with activities that involve critical thinking, writing, and technology. The book includes topics such as Lewis and Clark, the Santa Fe Trail, the Gold Rush, and San Francisco.
- Which Way to the Wild West?: Everything Your Schoolbooks Didn't Tell You About Westward

Expansion, 2015 by Steve Sheinkin (Author), Tim Robinson (Illustrator).

A fascinating narrative that stretches from the Louisiana Purchase (remember: if you're negotiating a treaty for your country, play it cool.) to the gold rush (there were only three ways to get to California, all of them bad) to the life of the cowboy, the Indian wars, and the everyday happenings that defined living on the frontier.

Fiction

- Coolies, 2003 by Yin (Author), Chris Soentpiet (Illustrator).
Shek marvels at the new world as he and his brother, Little Wong, arrive in California. Along with hundreds of other workers, the brothers are going to build a great railroad across the West. They plan to save enough money so that their mother and little brothers can join them in America. Inspired by actual events, this story reveals the harsh truth about life for the Chinese railroad workers in 1865, while celebrating their perseverance and bravery.
- The Giant Rat of Sumatra: or Pirates Galore, 2006 by Sid Fleischman (Author), John Hendrix (Illustrator).
The Giant Rat of Sumatra is the most notorious pirate ship in the Pacific. Its ferocious figurehead, a rat with crooked teeth and gouged-out eyes, strikes fear in the heart of every seafaring crew. Now the ship has dropped anchor in San Diego. Twelve-year-old cabin boy Shipwreck, so named after he was rescued from the sea by the pirates, is anxious to begin his long journey home to Boston.
- Island of the Blue Dolphins, 2010 by Scott O'Dell (Author).
Far off the coast of California looms a harsh rock known as the island of San Nicholas. Dolphins flash in the blue waters around it, sea otter play in the vast kelp beds, and sea elephants loll on the stony beaches. Here, in the early 1800s, according to history, an Indian girl spent eighteen years alone, and this beautifully written novel is her story.
- Jip: His Story, 1998 by Patterson, Katherine (Author).
This historical tale by Katherine Paterson involves its young protagonist, Jip, in the great 19th century struggle between slave owners and abolitionists while sending him into a test of his own loyalty and courage
- Sarah, Plain and Tall, 2004 by Patricia MacLachan (Author).
19th century tale of a widowed farmer with two children who advertises for a wife. The answer to his ad is Sarah, who arrives from Maine. The tale gently explores themes of abandonment, loss and love.
- The Sign of the Beaver, 1984 by Elizabeth George Speare (Author).
Story of a 12 year old boy who is left to survive in the wilderness on his own.
- The Traitor, 2004 by Laurence Yep (Author).
Michael and Joseph, two outcasts who are also allies in a rough, coal-mining town, must test their unlikely friendship and trust each other with their lives. As the tensions grow between the white and Chinese miners in the Wyoming Territory of 1885, an unlikely friendship between two boys from both groups is the only hope for survival the rivaling parties have when the bloody battles begin.
- Until the Last Spike, the Journal of Sean Sullivan, a Transcontinental Railroad Worker, Nebraska and Points West, 1867 (My Name Is America), 2013 by William Durbin (Author).
It's August 1867 and Sean has just arrived from Chicago, planning to work with his father on the Transcontinental Railroad. Sean must start at the bottom, as a water carrier, toting barrels of it to the thirsty men who are doing the backbreaking work on the line.

- Valley of the Moon: the Diary of María Rosalia de Milagros, 2001 by Sherry Garland (Author). A story set during the final months of Mexican rule that incorporates historical events and the many factions of early California, Americanos, Mexicanos, Indios, Californios, into it. Orphaned at age five, Rosa and her younger brother were cared for at the Mission Rafael by Padre Ygnacio before they became servants at the large Medina rancho.
- Wagon Wheels, 1984 by Barbara Brenner (Author), Don Bolognese (Illustrator). An African-American family moves to Kansas after the Civil War to create a new life.
- Worth, 2006 by A. LaFaye (Author). Dynamic portrayal of two boys longing for something they no longer have and finding the resources to face the future. This story offers a fresh perspective on the thousands of children who moved west via the Orphan Trains in the late 19th century.

Magazines, Journals, Miscellaneous

- Discovery Magazine: Lewis and Clark
In 1799, after Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte of France surprised everyone by selling a huge swathe of North America, called the Louisiana Purchase, to the newly minted U.S., third president Thomas Jefferson had a dilemma on his hands: Who would explore this new region? In this issue read how Jefferson pinned his hopes on an old army buddy, Meriwether Lewis, who accepted this huge task, hired his friend William Clark to help him, and put together the Corps of Discovery: a rag-tag, team of adventurers who set out on May 14, 1804, to chart this great unknown.
<https://www.kidsdiscover.com/shop/issues/lewis-and-clark-for-kids/>
- Discovery Magazine: Pioneers
This issue, sheds light on a grueling period of American history, which will leave readers grateful for the comfortable lives they lead today. What drew these hardy settlers to leave everything behind and travel thousands of miles to unknown places? Readers will see how the desire for expansive, untouched farmland, as well as a lust for furs, timber, and gold, drove three major waves of migration. Early pioneers, who ventured west between 1760 and 1800, only went as far as the Mississippi and Ohio valleys, but later waves went as far as the Great Plains and California.
<https://www.kidsdiscover.com/shop/issues/pioneers-for-kids/>
- The Oregon Trail: Guide a wagon trail of settlers west across the American frontier by tapping the screen to interact with buttons and menus. Respond to random events such as sick family members, manage supplies and money, and decide how fast to go and which routes to take. Download in your play store.

Online Links

- American Panorama: Interactive atlas magnifies events in United States history
<http://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/>
- The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History: The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is the website of a nonprofit organization that promotes education and understanding about the history of the United States.
[tps://www.gilderlehrman.org](https://www.gilderlehrman.org)

- Little BigHorn Battlefield: National Monument. Explore with photos and exhibits about this National Battlefield
<https://www.nps.gov/libi/index.htm>
- National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum: in Oklahoma City, OK
<https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/>
- Primary Source set for the California Gold Rush: Photos, letters and much more.
<https://dp.la/primary-source-sets/california-gold-rush>

Background information for the Educator

- National Geographic Education: Bring National Geographic Resources Into Your Classroom
<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/education/>
- PBS: New Perspectives on the West. Classroom resources gathered to help with the use of this Web site, other material on the Internet, and The West videos for a study of the United States' westward expansion in the Nineteenth Century.
http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/lesson_plans/
- Westward Expansion: Encounters at a Cultural Crossroads. Library of Congress: teacher's guide primary source set.
http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/westward/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf