

Oregon Trail Education Trunk

Curriculum Overview

The Wyoming State Museum is extremely excited for you to try out this exciting Oregon Trail curriculum. This overview tells you what to expect within each section of the curriculum. The following pages will dive deeper into each activity. Most of these sections can even be completed before you receive the trunk or after you send it back.

- **Section 1: The Five Big Questions of the Oregon Trail**
This section consists of a video, produced by the Wyoming State Museum, that teaches students the five big questions of the Oregon Trail. Afterwards, your students will complete a crossword puzzle to reinforce the information from the video.
- **Section 2: Why Would You Travel the Trails?**
This section puts students in the shoes of an immigrant traveling west. They will pick one of the nine main reasons why immigrants traveled west (discussed in the “Five Big Questions” video) and write an opinion piece about why they (personally) would take this dangerous journey.
- **Section 3: Exploring History Through Artifacts**
This section allows students to get hands-on with one artifact from the education trunk. They will do small group work, handle artifacts, draw pictures, and use critical thinking to hypothesize about what their artifact was used for.
- **Section 4: Reading an Oregon Trail Guidebook**
In this section, students will read a guidebook telling them what to pack on their journey to Oregon. This guidebook was written by compiling the advice of three original sources from the 1840s. Students will also fill out a vocabulary sheet to learn some of the more unique words included within the guide.
- **Section 5: Packing Your Wagon**
To prepare for their journey, your students will work in small groups to pack everything they’ll need for the long trip west. First, they will watch a short video from the museum to give them tips and hints for packing their wagons. Then, they’ll go through the general store to decide what they’re bringing with them. They’ll use mathematics to fill out their worksheet.
- **Section 6: Field Trip and Game with the Wyoming State Museum**
Now that your students have packed their wagons, we’re ready to head west! The museum has created a very special field trip to accompany this education trunk. Your students will play a live action version of the Oregon Trail video game. We will see many of the important landmarks along the trail, talk about how the immigrants lived on their journey, and discuss the dangers of the trail. Your students will also see amazing historical artifacts from this time period. How well your students packed their wagons will influence whether they survive this deadly expedition.

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The Five Big Questions

Section 1: The Five Big Questions of the Oregon Trail

This section consists of a video, produced by the Wyoming State Museum, that teaches students the five big questions of the Oregon Trail, California Trail, and Mormon Trail. They'll learn about **what** the trails were, **where** the trails took the immigrants, **when** the trails were utilized, **why** the immigrants risked their lives on such a dangerous journey, and **who** used the trails. Afterwards, your students will complete a crossword puzzle to reinforce the information from the video.

This activity can be completed before you receive the trunk in your classroom.

- Activity 1: “*The Five Big Questions of the Oregon Trail*” Video

Students will watch a video to learn about the five big questions of the Oregon Trail. This video will walk your students through some basic information about the Oregon Trail before they learn about the topic more in depth. This video is available from the Wyoming State Museum website, on any of the “Oregon Trail” pages.

- Activity 2: Crossword Puzzle

Students will complete a crossword puzzle to reinforce what they learned in the video. This crossword puzzle can be downloaded from the Wyoming State Museum website or photocopied from the “Student Handouts” section of this book.

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The “Five Big Questions” Crossword Puzzle

Before we learn all about what it was like to travel the Oregon Trail and other historic trails, it’s important to answer the “five big questions” about the trails.

What was the Oregon Trail?

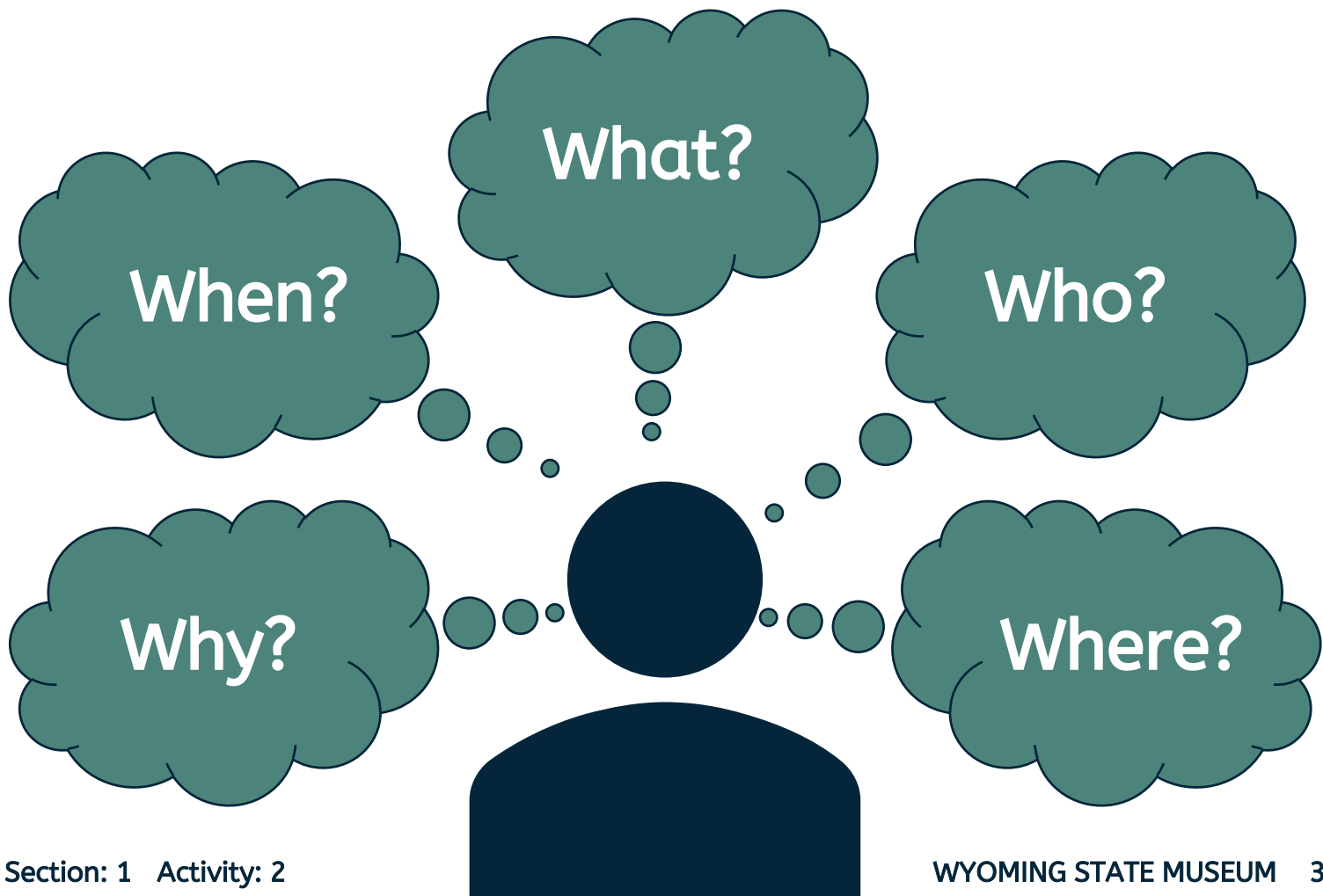
Where did the Oregon Trail and other historic trails go?

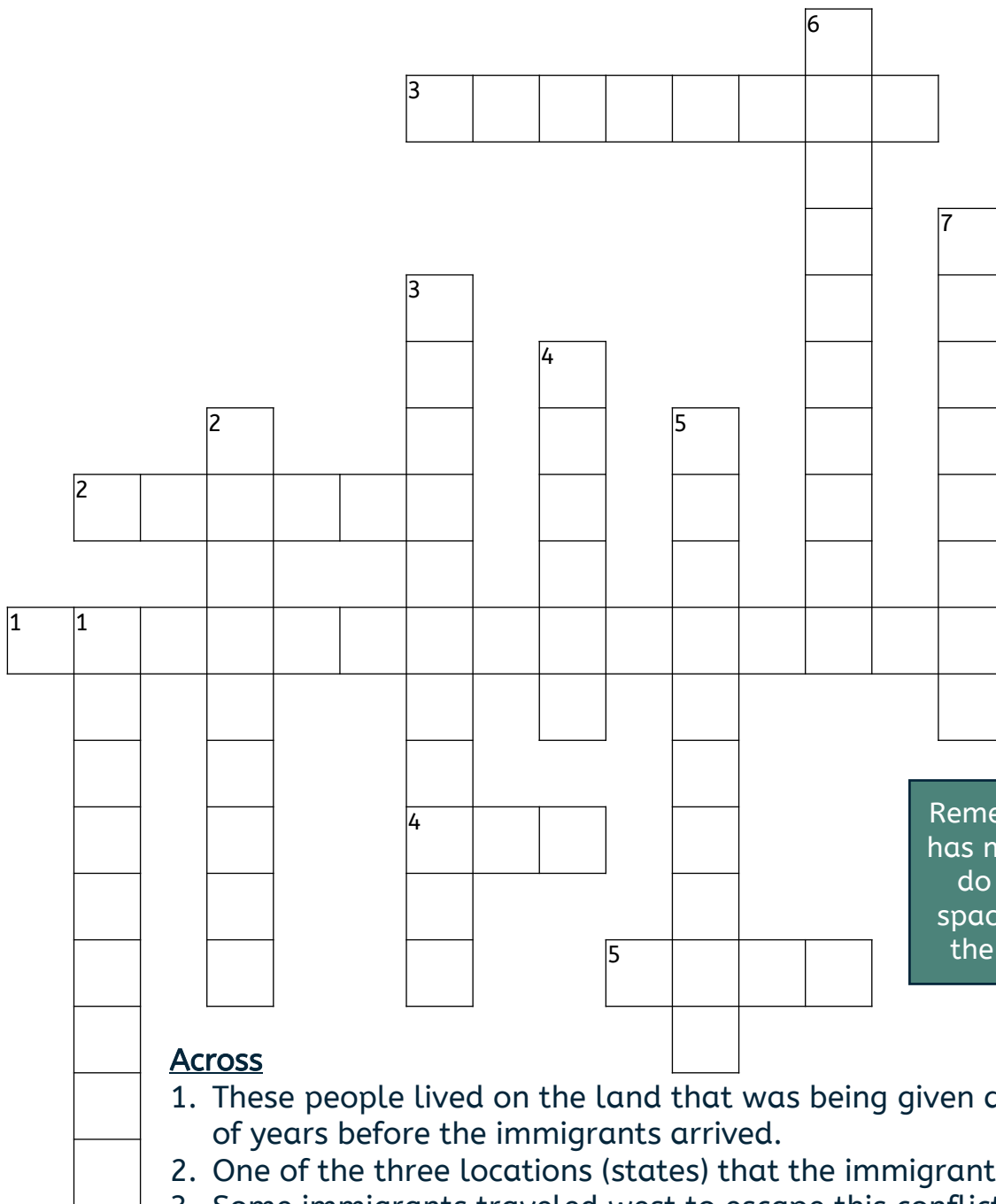
When did immigrants travel the Oregon Trail?

Why did they travel the trails?

Who were these immigrants that risked their lives on this journey?

Your teacher will play you a video to learn more about these five big questions. Afterwards, use the knowledge you gained to complete the crossword puzzle on the back of this page. If the answer has more than one word, do not leave a blank space between them on the crossword puzzle.





Remember, if the answer has more than one word, do not leave a blank space between them on the crossword puzzle.

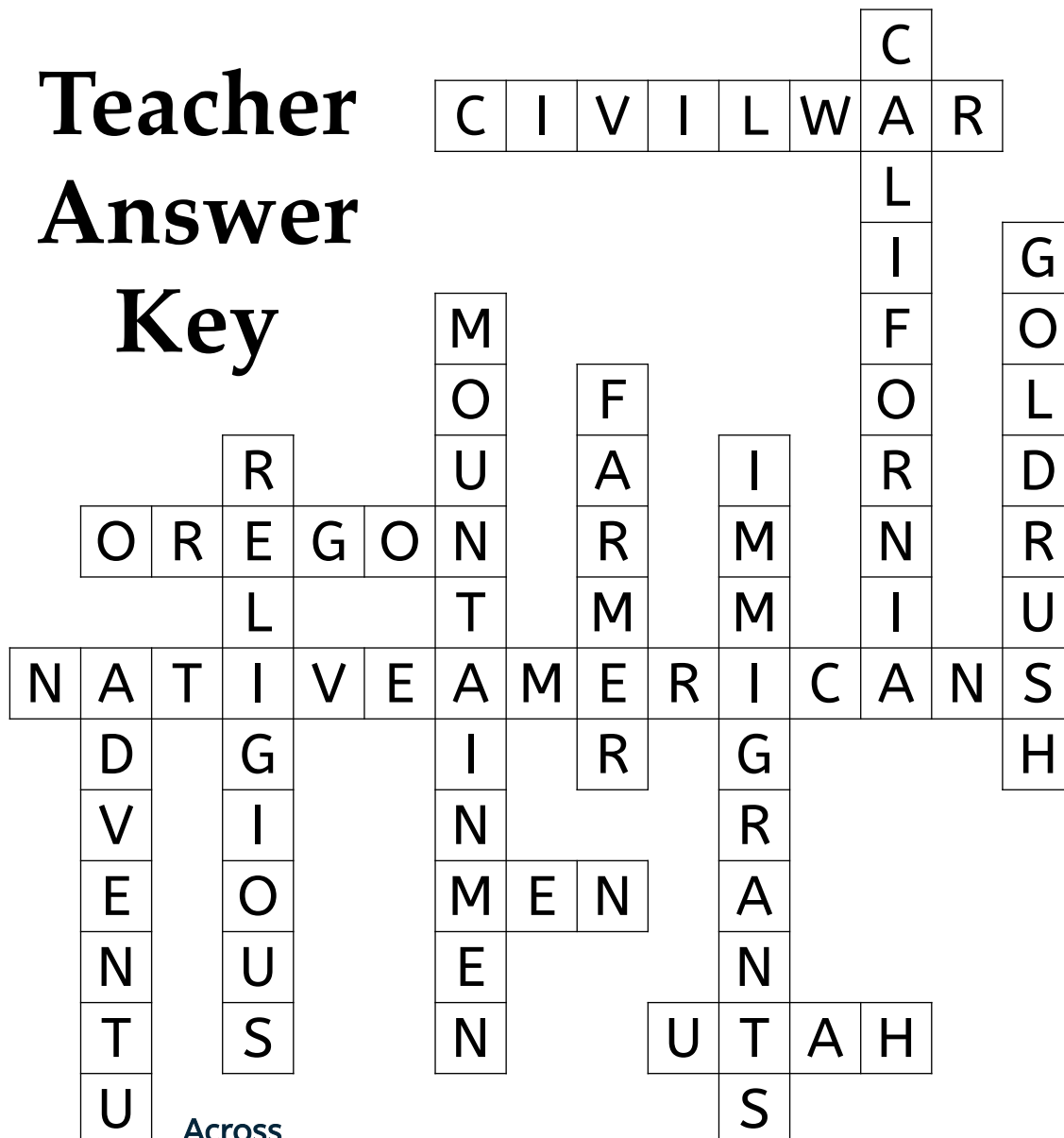
Across

1. These people lived on the land that was being given away for thousands of years before the immigrants arrived.
2. One of the three locations (states) that the immigrants traveled to.
3. Some immigrants traveled west to escape this conflict, which would soon affect most of the country.
4. Land out west was only given to this people of this gender.
5. One of the three locations (states) that the immigrants traveled to.

Down

1. Some young men traveled west to find _____.
2. Many Mormon immigrants traveled west to find _____ freedom.
3. These people learned the routes to the West while trapping beavers in the early 1800s.
4. Many immigrants traveled to Oregon to become a _____.
5. The people who traveled west in search of a new life were called this.
6. One of the three locations (states) that the immigrants traveled to.
7. This was the main reason that immigrants traveled to California.

Teacher Answer Key



Across

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