

## Exploring America's Frontier

### Resource List for Grades K through 4

The Resources in this document can be used with the Exploring America's Frontier Curriculum Packet for grades K through 4.

#### Books

##### Non-fiction and Biography

- The Buffalo Are Back, 2010 by Jean Craighead George (Author), Wendell Minor (Illustrator). This picture book is a hybrid of nonfiction and fiction, as George tells the story of how the buffalo made a comeback in the American Midwest after being nearly decimated in the late 1800s.
- The California Gold Rush (True Books), 2010 by Mel Friedman (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.
- Daily Life in a Covered Wagon, 1997 by Paul Erickson (Author). In 1853, the Larkin family loaded up their wagons and headed west in search of a new life. But how did they do it? What did they eat? How did they survive sickness, and attacks from cattle thieves? Drawing on diaries and letters, and illustrated with photographs of actual objects from the past, Daily Life in a Covered Wagon explored what life was really like on the wagon trail.
- The Foul, Filthy American Frontier: The Disgusting Details About the Journey Out West, 2010 by Heather E. Schwartz (Author). Describes the disgusting and unsanitary details about daily life in the American frontier, including housing, food, and illness.
- The Lewis and Clark Expedition (A True Book), 2010 by John Perritano (Author). Takes readers on an amazing journey to a fascinating time in U.S. history when the country was experiencing dynamic change and expanding westward, providing the keys to discovering the important people, places and events that helped shape the western United States.
- A Pioneer Sampler: The Daily Life of a Pioneer Family in 1840, 1998 by Barbara Greenwood (Author). In an unusual blend of fiction and nonfiction, A Pioneer Sampler chronicles one year in the lives of the Robinson family. Illustrated historical notes enlarge on the social history and describe activities related to the stories, from churning butter to predicting the weather. Young readers are invited to try their hand at these tasks to experience a bit of pioneer life.
- You Wouldn't Want to Be an American Pioneer!: A Wilderness You'd Rather Not Tame, 2012 by Jacqueline Morley (Author), David Antram (Illustrator), David Salariya (Contributor). This lively, interactive book will engage readers by making them part of the story, inviting them to become the main character and revel in the gory, dark, horrific side of life throughout important eras in history.

## Fiction

- Buffalo Song, 2007 by Joseph Bruchac (Author) and Bill Farnsworth (Illustrator).  
Here is the inspiring story of the first efforts to save the buffalo, an animal sacred to Native Americans and a powerful symbol of the American west. From the foresight and dedication of individuals like Walking Coyote came the eventual survival of these majestic animals, one of the great success stories of endangered species rescue in United States history.
- Covered Wagons, Bumpy Trails, 2000 by Verla Kay (Author), S. D. Schindler (Illustrator).  
Illustrations and simple rhyming text follow Mother, Father, and Baby John as they make the difficult journey by wagon to a new home across the Rocky Mountains in the fertile Sacramento Valley of California.
- Dandelions, 2001 by Eve Bunting (Author), Greg Shed (Illustrator).  
Embarking on a new life, Zoe and her family journey west to the Nebraska Territory in the 1800s. When Zoe and her family arrive at their claim, nothing distinguishes it from the miles and miles of surrounding prairie. Even after they build their soddie, the home can't be seen from any distance.
- Going West, 1997 by Jean Van Leeuwen (Author), Thomas B. Allen (Author).  
One day in early spring they packed everything they had into our wagon, and set out to find a new home. Sleeping under the stars, weathering terrible storms, and fording swollen rivers, Hannah and her family made the journey of a lifetime.
- Happy Birthday, Kirsten: A Springtime Story, 1990 by Janet Beeler Shaw (Author), Renee Graef (Illustrator).  
A springtime story with insights into life on the frontier in 1854. On a Minnesota farm in the mid 1800's, the hard working members of the Larson family find time to celebrate Kirsten's tenth birthday.
- The People Shall Continue, by Simon J. Ortiz (Author), Sharol Graves (Illustrator).  
Told in the rhythms of traditional oral narrative, this powerful telling of the history of the Native/Indigenous peoples of North America recounts their story from Creation to the invasion and usurpation of Native lands.
- Thunder Rose (Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Books), 2003 by Jerdine Nolen (Author), Kadir Nelson (Illustrator).  
On a dark night of howling rain and booming thunder, Jackson and Millicent MacGruder welcome a new baby girl into their lives. Imagine their surprise when she sits up, thanks them for bringing her into the world, and informs them that she's quite partial to the name Rose. So begins the story of Thunder Rose, who drinks her milk straight from the cow and prefers the company of her bull, Tater, to any kitten or puppy.

## 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/>

### Online Links

- 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/](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](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/primarysourcesets/westward/pdf/teacher_guide.pdf)