

# 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.

### Section 6: Travel the Oregon Trail Field Trip and Game

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.

### You can book your field trip before you receive the trunk in your classroom.

- Activity 1: "Travel the Oregon Trail" Field Trip and Game

First, book a field trip with the museum to play the game. You can either bring your students to the museum for an on-grounds field trip or book a virtual field trip. The on-grounds field trip will take a total of two hours (one and a half hours for the game and thirty minutes of museum exploration). If you prefer a virtual field trip, we will break the journey up into two sessions, each one hour. You can request this field trip from the same link you used to request this trunk. The link is available on the Wyoming State Museum website.

Regardless of which type of field trip you book, the museum staff will take your students through a fun, high-paced, and educational trip along the Oregon Trail. We'll roll dice to see which wagons/immigrants are affected by certain dangers, their supplies will help them survive, and we'll lose at least a few students to cholera and bears. But, we promise a very fun experience for all!

- Activity 2: Going Through the Trunk Artifacts

If you schedule a virtual field trip to coincide with when you have the education trunk in your classroom, we recommend not going through the items until we play the game. Many of the included items will be shown and discussed as we go along our journey. You'll be able to get the items out and pass them around while the museum staff member discusses them.

If you schedule a virtual field trip for a date when you don't have the education trunk, we recommend you go through the items with your students while you have the education trunk in your classroom. The inventory list will tell you about each item, so you can discuss it. But, rest assured, we'll go through most of the items in more detail as we play the game.

If you schedule an on-grounds field trip, we also recommend you go through the items with your students while you have the education trunk in your classroom. The inventory list will tell you about each item, so you can discuss it. As mentioned above, we'll go through most of the items in more detail as we play the game.