

# Teamwork and Competition on the Transcontinental Railroad

GRADE 4

# Teamwork and Competition on the Transcontinental Railroad

By Brittany Roper

## Summary

Students will learn about the different workers that helped build the first transcontinental railroad.

## Main Curriculum Tie

Social Studies – UT 2.1: Students will understand how Utah's history has been shaped by many diverse people, events, and ideas.

## Additional Curriculum Ties

Reading – Informational Text Standard 1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

## Time Frame

One time period that runs about 40 minutes

## Group Size

Describe: individual, pairs, small groups, large groups

## Life Skills

Employability; Thinking & Reasoning

## Bibliography

Central Pacific Railroad -- Construction P.2. Digital Image © 2008 Utah State Historical Society.

Fraser, Mary Ann. "Ten Mile Day: And the Building of the Transcontinental Railroad." Scott Foresman, 2013.

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Heath, Erle. "A Railroad Record That Defies Defeat: How Central Pacific Laid Ten Miles of Track in One Day Back in 1869." Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum, [cpr.org/Museum/Southern\\_Pacific\\_Bulletin/Ten\\_Mile\\_Day.html](http://cpr.org/Museum/Southern_Pacific_Bulletin/Ten_Mile_Day.html).

"Immigration, Railroads, and the West." Harvard University Library Open Collections Program, [ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/railroads.html](http://ocp.hul.harvard.edu/immigration/railroads.html).

NJ AOH Division #1. Irish Railroad Workers. 9 May 2016

Peoples of Utah Photograph Collection, 1975-1977. Digital Image © 2008 Utah State Historical Society. <https://collections.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6b27t4p>

Russell, Andrew J. Union Pacific Railroad -Boarding Train P. 4. Digital Image © 2008 Utah State Historical Society.

Russell, A. J. Union Pacific Railroad - Survey P.1. Digital Image © 2008 Utah State Historical Society.

Russell, A. J. *Union Pacific Railroad -Construction P. 22*. Digital Image © 2008 Utah State Historical Society.

"The Railroad." Omeka RSS, [irishworkhistory.omeka.net/exhibits/show/the-transcontinental-railroad/the-railroad-background](http://irishworkhistory.omeka.net/exhibits/show/the-transcontinental-railroad/the-railroad-background).

Zartman, Todd. "Ten Mile Day." Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, 2009. <https://www.philadelphiafed.org/-/media/education/teachers/lesson-plans/TenMileDay.pdf>

## Materials

- Teamwork and Competition Powerpoint Slides
- Ten Mile Day by Mary Ann Fisher. Also available online: [Grade 5 Reading Street version](#)
- Ten Mile Day Worksheet

## Background for Teachers

Teachers should be familiar with Utah's geography and the story of the first transcontinental railroad. President Abraham Lincoln approved the Pacific Railway Act of 1862, paving the way for a rail line to connect the East with California. People from all over came to help build the railroad. There were immigrants from China and Ireland. When the railroad reached Utah, Mormons also helped complete the railroad. The first transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869 at Promontory Summit in northern Utah.

## Student Prior Knowledge

Students should know that people came from all over the world to help build the Transcontinental Railroad.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will more fully understand the amount of work and dedication that went into building the Transcontinental Railroad. They will be able to recall the different groups that were employed by the railroad companies.

## Instructional Procedures

1. Pull up the Google Slides Presentation. Questions and information are in the notes section.
2. Tell students that in the 1860s, no railroad ran across all of North America, connecting the Atlantic to the Pacific. It was quite a feat to complete this railroad because the terrain that the rails (or tracks) covered seemed impassable. Work crew members died laying the rails through the treacherous terrain.
3. Pass out the Ten Mile Day Worksheet. As you read [Ten Mile Day](#) by Mary Ann Fraser have students listen for and record the answers.
4. Review the answers if necessary and have students turn in the worksheet.
5. Let students know that after the first transcontinental railroad was completed, immigrants who entered the US at immigration checkpoints on the Eastern Seaboard such as Ellis Island in New York began using the train system to migrate west.
6. Ask students if they know where their families immigrated from. Many generations may have lived in the United States but where did their ancestors live before coming here? Challenge students to find out.

## Strategies for Diverse Learners

An alternative worksheet has been provided.

## Extensions

[Ten Mile Day Lesson Plan](#) \*\*The Reading Street version will have different page numbers

## Assessment Plan

No formal assessment has been provided.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Ten Mile Day

1. Who worked on the team that laid just over ten miles of track in one day for the Central Pacific Railroad Company?

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2. Which position would you have wanted if you were on the team? (foreman, ironman, spike setter, track gauge team, fishplate men, gandy dancers/track liners, surveyor, tamper, shovelers, or pioneer) Why?

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3. What is teamwork?

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4. Why did they call the name of the rest spot "Camp Victory?"

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5. How many feet of Iron did they lay on average in one minute and twenty seconds?

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6. Why did it take them longer to lay track at the end?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Ten Mile Day

1. **Who worked on the team that laid just over ten miles of track in one day for the Central Pacific Railroad Company?**
  - a. Chinese & Irish workers
  - b. Mormon workers
2. **Which position would you have wanted if you were on the team?**
  - a. Foreman: I like being in charge and know how to be in charge
  - b. Ironman: I am strong and could lay iron rails.
  - c. Track gauge team: I am good at math
  - d. Gandy dancer/ track liners: I can straighten things up and follow a beat.
3. **What is teamwork?**
  - a. one person doing all the work
  - b. a group of people working together towards the same goal.
4. **Why did they call the name of the rest spot “Camp Victory?”**

They called it Camp Victory because they knew they could reach their \_\_\_\_\_.
5. **How many feet of Iron did they lay on average in one minute and twenty seconds?**
  - a. 500 feet
  - b. 240 feet
  - c. 10 feet
6. **Why did it take them longer to lay track at the end?**
  - a. because they were tired
  - b. because the ground was steep and there were more curves

Name: KEY

# Ten Mile Day

1. Who worked on the team that laid just over ten miles of track in one day for the Central Pacific Railroad Company?

1,400 of Central Pacific's best laborers, both Chinese and Irish.

2. Which position would you have wanted if you were on the team? (foreman, ironman, spike setter, track gauge team, fishplate men, gandy dancers/track liners, surveyor, tamper, shovelers, or pioneer) Why?

Answers will vary.

3. What is teamwork?

Teamwork is a group of people working towards a common goal.

4. Why did they call the name of the rest spot "Camp Victory?"

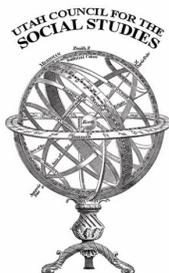
They called it Camp Victory because they knew they could reach their goal.

5. How many feet of Iron did they lay on average in one minute and twenty seconds?

They laid an average of 240 feet of Iron in one minute and twenty seconds.

6. Why did it take them longer to lay track at the end?

It took them longer to lay the track at the end because the ground was steep and there were more curves.



Lesson plans on the Transcontinental Railroad created with the support of Spike150, the Utah Division of State History, and Utah Council for the Social Studies.

