RIDE THE RAILS ON A BUTTON TRAIN!

KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 2
Ride the Rails on a Button Train!

By Tara Chase

Summary
Students will learn how the Transcontinental Railroad enhanced travel across the country. They will compare how quickly people travel today as then. Students will create “button trains” and discuss what trains carried in 1869 and now.

Main Curriculum Tie
Kindergarten Speaking and Listening Standard 1, Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

Additional Curriculum Ties
Kindergarten Fine Arts Visual, Create Strand, Students will generate artistic work by conceptualizing, organizing, and completing their artistic ideas. They will refine original work through persistence, reflection, and evaluation.

Time Frame
1 time periods that run 40 minutes each

Group Size
Large group discussion followed by individual work

Life Skills
- Aesthetics  _ Character  _ Communication  _ Employability
- Social & Civic Responsibility  _ Systems Thinking  _ Thinking & Reasoning

Bibliography

Materials
Map of the United States
Button Train worksheet copied on to heavy paper if possible.
A variety of buttons for students to glue on worksheets
Crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.
Glue

Background for Teachers
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wvQyBcbHJkg
https://tcrr.com/
Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will learn how the Transcontinental Railroad enhanced travel across the country.

Students will practice creating visual art while improving fine motor skills.

Instructional Procedures

1. Ask students how they get from one place to another (bus, car, walk, ride bike). Expand to discuss how they might get somewhere very far away (car, plane). Introduce them to the idea that long ago the fastest way to travel was on a train.

2. Teach or use a Train song: [http://www.songsforteaching.com/trainsongs/](http://www.songsforteaching.com/trainsongs/)

3. Show students a map of the USA and (see map toward bottom of webpage [https://tcrr.com/](https://tcrr.com/)) draw in where the transcontinental railroad ran between Nebraska and California. Explain how in the 1860s (a long long time ago!) thousands of people worked for years to build a railroad that would cross the entire country.

4. Discussion questions
   a. How long do you think it would take to walk that far before they built a railroad? (months)
   b. How long did it take to ride the train that far? (days)
   c. How long does it take us today to get between those points on a plane? (hours)
   d. What sort of things did a train carry then? What do you think trains carry today? (Coal, dry goods, passengers, etc)

5. Direct students in creating a “button train” using the attached worksheet. Have a variety of buttons available for them to add as the wheels on the train. Additionally, have students draw into the cars what the train might be carrying.

6. If time allows, have students show their button trains to the class. Review together how trains used to be the fastest mode of travel—carrying people and goods across the country.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

1. Allow more time and more support on Button Train activity

2. For G/T, encourage students to create a pattern in the buttons they glue on the train.

Extensions

Share books about the railroad—Freight Train by Donald Crews, Sleep Train by Jonathon London, etc.

Have students share experiences they have had traveling long distances. If anyone has been on a train, share that experience too.

Assessment Plan

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<tr>
<th>RUBRIC</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated in group discussion.</td>
<td>Did not participate</td>
<td>Made one or more comments that were off topic</td>
<td>Made one or more comments that related to the discussion at hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Created a visual representation of a train</td>
<td>Did not create a visual representation of a train</td>
<td>Partially completed the train assignment on provided worksheet.</td>
<td>Created a visual representation of a train on provided worksheet.</td>
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</table>
Glide buttons under the train for its wheels and then it will be ready to go! All aboard!!

What will the train carry? Draw in the train’s cargo.

Color the A parts RED, color the B parts BLUE, color the C parts GREEN.

Can you help complete the train so it's ready to travel on the Transcontinental Railroad?

____________________________
Name
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.