

# Life Before and After Four Wheels

## Subject: History & Language Arts



### OBJECTIVES:

- To establish an appreciation of what life was like before the development of the car
- To realize how much the car has changed our society



### MATERIALS:

- Magazines
- Internet access
- Large pieces of butcher paper
- Research Questions work sheet



### ESTIMATED TIME:

1-2 class periods



### VOCABULARY:

Transportation, mode of transportation, fossil fuel, alternative fuels



### ACTIVITY SOURCE:

*Alameda County Safe Routes to Schools*



## OVERVIEW:

Students will learn about the vastly different modes of transportation have existed throughout history.

## BACKGROUND:

California has seen a vast array of transportation modes throughout its history, including the following:

**First inhabitants:** relied on their feet and walked all the way from Europe, eventually reaching what we call California. Once they settled here, many tribes did a lot of traveling around the year. The Ohlone also used their tule boats, for transportation as well as fishing.

**16th—18th Century explorers and missionaries:** Relied mostly on horses, though during this time there was an explosion of inventions that helped to mechanize transportation, agriculture, and manufacturing. **Coal** was used for energy to power many of the inventions of the time.

**18th Century:** Railroads invented, and canals used for steamboats. During the Gold Rush many people arrived by railroad, while others continued to use the horse and buggy to migrate to California.

**Late 1800's:** Bicycles become used widely.

**Early 1900's:** Cars begin to replace horses as transportation in the cities. Airplane invented (though not widely used until the mid-1900's).

**21st Century:** More widespread use of alternative fuels for transportation, as people begin to understand that fossil fuels contribute to climate change, pollution and other environmental disasters.

**2008:** Safe Routes program comes to Sonoma County, advocating for walking and bicycling to school, and more walkable and safer communities.

## STATE STANDARDS

### History and Social Studies:

4.2: Students describe the social, political, cultural and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

4.3-2: Compare how and why people traveled to California and the routes they traveled.

### Language Arts:

Research and Technology; 1.7: Use various reference materials as an aid to writing.

Comprehension; 1.2: Summarize major ideas and supporting evidence presented in spoken messages and formal presentations.

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## LESSON SET-UP:

1. Have Internet access ready and available for the students.
2. Photocopy the student handout for each student.
3. If your class works with a computer teacher, ask this teacher about doing this assignment during that class time.

## ACTIVITY SUGGESTION #1:

1. Ask students to brainstorm a list of different forms of transportation that have existed in California. Examples could include:
  - ✓ Horses
  - ✓ Canoes and tule boats
  - ✓ Bicycles
  - ✓ Trains
  - ✓ Walking
  - ✓ Airplanes
  - ✓ Cars
2. Divide students into groups of 2-4. Explain that they will be researching specific modes of transportation through the Internet and other sources. Give them the accompanying worksheet as a guide for their research.
3. Have each group present its topic in front of the class.

## SUGGESTED SOURCES:

- **History of Transportation in the U.S.**  
[http://americanhistory.si.edu/ONTHEMOVE/themes/story\\_48\\_1.html](http://americanhistory.si.edu/ONTHEMOVE/themes/story_48_1.html)
- **Canoe:**  
[http://www.canoe.ca/AllAboutCanoes/canoe\\_history.html](http://www.canoe.ca/AllAboutCanoes/canoe_history.html)
- **Bicycle:**  
<http://www.pedalinghistory.com/PHhistory.html>
- **Airplane:**  
<http://library.thinkquest.org/J0112389/airplanes.htm>

4. After the students have completed their research, have each group present their topic in front of the class. Allow enough time for a discussion about the pros and cons of each mode of transportation.

## ACTIVITY SUGGESTION #2:

1. Write down the names of the periods in history that students have studied or will be studying throughout the year. Examples include: Pre-European, Spanish Missionaries, Gold Rush, Pre-World War II and Modern Times.
2. Divide students into groups of 2-4 and assign each group to a period in history. Ask them to answer the questions provided in the accompanying worksheet
3. Have each group present its topic in front of the class.



## EXTENSION IDEAS:

1. Ask students to think about what transportation will be like in the future.
  - Have them (alone or in pairs) to draw what they think transportation will be like in 100 years from now.
  - Have them write an essay to accompany the picture, answering questions such as: what it will be powered by, who will use it, etc.
2. Have students research about the various alternative fuels that run cars today. Examples include cars running on biodiesel, solar, compressed air and ethanol.

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## LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER FOUR WHEELS

### Research Questions

Activity Suggestion #1



1. Name of form of transportation?

2. When was it invented?

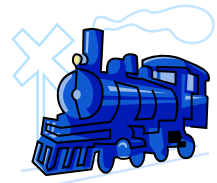


3. What has it been used for?

4. How was it used for the following periods (if used at all):

- \*\* Pre-European time
- \*\* Spanish missionary period
- \*\* Gold Rush
- \*\* Today

4. Is it still used today?

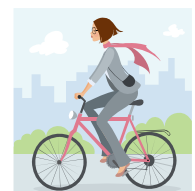


5. What are the benefits of this transportation mode?

6. Is there anything harmful about this transportation mode?

7. How does it affect the environment?

8. Do you think that it will be around 100 years from now? If so, how do you think it will change?



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## LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER FOUR WHEELS

### Research Questions

Activity Suggestion #2



1. Name and dates of time period?



2. What were the primary modes of transportation during this time period?

3. Describe each primary form of transportation (or pick 2 or 3), answering the following questions:

- What were the benefits of this transportation mode?

- Is there anything harmful about this transportation mode?



- How does it affect the environment?

- Do you think that it will be around 100 years from now? If so, how do you think it will change?

