



The Transcontinental Railroad Comes to Utah!

GRADE 4

The Transcontinental Railroad Comes to Utah: Geography and Mapping

By Brittany Roper

Summary

Students will analyze the physical geography of Utah and discuss the challenges that may have occurred when laying the tracks for the transcontinental railroad.

Main Curriculum Tie

Social Studies – Standard 1.2d: Analyze how physical geography affects human life in Utah. Make inferences about the relationships between the physical geography of Utah and the state's transportation systems.

Time Frame

One time period that runs 60 minutes

Group Size

Whole Class

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning

Bibliography

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- "Utah – Large Map." WorldAtlas, www.worldatlas.com/webimage/countrys/namerica/usstates/lgcolor/utcolor.htm.

Materials

- The Transcontinental Railroad Comes to Utah Geography Mapping Powerpoint
- The Railroad Comes to Utah Map Worksheet (unlabeled)
- The Railroad Comes to Utah Map Answer Key
- The Railroad Comes to Utah Script
- Colored Pencils

Background for Teachers

Teachers should be familiar with Utah's geography and the story of the Transcontinental Railroad. Work on the first transcontinental railroad began after President Abraham Lincoln approved the Pacific Railway Act of 1862. 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.

Vocabulary:

- Grading: The foundation for a specified slope.

Student Prior Knowledge

- Students should know what a landform is specifically a mountain, lake, canyon, and valley.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to analyze Utah's geography and discuss how it may have affected the building of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Instructional Procedures

1. Ask students what kind of landforms they can see around their house or school.
2. Pass out The Railroad Comes to Utah Map Worksheet and have students get colored pencils ready.
3. Help students label the four cities listed. You may want to include a spot for your town/city. Have students put a star next to Salt Lake City because it is the capital of Utah.
4. Present the accompanying powerpoint. Some slides are animated, with sequential discussions and tasks. Use The Railroad Comes to Utah Script to narrate the lesson as you go through the slides.
5. Once their worksheets are completed, have students turn them in.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Have students use the letters instead of writing out the whole city or provide a close up of the completed map.

Extensions

Students could research more about Promontory Summit and the towns each railroad company went through by exploring this interactive map created by the Union Pacific. To read specifically about the Golden Spike Ceremony, enter by clicking on either company and then click the spikes on the map.

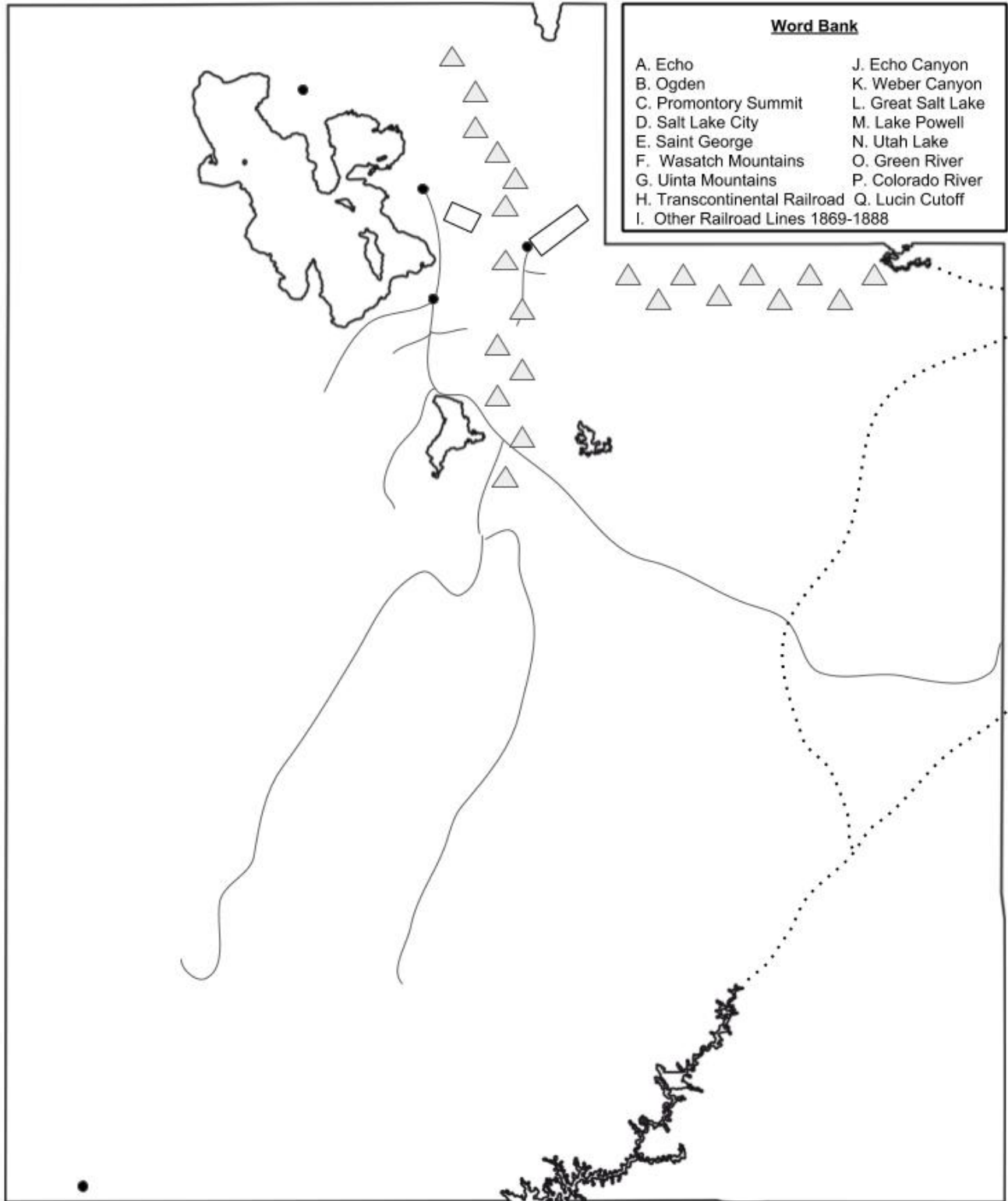
<https://www.up.com/goldenspike/index.html>

Assessment Plan

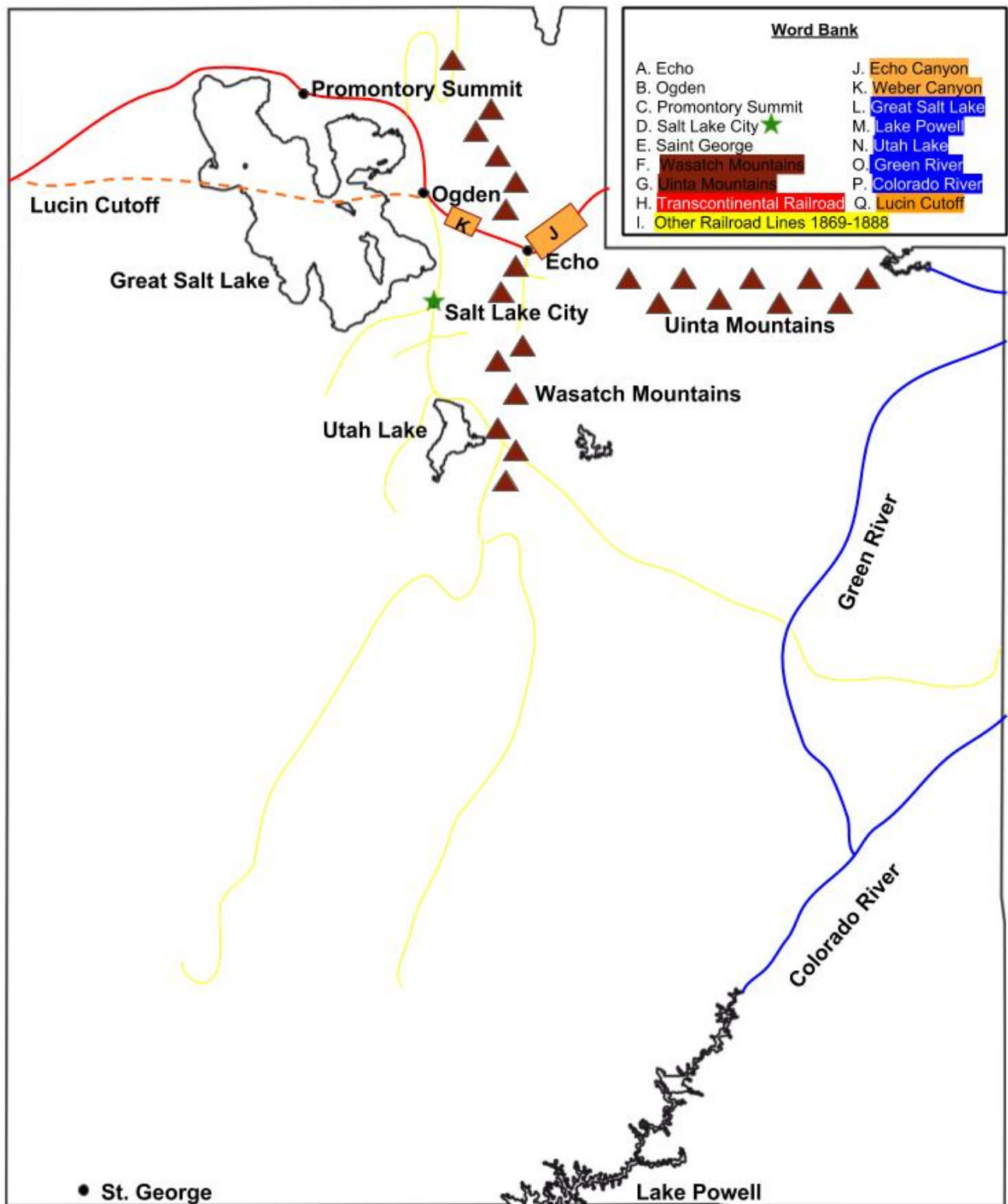
No formal assessment has been provided for this lesson.

Name: _____

The Railroad Comes to Utah!



The Railroad Comes to Utah!



The Railroad Comes to Utah Script

Teachers: Use this script to guide students through the mapping activity as you go through the slides.

SLIDE 1 – title slide

SLIDE 2

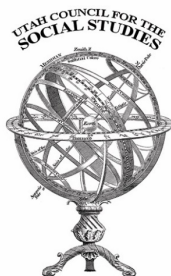
1. Show students the geographical map of Utah. Discuss what types of landforms you see on the map. Ask them about the coloring. What does all the green represent?
2. Have students label the Wasatch Mountains and Uinta Mountains and color the mountains brown. Then have them label the three lakes and two rivers. Then, color them blue.
3. Ask them about transportation. If you wanted to drive from location to another what would you need to consider? Are all roads the same? Where is it easier to build a road? Why is it hard to build a road in the mountains? Why is it easier in a valley?
4. Point out the red dot. This is about the place where the Union Pacific Railroad Company entered Utah. What do you notice about the geography? How might this be a problem?

SLIDE 3

1. “The Echo and Weber canyons were the most difficult terrain through which Union Pacific had to build. Several tunnels were required in these narrow canyons, and floods washed out both grading and bridges.
2. Have students label Echo Canyon and color them tan/peach.

SLIDE 4 – with animations

1. Point out the purple dot. In 1869 This the Central Pacific Railroad Company entered Utah. They needed to meet up with the Union Pacific Railroad Company, but what landforms are in their way? What are their options? Which would be the quickest way for the company to lay their tracks?
2. The Central Pacific laid tracks heading towards the north of the Great Salt Lake.
3. [CLICK] The dark red line shows the route that these two companies took
4. Have students draw a red line to show the route.
5. [CLICK] The two companies met at Promontory Summit on May 10, 1869.
6. [CLICK] In 1904, a shortcut was built across the Great Salt Lake this was known as the Lucin Cutoff.
7. Have students draw an orange dotted line to show the Lucin Cutoff.



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.

