

Mountain Man Education Trunk

Teacher Info: Curriculum Overview

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

- **Section 1: Louisiana Purchase and Lewis and Clark Expedition**
This introduction lesson teaches students how the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition were instrumental to creating the mountain men. These activities focus on reading comprehension and vocabulary.
- **Section 2: Exploring History through Artifacts**
This activity allows students to get hands on with one mountain man artifact, analyze it, and determine what it would have been used for. This activity utilizes group work and critical thinking.
- **Section 3: How Mountain Men Trapped Beavers**
This activity is two parts worksheets and one part classroom discussion. Your students will use independent research to learn about the American beaver and figure out the steps that mountain men used to trap beavers. Then, you'll use a couple of the trunk's artifacts to teach your students more about this topic.
- **Section 4: Creating a Mountain Man**
In this fun activity, your students will create their own mountain man. They'll name him, choose his country of origin, give him abilities and skills, and dress him. You will also have a classroom discussion about mountain man clothes, showing the clothes from the trunk. This activity cannot be skipped if you're doing Section 5 or 6.
- **Section 5: A Year in the Life of a Mountain Man**
This is the main activity of the entire trunk. Students will go through 22 "encounters" with their mountain man, led by you. You will utilize cards (created by the museum) to easily walk your students through different good and bad things that happened to mountain men while trapping. Their mountain man abilities and skills will help them survive and thrive.
- **Section 6: Mountain Man Rendezvous**
After their first year in the mountains, your students will use mathematics to determine how many beavers they obtained, and how much money they're worth. Then, they'll go through the rendezvous store, purchasing items they'll need for their next year in the Rocky Mountains.
- **Section 7: Mountain Man Tall Tales**
Finally, your students will use writing skills to create tall tales about their mountain man's experience in the mountains, during their first year.

Mountain Man Education Trunk

Teacher Info: Creating a Mountain Man

Section 4: Creating a Mountain Man

This section allows your students to get creative, and make their own mountain man. They will choose the mountain man's name, nation of origin, abilities, and skills. They will also dress their mountain man. All of this will prepare them for Section 5.

- Activity 1: Making Your Mountain Man

- Part 1: "Making Your Mountain Man" Worksheet

Students will use reading skills to learn about why mountain men braved the Rockies. Then, they will answer questions on the worksheet to create their own mountain man. You can print this document from the "Mountain Man Trunk" page of the Wyoming State Museum website or photocopy it from the "Student Worksheets" section of this book.

- Activity 2: Dressing Your Mountain Man

- Part 1: Classroom Discussion

Like you did with the beaver trapping artifacts, you will now show the students the clothing from the education trunk. Show them each piece of clothing; discuss what it is, and what it would be used for. This conversation should focus on the store purchased goods that the mountain men would have brought with them for their first year in the wilderness.

For the artifacts in the trunk, this is basically all of the clothing EXCEPT the moccasins. It is also important to discuss other vital pieces of clothing that are not included in the trunk, like boots, coats, and socks.

Do not show them the moccasins yet, and do not talk about the leather clothes that mountain men would make during their time in the Rockies. During the next activity, that will be a talking point.

As with before, if you need more background knowledge on this subject, some supplemental information is included at the back of this packet ("Supplemental Teacher Information: Clothing.")

- Part 2: "Dressing Your Mountain Man" Worksheet

Included in the same worksheet that was used for activity 1, there is a section on dressing their mountain man. Now that they've learned all about the clothes that a mountain man would have worn into the Rockies their first year, they will pick what clothes their mountain man is bringing with him on his adventure. Have your students list the clothes that their mountain man is going to bring, then draw them on the picture of the man.

A Year in the Life of a Mountain Man

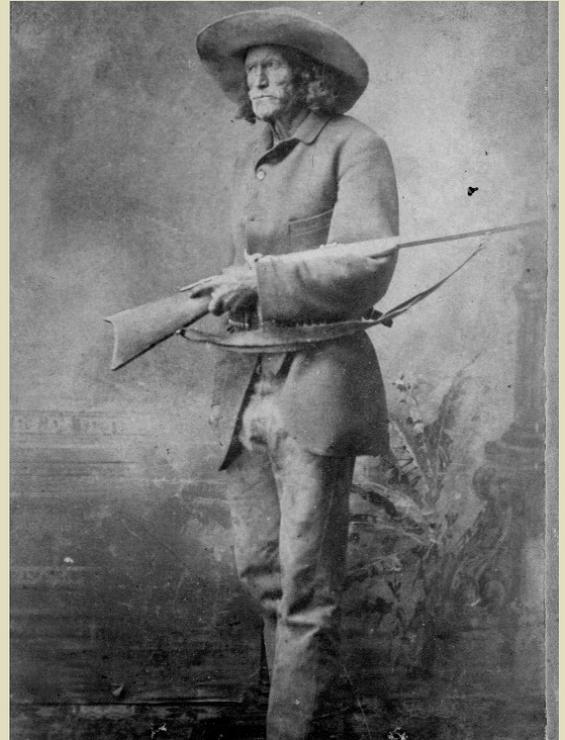
Making Your Mountain Man

Mountain men were drawn to the wilderness of the Rocky Mountains, for many different reasons. Some were focused on making money from trapping and selling beaver pelts. Others were young men looking for adventure, and had read “tall tales” and exaggerated stories about what life was like in the mountains. Still others came for the freedom and independence the mountain man life could offer.

Despite all the opportunities the Rocky Mountains could offer, mountain men led lives that were dangerous, difficult, and (at times) down-right miserable. The lives of many mountain men ended violently. These men died by drowning, freezing, starving, wild animal attacks, being buried alive, being murdered, or from many other dangers.

You will be creating your own mountain man, in order to survive in the Rocky Mountains and successfully trap beavers! Your mountain man will be joining his first beaver trapping season in the fall of 1830!

On the following pages, answer the questions to create your own fictional mountain man!



Jim Baker



James Beckwourth

A Year in the Life of a Mountain Man

Making Your Mountain Man

1. Due to the culture and laws of the United States at the time, all of the trappers coming from the East were men.

What is your mountain man's name?

2. While some mountain men were more than 60 years old, the vast majority of them were teenagers or in their 20s and 30s. For example, Jim Bridger was 17 when he first ventured into the mountains, while Kit Carson was 16! Both of these men became famous Wyoming frontiersmen.

How old is your mountain man?

3. Mountain men were a diverse group of men, coming from many different nations and areas. Some of the men came from the young United States – including both white and black men. Others were French trappers who lived in the Louisiana Territory before France sold it to the United States. There were also trappers from Spain, Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Mexico, and the French territory of Canada. Additionally, there were a number of Native American mountain men, mainly from the Iroquois and Delaware Nations. These eastern tribes had been involved with the fur trade since the 1600s, and some Native men ended up working for the fur companies.

What nation does your mountain man come from?

A Year in the Life of a Mountain Man

Making Your Mountain Man

4. Mountain men had many attributes that helped make them successful during their time in the mountains.

Choose one attribute that your trapper is great at.

- Extra Strong
- Extra Smart
- Extra Tough
- Extra Friendly
- Extra Fast

5. Mountain men needed many skills to survive in the mountains. From languages, to survival skills, to hunting, to the ability to fight... they were a skilled group of men.



John Colter

Choose eight skills that your mountain man will be best at.

- French Language
- Swimming
- Trapping
- Spanish Language
- Mountain Climbing
- Hunting
- Native Languages
- Canoeing
- Fishing
- Sign Language
- Horse Riding
- Plant Identifying
- Bullet Making
- Map Reading
- Cooking
- Gun Shooting
- Shelter Building
- Sewing
- Knife Fighting
- Fire Building
- Reading
- Fist Fighting
- Tool Making
- Trading

A Year in the Life of a Mountain Man

Dressing Your Mountain Man

Mountain men needed many different tools and supplies to survive life in the mountains. They would make some of these items on their own, while others would be traded for at the mountain man rendezvous each summer! A rendezvous was a place to meet up with your company, sell your beaver pelts, buy supplies for the next year, and party with your friends!

Of all the items a mountain man carried with him, clothing was especially important. Mountain men needed good clothes to keep them safe and warm! When mountain men first came to the Rockies, they would be wearing clothes that were purchased in the Eastern United States.

These clothes would include wool, flannel, and cotton shirts, which could come in various bright colors and even calico print... like the shirt in your education trunk! These shirts would have been pulled over the men's heads, been loose around their body, and had large, loose sleeves.

The men would also bring with them trousers, usually designed to fit very tight around their ankles, like a pair of skinny jeans. Their pants would be held up with suspenders, not a belt.

Mountain men needed heavy coats, too. These would have been made from leather, heavy wool, or even from bison hides. Even though they didn't use belts to hold up their pants, the men would wrap belts around their coats to hold their weapons.

They also brought mittens, hats, caps, wool socks, and boots. With all these items, a mountain man would be prepared for his first year in the Rockies! But even though he was ready now, his clothes would end up drastically changing throughout the year!

A Year in the Life of a Mountain Man

Dressing Your Mountain Man

Draw and color the picture below, showing what clothing your mountain man is bringing with him into the mountains for his first year. Use the boxes below to list up to ten pieces of clothing that he is bringing.



