

# TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

SPECIAL  
EDUCATION

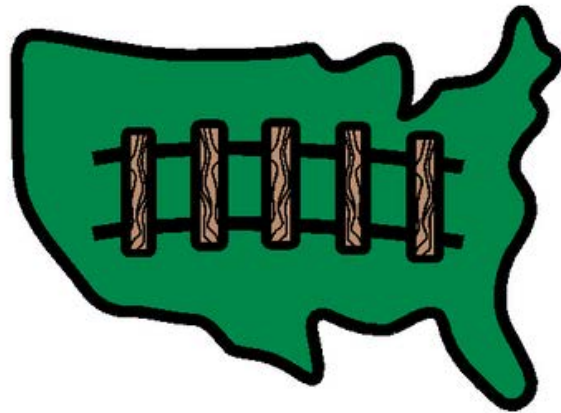


INCLUDES GOOGLE SLIDES



*This unit was created with this guy in mind. He has autism and an intellectual disability. He is a non-reader, and loves any and all trains. With some support he is able to do this unit, and enjoys the challenge. He is my tester!!*

# Transcontinental Railroad for Special Education



by  
Christa Joy  
Special Needs for Special Kids

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Also included in this resource as separate files:

- Lesson plans
- Links and directions to digital activities
- PowerPoints (these are the books in the lesson plans)
- Voice recorded PowerPoint
- Activities in black and white

This unit contains 11 days of material that is in both printable and digital formats. I have included a detailed lesson plan to help you make the most of everything in this unit including how to add some group activities.

It comes in 2 separate files. One in color and one in black and white.

# Transcontinental Railroad Lesson Plan

## Preparation

- Print out a vocabulary board for each student to use throughout unit
  - Laminate or place in page protector
- Book
  - Print out, laminate, and bind
  - OR your students can listen to the pre-recorded version
- Vocabulary cards
  - Print out a set of cards onto cardstock and laminate
  - Make one set for each student and also one for the teacher to use in I Spy games
- Timeline cards
  - Print out a set of cards onto cardstock and laminate
  - For additional ideas on how to use these, go to:  
<https://specialneedsforspecialkids.org/2018/06/13/making-a-life-sized-timeline/>

## Preassessment (do day 1 before starting lesson)

- Choose the form of the assessment that best fits the learning level of your students
- Give the assessment to assess what your students may already know
- I cannot emphasize enough how important this step is. If you want to see growth, this preassessment is so important!!

## Teaching Tips

1. *Color Coding:* this is a really easy way to add more structure to a matching activity. Outline or color in an empty box or sorting label. Outline or color in the corresponding picture symbols the same colors. Becomes a color matching task.
  - a. For more info, read more here:  
<https://specialneedsforspecialkids.org/2015/09/05/using-color-coding-for-differentiation/>
  - b. I also have a blog post on differentiating one activity 3 ways:  
<https://specialneedsforspecialkids.org/2018/10/22/differentiating-1-activity-3-ways-easily-and-effectively/>
2. *Make your own copies of the activities:* Every day I review the activity we did yesterday. For that reason:
  - a. I often complete the activity myself and often laminated it for easy review that I could use year after year.

The lesson plans contain:

Overall tips for teaching students with significant needs

## Quick Look

Day	Activity	Day	Activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards intro</li><li>• Circle map</li></ul>	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards cut and paste</li><li>• Sudoku puzzle</li></ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards activity</li><li>• Timeline activity</li><li>• Circle map</li></ul>	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards activity</li><li>• Matching activity</li></ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards activity</li><li>• Timeline activity</li><li>• Color map</li></ul>	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards activity</li><li>• Close worksheet</li></ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards activity</li><li>• Timeline activity</li><li>• Venn Diagram</li></ul>	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards activity</li><li>• Close worksheet</li></ul>
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards activity</li><li>• Timeline activity</li><li>• Timeline cut and paste</li></ul>	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assessment</li></ul>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocab cards activity</li><li>• Timeline activity</li><li>• Writing Prompt</li></ul>		

The lesson plans contain:

A quick look at what you will do each day

## Day 5

Activity	Notes	Materials
Read or listen to a recording of the book: (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read through the story, asking lots of questions</li><li>• Continue to make connections between book and vocabulary board</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Book</li><li>• Vocabulary board</li></ul>
Vocabulary cards Puzzle Game (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give each student a pile of pieces</li><li>• Have them reassemble the pieces into the correct symbols<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ They may have to ask each other if someone else has the second half to a piece they have. Great for increasing communication and sharing.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Vocabulary cards (set where each card is cut in half)</li><li>•</li></ul>
Large Timeline Cards (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pass the cards out to the students and have them arrange themselves in the correct order<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ You can put index cards with the date on the floor ahead of time, so they just have to find the card that matches the date on their flashcard</li></ul></li><li>• Have each student step forward as you talk about their card</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Large timeline cards</li></ul>
Venn Diagram review (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review the Venn Diagram completed yesterday</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activity completed yesterday</li></ul>
Cut and paste timeline (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have students complete the cut and paste timeline activity</li><li>• Add color coding if needed</li><li>• Make connections to book and large timeline cards</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cut and paste timeline</li><li>• Scissors</li><li>• glue</li></ul>
Sharing (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Each student shares their finished worksheet with the group using the communication method of their choice</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Completed worksheet</li><li>• Communication devices</li></ul>

The lesson plans contain:

Detailed instructions on how that day's lesson should run

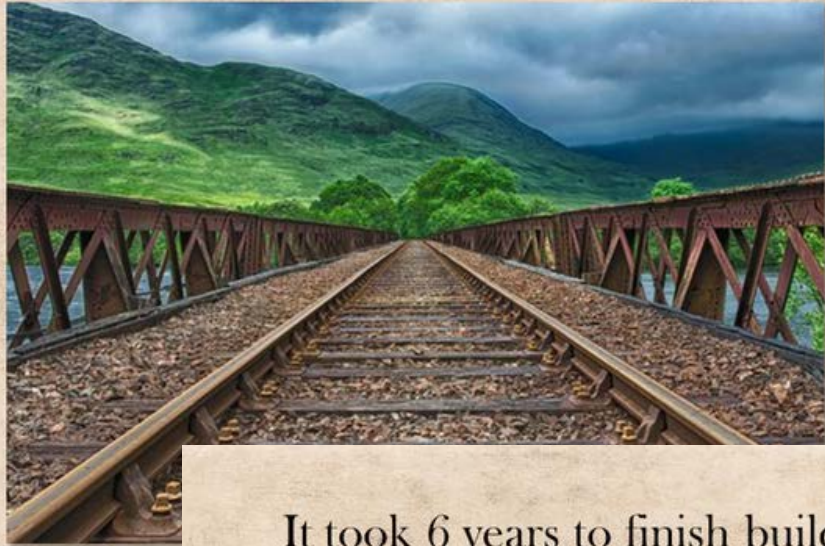
This unit comes with a vocabulary board.

Vocabulary boards are great for ALL students to assist with participation and engagement in group discussions.

Tips on how to use in the unit!!

 United States	 west	 transcontinental railroad	 Oregon Trail	 land
 homestead	 Lincoln	 mountains	 tunnels	 Native American
 Nebraska	 California	 land rush	 sooners	 no more land
 repeat that	 yes	 no	 I don't know	 I need a break

Despite being in the middle of the Civil War, President Lincoln also signed the **Pacific Railroad Act** in 1862. This would allow a railroad to be built across the central United States. It would be called the **Transcontinental Railroad**.



It took 6 years to finish building the railroad. On May 10, 1869, the two ends met at **Promontory Summit** in Utah.



There is a 29 page book with this unit using simple text and photos.

It comes in a pdf version as well as a voice recorded powerpoint (so you don't have to print it out.)



## Oregon Trail

2000 miles trail that went from Missouri to Oregon Country through the middle of the US.



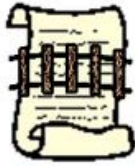
## Homestead Act

Passed by Lincoln that gave 160 acres of land west of the Mississippi River to anyone over 21 years old.



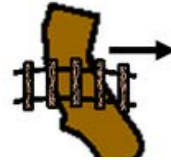
## Pacific Railroad Act

Passed by Lincoln that gave 2 companies the land and money they need to build a railroad across the central US.



## Central Pacific Railroad

Built the Transcontinental Railroad from California heading east.



## Land Rush

When 2 millions acres of land in Oklahoma was made available to settlers.



## sooners

Settlers who snuck in early to claim the best pieces of land during the Oklahoma Land Rush.



## sod

Thick pieces of grass and mud used by settlers to build their homes.



## Transcontinental Railroad

Railroad built between 1863-1869 that went from Nebraska to California and replaced the use of the Oregon Trail.



There are 12 vocabulary cards that come in color and black and white.

Included are suggestions for group activities to do with these each day.

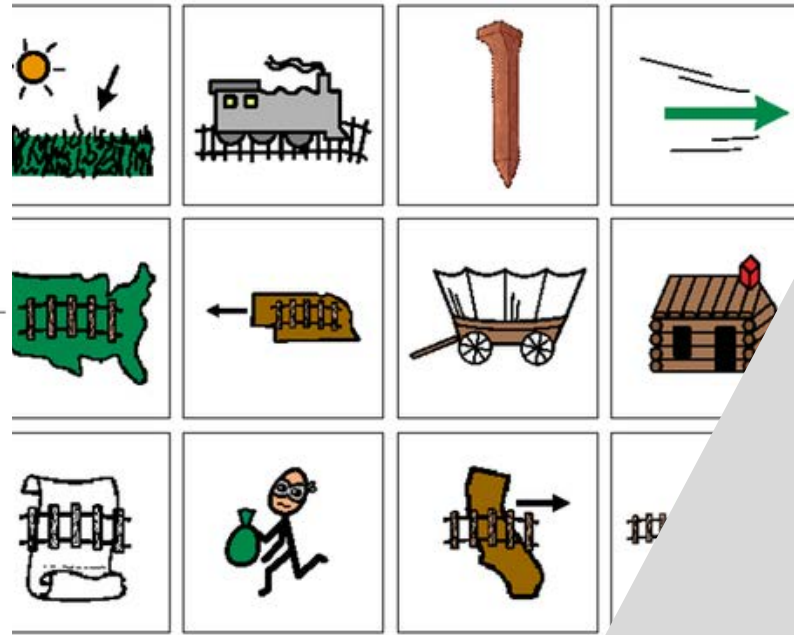
### Oregon Trail

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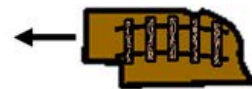


### Central Pacific Railroad

Built the Transcontinental Railroad from California heading east.



### Union Pacific Railroad



### Iron Horse



### Promontory Summit



### Golden Spike



The last spike used in the Transcontinental Railroad hammered in by governor of California.

Built the Transcontinental Railroad from California heading east.

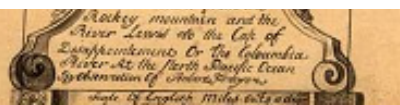
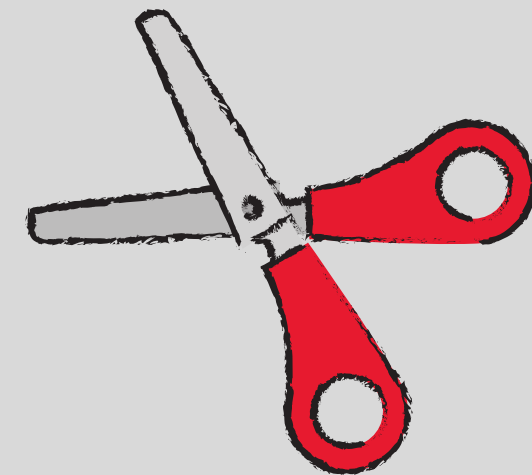
Railroad built between 1863-1869 that went from Nebraska to California and replaced the use of the Oregon Trail.

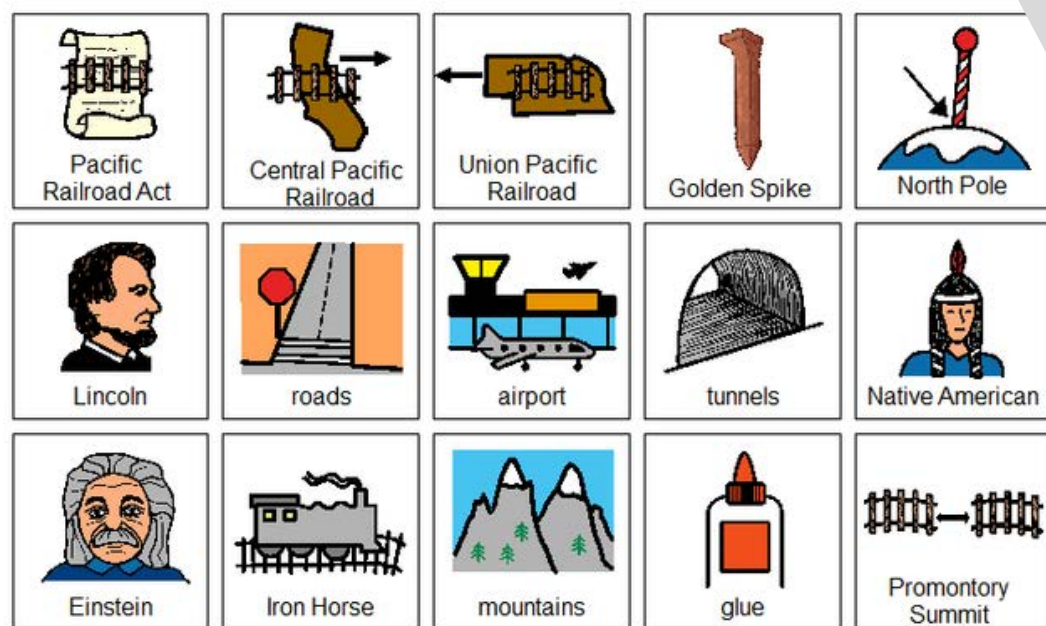
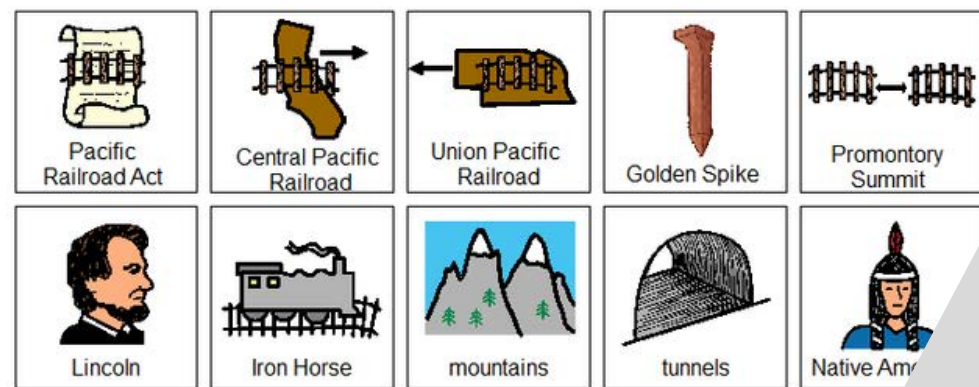
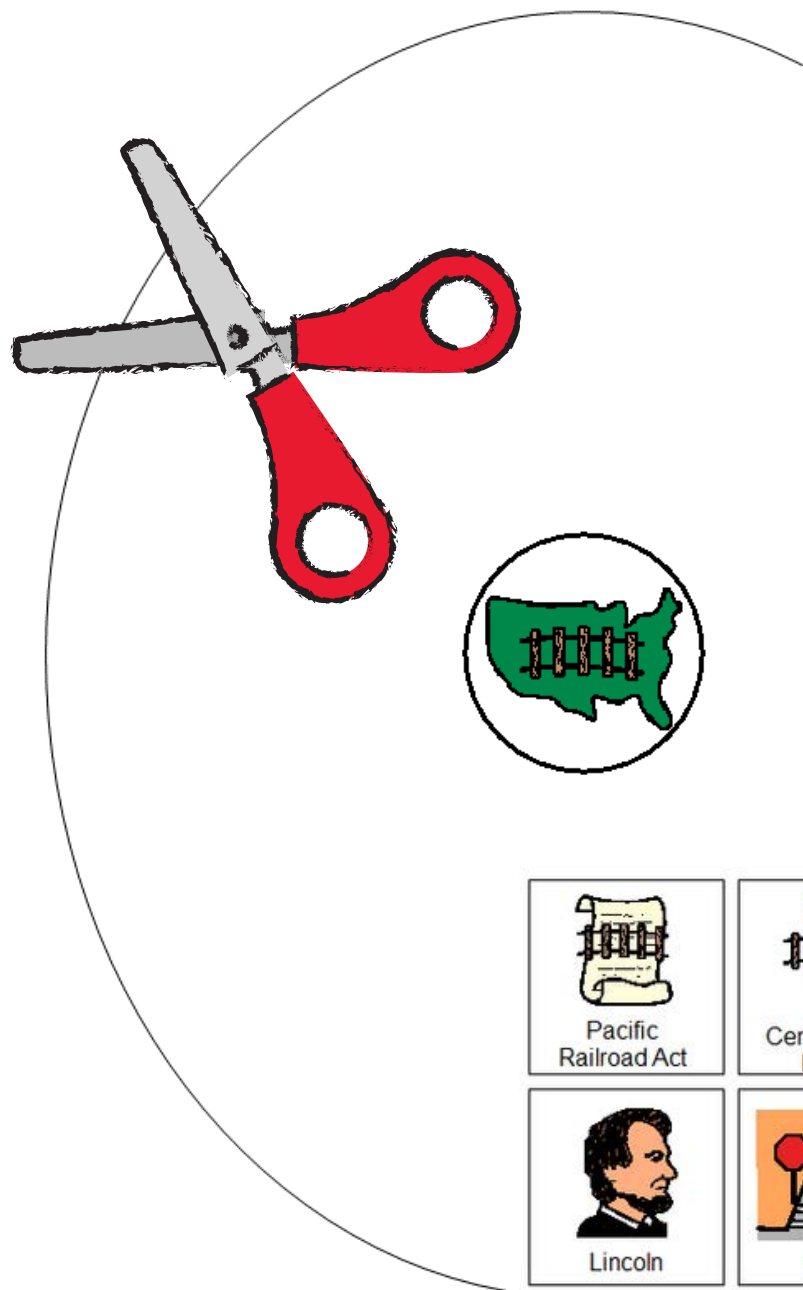
Passed by Lincoln that gave 160 acres of land west of the Mississippi River to anyone over 21 years old.

What the Native Americans called the train.

Settlers who snuck in early to claim the best pieces of land during the Oklahoma Land Rush.

On days 7&8 there is an activity where students will match either the picture to the definition or the definition to the picture (harder).





There are 2 a circle maps.

Circle maps are a great way for students to see the concept at a glance. There are 2 versions:

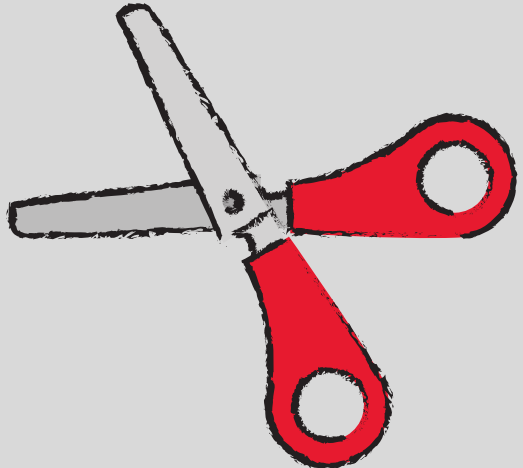
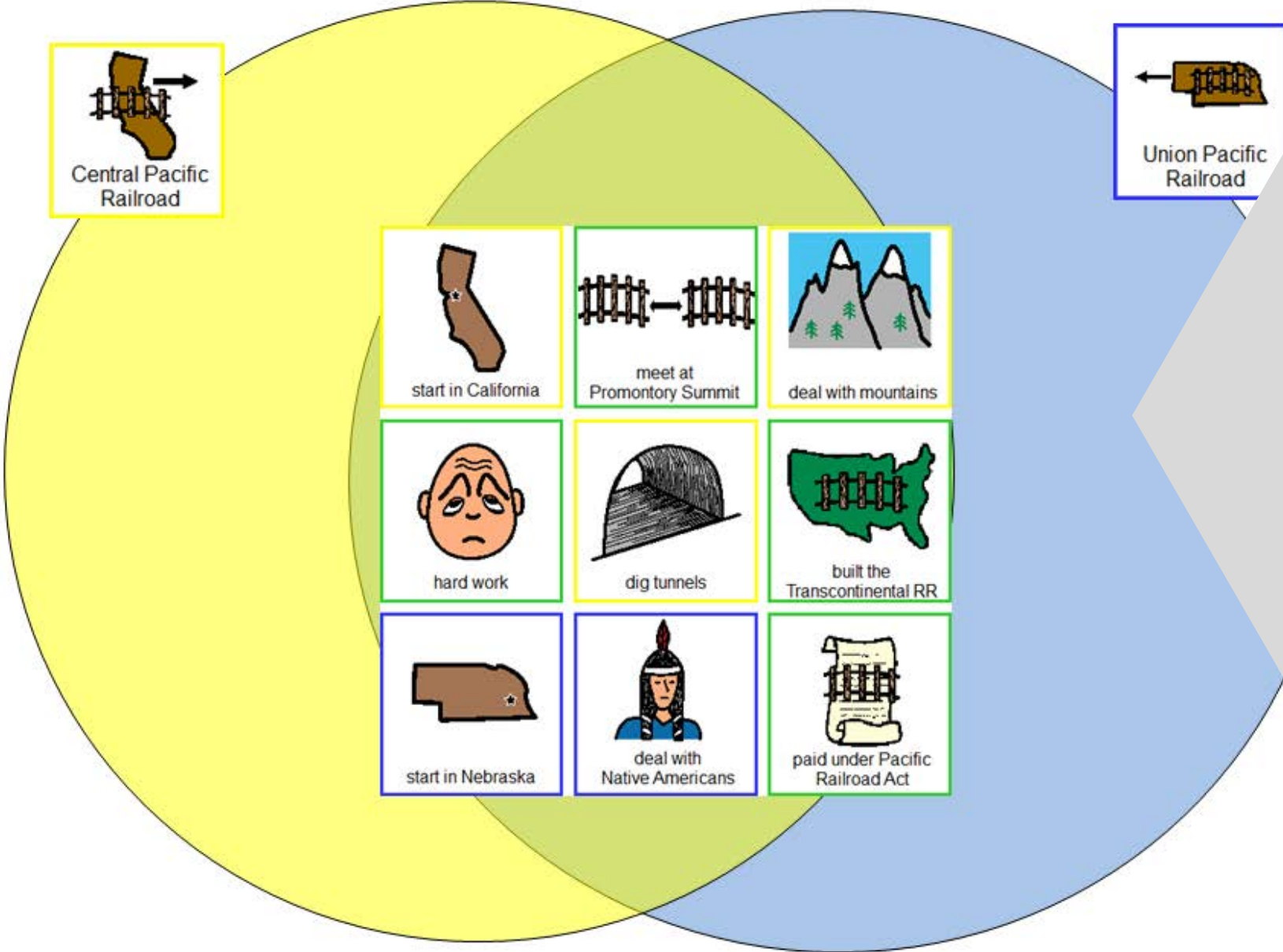
- One is errorless
- One has wrong answers mixed in students will have to set aside

1. Color in California green.
2. Color in Nebraska orange.
3. Trace the Transcontinental RR.



There are is a map that allows students to color in the Transcontinental Railroad There is a version with colored outlines added.

There is a Venn Diagram that compares the 2 railroad companies that built the railroad. There is color-coded version included as shown here.



A MAP of the discovery of Col. Lewis & Clark from the Rocky mountains and the River Lewis to the Gulf of Essequibo on the Columbia River at the North Pacific Ocean by observation of Andrew Balfour. 1805. By George Fisher.

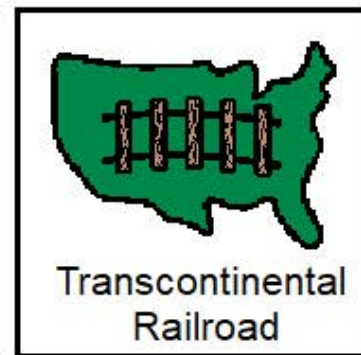


**1863-1869**

Building of the Transcontinental  
Railroad.



California



Transcontinental  
Railroad



Nebraska

There are 7 large timeline cards along with directions on how to use these as a group activity.

## Timeline

1842

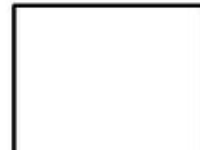
1862



1863

1869

1899



## Timeline symbols



Transcontinental Railroad finished



Pacific Railroad Act passed



Homestead Act passed



Great Land Rush



first on the Oregon Trail



Transcontinental Railroad started

There is a cut and paste timeline activity as well. Instruction on how to add color coding is included.

# Riding on the Transcontinental RR

My family left from  for a trip on the Transcontinental RR.

My  went with us.

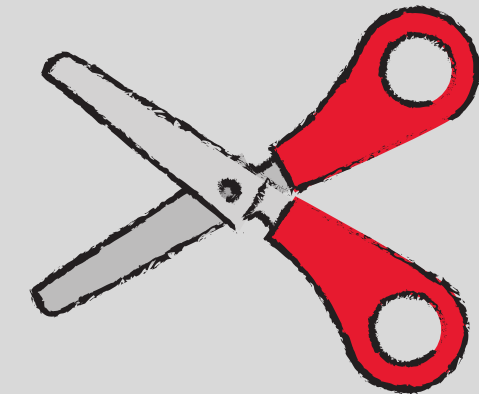
We saw  and  on our travels.

The best part about riding on the train was/were the

It was .






















There is a writing prompt where students write a story about what it would have been like to travel on the Transcontinental Railroad. This is an errorless activity that students can do more than one time.






















# Transcontinental Railroad

		 sooners	 Transcontinental Railroad	 Land Rush	
 Transcontinental Railroad			 Homestead Act	 sooners	
	 Golden Spike	 Homestead Act	 sooners	 Transcontinental Railroad	 Land Rush
 sooners		 Land Rush		 Golden Spike	 Homestead Act
 Golden Spike	 Transcontinental Railroad	 Land Rush	 Homestead Act		

# Transcontinental Railroad

 Land Rush	 sooners
--	--

 Homestead Act	 Lincoln	 Transcontinental Railroad	
 Transcontinental Railroad			 Homestead Act
 Lincoln	 Homestead Act		 Transcontinental Railroad
		 Homestead Act	 Lincoln

 Transcontinental Railroad	 Lincoln	 Land Rush
 Land Rush	 Land Rush	 Land Rush

There is a Sudoku puzzle in this unit as well. This is a great way to work with the new vocabulary!!

There are 2 versions plus answer keys.



## Transcontinental Railroad

VYWGBCMBSEFTYPPCHWAE  
 WXNEBRASKAQZGOEJHJVR  
 ZLAFSCSDXXYNGZDZGUSM  
 PEOMALIJJIRAILROADTI  
 CXOWRTLAWQOAMIFLJSTL  
 BVIKTBWGDGDHXUJZTKCL  
 TRANSCONTINENTALVDOM  
 RBYJFLEXPKFQYMIYQVRC  
 KSNDZSJULIJTAEIYTPEX  
 DORYTMAINXGVCUFNUTGP  
 BOLANDRUSHNFJYDCVZOM  
 WNAHTHOMESTEADACTINM  
 FEDSEZJWOOHXJJKHSRTS  
 MRIOUXOWJVOGCMZTNORU  
 BKWDBTGOLDENSPIKENAU  
 YMPBPDUYXWDWKHKKHJHIP  
 XVFNWWCALIFORNIAEOLJ  
 VLINCOLNGOAGSSVPKRYZ  
 ZXETLTGGCHLJKDJCMSIK  
 ELOBBBTGRNNJBTLLERL

Transcontinental	Homestead Act	Oregon Trail	golden spike
California	Iron horse	railroad	Land Rush
Lincoln	sooner	Nebraska	sod



## Transcontinental Railroad

VYWGBCMBSEFTYPPCHWAE  
 WXNEBRASKAQZGOEJHJVR  
 ZLAFSCSDXXYNGZDZGUSM  
 PEOMALIJJIRAILROADTI  
 CXOWRTLAWQOAMIFLJSTL  
 BVIKTBWGDGDHXUJZTKCL  
 TRANSCONTINENTALVDOM  
 RBYJFLEXPKFQYMIYQVRC  
 KSNDZSJULIJTAEIYTPEX  
 DORYTMAINXGVCUFNUTGP  
 BOLANDRUSHNFJYDCVZOM  
 WNAHTHOMESTEADACTINM  
 FEDSEZJWOOHXJJKHSRTS  
 MRIOUXOWJVOGCMZTNORU  
 BKWDBTGOLDENSPIKENAU  
 YMPBPDUYXWDWKHKKHJHIP  
 XVFNWWCALIFORNIAEOLJ  
 VLINCOLNGOAGSSVPKRYZ  
 ZXETLTGGCHLJKDJCMSIK  
 ELOBBBTGRNNJBTLLERL

Transcontinental	Homestead Act	Oregon Trail	golden spike
California	Iron horse	railroad	Land Rush
Lincoln	sooner	Nebraska	sod



There is also a word search to work with vocabulary. If your students cannot do a word search, have them highlight the circle words on the answer key.

## Transcontinental Railroad

1. The Transcontinental Railroad went from Nebraska to

2. President  signed the bill to build the railroad.

3.  companies worked to finish the railroad.

4. The Central Pacific Company had to dig  through the mountains.

5. The Native Americans called the train an .

2

two



Lincoln



iron horse



California



tunnels

## Transcontinental Railroad

6. The Union Pacific Railroad faced attacks from the

7. The railroad was finished in Utah and the driven in by the mayor of California.

8. The Transcontinental Railroad took the place of the

9. The railroad meant  could travel more safely.

10. The railroad made it easier for people to settle out .



people



golden spike



west



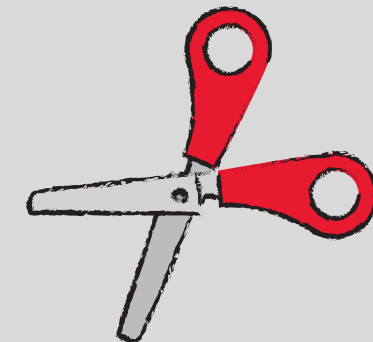
Native Americans



Oregon Trail

Close worksheet are a great informal assessment. This unit has 10 questions that review the Transcontinental Railroad.

Answer key included.



# Homestead Act and The Land Rush

1. The Homestead Act was passed by President

2. The Land Rush was later and took place in

3. People who snuck in early to claim land were called

4. Settlers would make their homes using

5. Soon after the Great Land Rush, the western frontier was which meant there was no more free land.



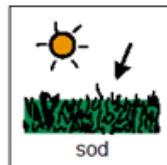
Oklahoma



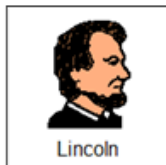
sooners



closed



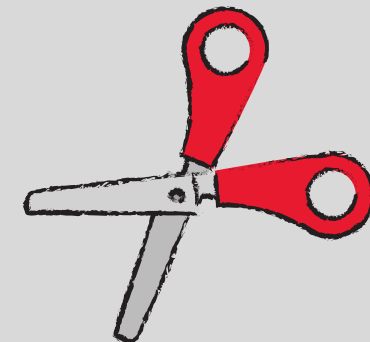
sod



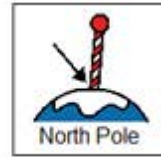
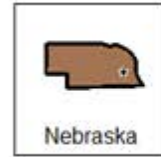
Lincoln

There is also a close worksheet on the Land Rush and Homestead Act.

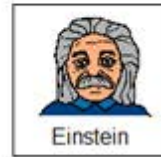
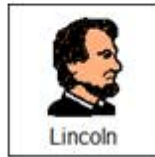
Answer key included.



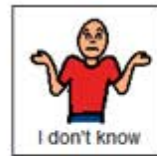
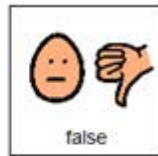
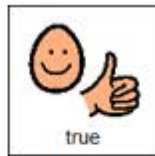
1. The Transcontinental Railroad went from California to:



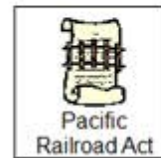
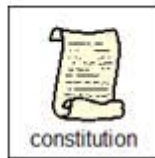
2. Who signed the Pacific Railroad Act?



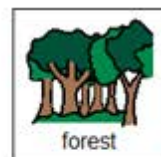
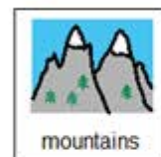
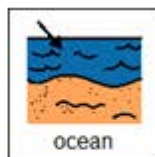
3. True or False. The Transcontinental Railroad was built as a safer and faster way to travel than the Oregon Trail.



4. Lincoln also signed this bill which allowed anyone over 21 to claim land in the west.



5. The Central Pacific Company started building the railroad in the west and had to tunnel through the:

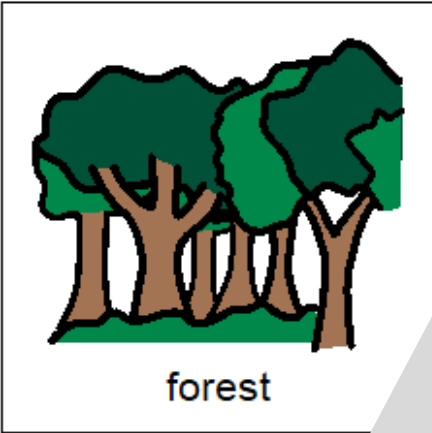
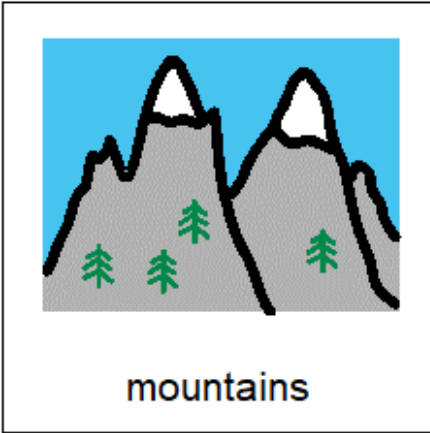
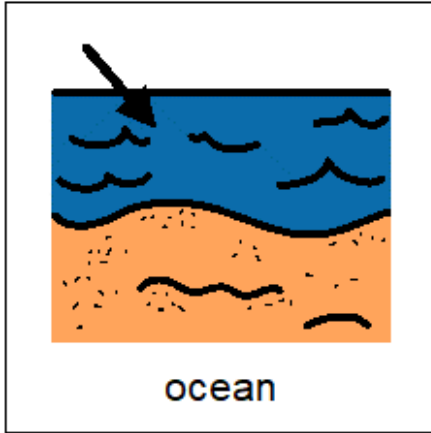


FINALLY the assessment!! There are 3 versions. This version has 10 questions with 3 picture choices for each question.

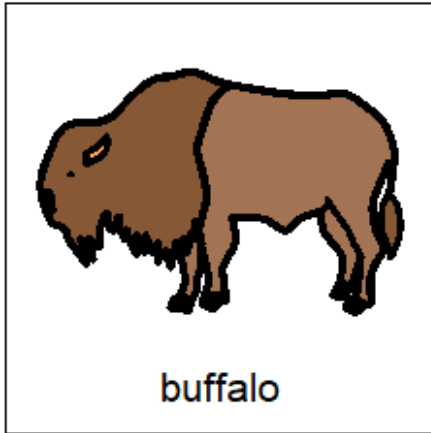
Answer key included.

Print onto cardstock or mount on index cards. Cut pictures apart and show student answer choices for each question.

Q 5



Q 6



With this version, you cut out the answer choices and glue them on index cards. Ask the student the question, and they point to the correct answer.

1. The Transcontinental Railroad went from California to:
  - A. Florida
  - B. Nebraska
  - C. North Pole
2. Who signed the Pacific Railroad Act?
  - A. Lincoln
  - B. Washington
  - C. Einstein
3. True or False. The Transcontinental Railroad was built as a safer and faster way to travel than the Oregon Trail.
  - A. True
  - B. False
  - C. I don't know
4. Lincoln also signed this bill which allowed anyone over 21 to claim land in the west.
  - A. Constitution
  - B. Pacific Railroad Act
  - C. Homestead Act
5. The Central Pacific Company started building the railroad in the west and had to tunnel through the:
  - A. Ocean
  - B. Mountains
  - C. Forest
6. What was the main danger the Union Pacific Company faced while building their part of the railroad?
  - A. Buffalo
  - B. Native Americans
  - C. Storms

*This is your traditional multiple choice version. It can also be used as a recording sheet if your students are using the version with index cards.*

Watch the movie  
on the  
Transcontinental  
Railroad

Despite being in the middle of the Civil War, President Lincoln also signed the **Pacific Railroad Act** in 1862. This would allow a railroad to be built across the central United States. It would be called the **Transcontinental Railroad**.



Chris | Play, Stop | New 2:29 / 7:06 | Kids



This unit also has  
digital activities.  
There is a movie  
version of the  
books students  
can listen to read  
aloud.



# Riding on the Transcontinental RR

My family left from  for a trip on the Transcontinental RR.

My  went with us.

We saw  and  on our travels.

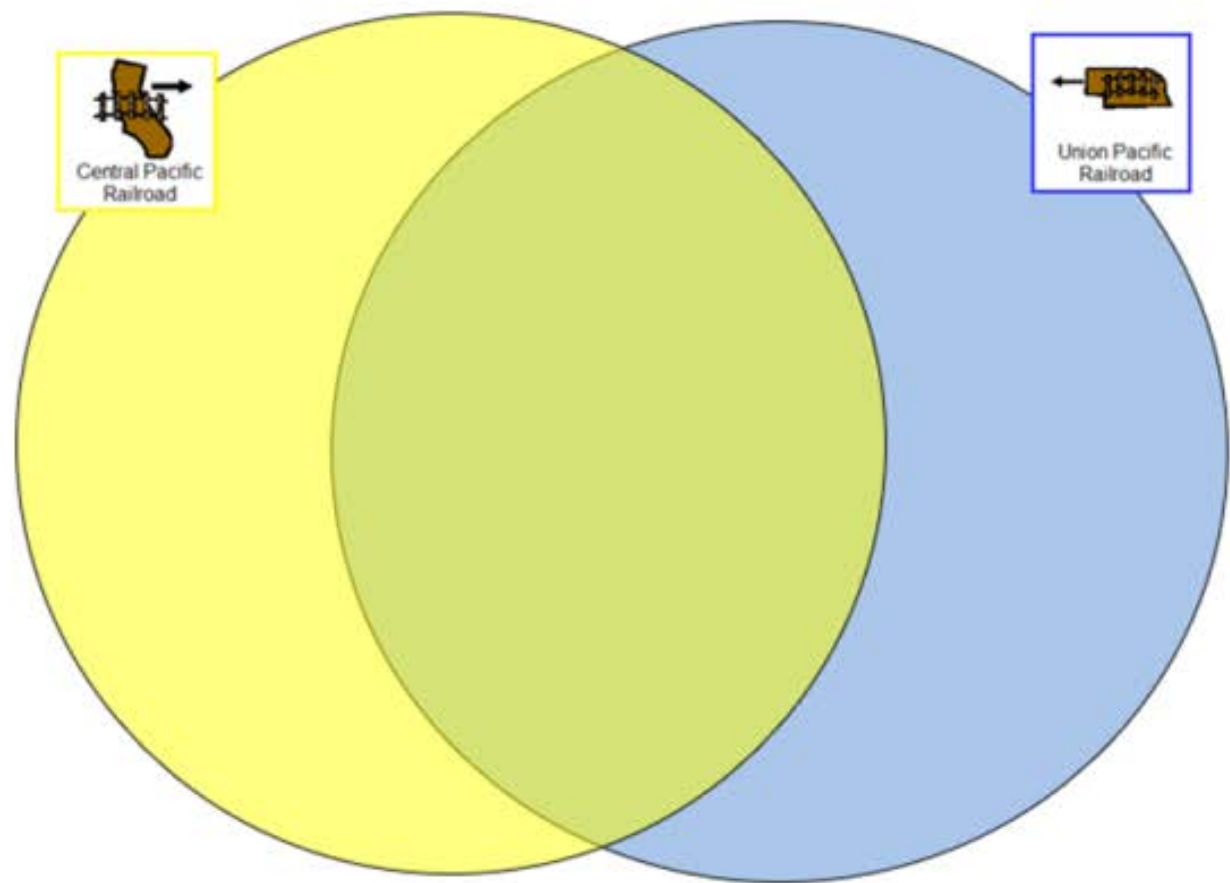
The best part about riding on the train was/were the .

It was .

Choose a picture to complete each sentence.

 Nebraska	 California	 the city	 train station	 Colorado	 Utah
 grandmother	 grandfather	 coach	 best friend	 dog	 neighbor
 animals	 buffalo	 Native Americans	 teepees	 mountains	 cities
 conductor	 people	 buffalo	 food / drink	 train	 Native Americans
 exciting	 dangerous	 fun	 exhausting	 wonderful	 scary

The digital activities have students click and drag their answers.

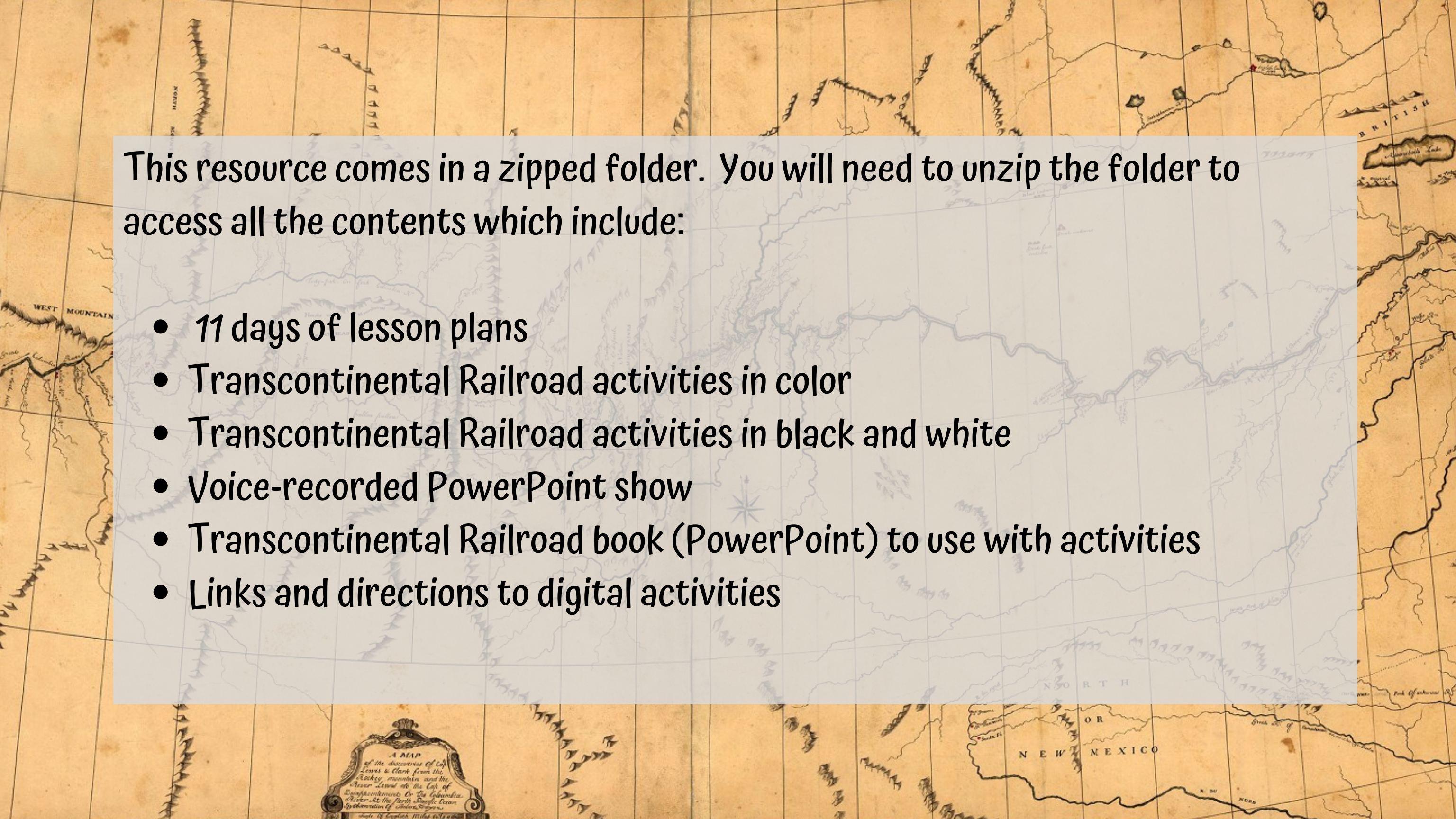


Place the pictures in the correct location on the Venn Diagram.

 start in California	 meet at Promontory Summit	 deal with mountains
 hard work	 dig tunnels	 paid under the Pacific Railroad Act
 start in Nebraska	 deal with Native Americans	 built the Transcontinental Railroad

There are 2 sets of slides. One set has color-coding for more support.

Christa Joy, Special Needs for Special Kids  
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**This resource comes in a zipped folder. You will need to unzip the folder to access all the contents which include:**

- **11 days of lesson plans**
- **Transcontinental Railroad activities in color**
- **Transcontinental Railroad activities in black and white**
- **Voice-recorded PowerPoint show**
- **Transcontinental Railroad book (PowerPoint) to use with activities**
- **Links and directions to digital activities**

Save money and get this unit as part of the  
**Westward Expansion Bundle**

[Click Here](#)

