

Resources

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Alaska Adventure

Jake Mays and his dad spent two weeks visiting Alaska. They flew to Anchorage and then took a train south to a lodge in Seward, a small harbor town surrounded by the Kenai mountain range. From there they took day trips around the area to see and experience the sights. Jake found it all so enticing that he never wanted to leave.

Every day brought a new adventure. They traveled by ferry and sailboat on the marine highways through straits and inlets. They paddled sea kayaks up narrow fjords lined with ice cliffs. They saw whales, otters, puffins, sea lions, and eagles. They spent a day on a fishing schooner catching salmon for dinner. Jake snapped pictures of every new vista.

“Mom is not going to believe how awesome the scenery is!” he said. “Next time, we have to coordinate the schedule so that she can come with us.”

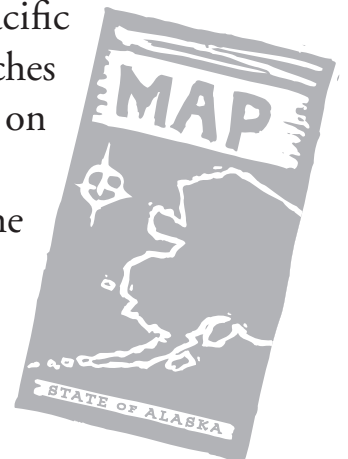
On the flight home, they pored over the map, already planning the return trip. Jake thought it would be exciting to do some backpacking on Mount McKinley, the tallest peak in North America.

“Wouldn’t it be fun to explore the state’s interior? We could travel north from Anchorage to visit Denali National Park. I heard that the fishing is first class, and there is plenty of wildlife to see.”

“That’s true,” said Dad. “Still, it is hard to resist the idea of retracing the route we just traveled. Now that we’re expert kayakers, we should paddle around the capes and coves and lagoons of the Alaska Peninsula.” Dad pointed at the chain of volcanic islands separating the Pacific Ocean from the Bering Sea. “The Aleutian archipelago stretches for more than a thousand miles. We could spend a lifetime on the water just exploring this part of the Ring of Fire.”

“Well, that settles it,” said Jake. “We just need to come back and stay longer.”

“You’ve got that right,” said Dad.



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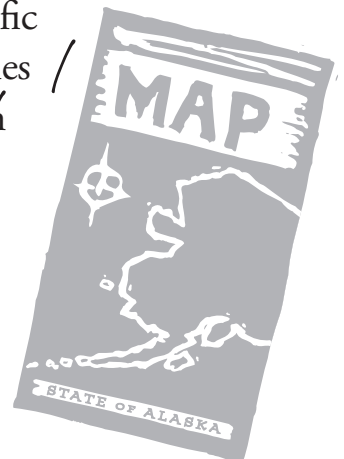
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Albert Einstein Asks a Question

BY JOHN ROSS



ALBERT EINSTEIN was born in Ulm, Germany, in 1879. When he was five, he was sick in bed for a time. His father gave him a compass. “But why does the needle always point north?” asked the boy. “I don’t know why,” his dad confessed. Later, the young Einstein studied the subject and found out the answer. And he never stopped asking questions after that. “The most important thing is to keep asking questions,” Einstein would always tell young people who wanted to become scientists.

Einstein did not do well in school. His teachers said he was slow to learn. “Albert will never amount to very much,” said the principal. But Einstein’s mind wasn’t slow. It was really working much faster than the school principal could ever have imagined. He wanted to know how everything worked. He thought a lot about space and time. He thought a lot about energy. He thought about atoms and how all the energy inside them could explode outward. He thought about how light travels in waves. He wondered what would happen to a person if he or she traveled at the speed of light, and he guessed that person would never grow old.

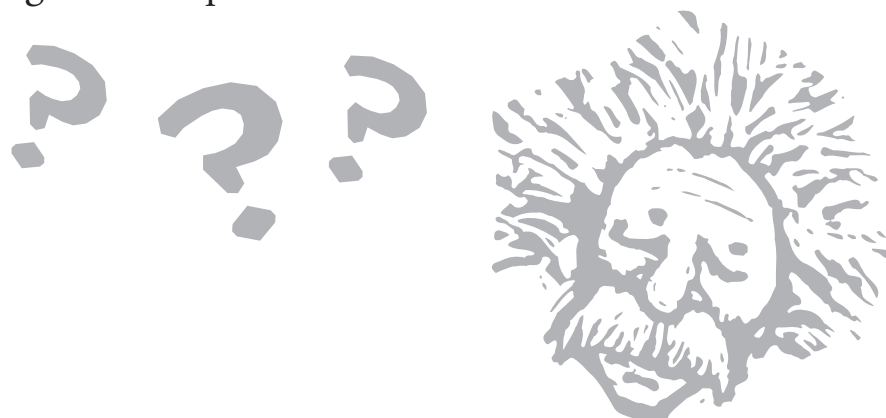
Einstein’s scientific theories forever changed our understanding of the world. He called his ideas “theories” or “thought experiments.” He tested his experiments by making pictures in his mind and using his imagination like a laboratory. These thought experiments were so hard to explain that sometimes only a few people in the whole world could understand what Einstein was thinking. Einstein’s most famous theory

is the theory of relativity. This is how he explained the theory of relativity: “If you sit with a pretty girl for an hour, it seems like only a minute. But if you sit on a hot stove for a minute, it seems like an hour. That’s relativity.”

In 1933, Albert Einstein fled Germany and went to the United States. From then until his death in 1955, he taught at Princeton University in New Jersey. There, he enjoyed sailing, playing the violin, putting together jigsaw puzzles, and building houses from playing cards. Einstein rode his bicycle everywhere; he thought driving was way too complicated.

When Einstein wanted to think, he often went for a walk. He usually wore a long overcoat and a black hat on top of his wild white hair (which was always uncombed). He would bring a notepad with him, to take notes on his “thought experiments.” Sometimes he would get so lost in his own thoughts that he would get lost for real. Einstein would have to ask neighbors for directions home.

When this famous scientist died at the age of 76, he left his brain to science. Scientists wanted to see if it was different from the average human brain. Nothing unusual turned up—until quite recently. In June 1999, a research team from Canada announced that Einstein’s brain is fifteen percent wider than normal in one particular area. This area seems to have something to do with mathematical thinking. Maybe having a wider area *caused* Einstein to be a math genius. Maybe having a wider area is the *result* of Einstein’s being a math genius. Or maybe this larger area doesn’t mean either of these things. Hmmm. Maybe it has to do with asking all those questions.



BMX Bikes

BMX bikes should have 20-inch wheels. The bolts should be tight. Take off any lights, and take off the kickstand.

Bike height is from 10 to 13 inches. A short bike can go fast, but your feet can hit the ground on turns. A tall bike has room for turns, but it jerks at top speed.

Choose the size of the wheelbase for the way you ride. Short is good for ramp riding and jumping. Long is good for going down hills.

Hot bikes are made for cool moves. To pop a wheelie, pump hard on the pedals. Shift your weight to the back of the seat. Pull up on the front wheel. It will lift the wheel off of the ground. You will be able to ride for a long way with your front wheel up high.



BMX Bikes

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Bike height is from 10 to 13 inches. A short bike can go 33
fast, but your feet can hit the ground on turns. A tall bike has 47
room for turns, but it jerks at top speed. 56

Choose the size of the wheelbase for the way you ride. 67
Short is good for ramp riding and jumping. Long is good for 79
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Hot bikes are made for cool moves. To pop a wheelie, 93
pump hard on the pedals. Shift your weight to the back of the 106
seat. Pull up on the front wheel. It will lift the wheel off of the 121
ground. You will be able to ride for a long way with your front 135
wheel up high. 138



The Case of the Blue Carbuncle



BASED ON A STORY BY SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

What are you investigating today?" I asked my friend Sherlock Holmes as I walked into his apartment. He did not reply, so I moved in to see what he was holding under his magnifying glass.

"Why, Holmes!" I exclaimed. "It's just an old hat. What's so valuable about it?"

"Nothing whatsoever," he replied. "I'm only studying the hat to find the owner of the goose."

"The goose?!" I asked, perplexed.

"The facts are these, Watson," explained Holmes. "Police Commissioner Peterson was walking home last night. He saw a man ahead carrying a fat goose. At Goodge Street, a rough gang appeared and knocked off the man's hat. The man swung his walking stick to fight back, and Commissioner Peterson rushed to help. Startled, the man dropped the goose and ran. The gang scattered, too, leaving Peterson with the goose and the hat."

"Which, surely, he returned to their owner?" asked I.

"There's the problem. True, the owner's name—Henry Baker—is stitched inside the hat. But there are hundreds of Henry Bakers in London. It would be impossible to find the right one. So, Peterson brought the hat to me. He took the goose home to cook before it spoiled."

Just then, the door flew open. Peterson rushed in. "The goose, Mr. Holmes!" he gasped. "See what my wife found in its crop!" He held out a dazzling blue stone. It was no bigger than a bean, but it sparkled like a star.

Sherlock Holmes whistled. "Peterson! Do you know what you have there?"

"It's the Countess of Morcar's blue carbuncle!" I cut in.

"Precisely," replied Holmes. "I have the newspaper article right here:

' . . . Police arrested plumber John Horner. Hotel Cosmopolitan manager James Ryder reported to police that Horner fixed a pipe in the countess's room on the day of the robbery. Horner, who has a criminal record, claims he is innocent.'

"The question is: How did the stone get from jewelry box to bird?"

Holmes took a pencil and paper and wrote: "Found on Goodge Street: 1 goose, 1 black felt hat. Mr. Henry Baker can have same—221B Baker Street. 6:30 p.m. this evening."

"Peterson, put this ad in all the papers and bring me a new goose!"

At 6:30 sharp, Henry Baker knocked on Holmes's door. Holmes handed Baker his hat. Then he explained that he had eaten Baker's goose but was offering another one in its place. Baker thanked Holmes, unconcerned that it was a different goose.

"By the way," asked Holmes, "could you tell me where your goose came from? It was delicious."

"Oh, yes, from my favorite inn," replied Baker. "The Alpha."

"So now we know Baker isn't the thief," Holmes remarked after Henry Baker had left. "I say we eat dinner later. Let's follow this clue while it's still hot."

We arrived at the Alpha Inn and ordered tea. "This tea should be wonderful if it's as good as your geese," Holmes told the innkeeper.

"My geese?" asked the innkeeper hesitantly.

"Yes, I heard about them from Henry Baker."

"Aha! Them's not our geese," the innkeeper answered. "I got them from a man named Breckinridge in Covent Garden."

After tea, we headed for Covent Garden and found a stall with the name Breckinridge. Holmes approached and said, "I want a goose—same kind you sold to the Alpha Inn. Where'd you get them?"

Breckinridge fumed, "Why's everybody asking about those geese? 'Where did they come from? Where did they go?' I'm tired of it!"

"I bet you five pounds those were country geese," said Holmes.

"You lose," said Breckinridge. "They're town geese. Look here at my register."

Holmes read, "Mrs. Oakshott, 117 Brixton Road, number 249."

Holmes threw down his money with a huff. As we walked away, he laughed, "Anything for a bet! We'll visit Mrs. Oakshott tomorrow. Shall we have dinner, Watson? Chicken sounds good tonight."

We were interrupted by shouts. Mr. Breckinridge was yelling at a rat-faced little man, "Enough of you and your geese! Go away!"

"This might save us a trip to Brixton Road," whispered Holmes. "Let's see about this fellow." Holmes went up to the man and touched his shoulder. He jumped. "What do you want?" he cried.

"I heard you asking about geese," said Holmes. "I believe I can help you."

"Who are you? What could you know about it?" said the rat-faced man.

"My name is Sherlock Holmes. It is my business to know things. I know you

are looking for a goose raised by Mrs. Oakshott. She sold it to Breckinridge. He sold it to the Alpha Inn. They sold it to Henry Baker.”

“Oh, sir, you’re just who I am looking for!” exclaimed the man.

“Before we talk, tell me your name.”

The man looked sideways and answered, “John Robinson.”

“No, your real name,” said Holmes.

The man turned red, “Well, then. It’s James Ryder.”

“Ah, yes. Manager of the Hotel Cosmopolitan. Come to my place. I’ll tell you everything.”

Back at his apartment, Holmes began, “You want to know what became of that goose?”

“Oh, yes!”

“It came here. And a remarkable bird it was. No wonder you want to know about it. It laid an egg, after it was dead. The brightest little blue egg I ever saw. See?” Holmes held up the blue carbuncle. It gleamed in the firelight. Ryder stared, motionless.

“The game’s over, Ryder,” said Holmes. “You knew Horner had a criminal record, so the police would go after him. You gave Horner a job in the countess’s room. When he finished, you took the gem. Then you called the police.”

“Don’t turn me in!” Ryder begged. “I swear I’ll never do wrong again!”

“We’ll talk about that,” replied Holmes, “but first, tell me, how did the gem get into the goose and away from you? Tell the truth; it’s your only hope.”

Ryder confessed, “After Horner’s arrest, I had to hide the stone. I went to my sister’s on Brixton Road, where she and her husband, Oakshott, raise geese.

“In their yard, I got an idea. My sister had offered me a goose to take home. I grabbed one and put the stone down its throat. Suddenly, the goose jumped out of my arms back into the flock! To my relief, I recognized the bar on its tail and caught it again. When I got home and opened the goose, the stone was nowhere to be found! I ran back to my sister’s, but she had just sold the whole flock to Breckinridge, including one of her two bar-taileds. The rest you know.”

My friend Holmes got up and threw open the door. “Get out!” he yelled.

Ryder crashed down the stairs, slammed the door, and ran away.

Holmes said, “I look at it this way, Watson. Ryder is too afraid to become a criminal. Now, I think it’s time we investigate another bird. Let’s hope our dinner doesn’t set off another wild goose chase.”



Common Sense: An Anansi Tale



ANANSI, THE SPIDER, was full of mischief. He loved to play jokes and pull pranks on people. One day, he decided to collect all the common sense in the world. Everyone uses these little bits of good judgment every day. “If,” Anansi thought, “I alone had all of this sensible information, I could sell it back to people when they needed it.” Anansi imagined people lining up to pay him for answers to the simplest questions: *Anansi, what should I wear when it’s cold outside? What should I do when I am hungry?*

“This is a brilliant scheme,” thought Anansi. “I will have all the common sense in the world, and all the money in the world, too!”

So Anansi got a sack and started collecting common sense. *Brush your teeth to prevent cavities! Put your socks on before your shoes!* Anansi put them all in his sack.

The sack was soon bursting at the seams. “I need to find a better place to keep the common sense,” thought Anansi. Just then he spied a calabash growing on a vine. It looked like a giant pumpkin. Anansi hollowed out the calabash. Then he stuffed all of the common sense inside and kept collecting.

When Anansi had gathered up every bit of common sense, he thought, “Now I just have to find a good place to hide it.”

Anansi set off through the jungle to find just the right hiding place. He dragged the calabash under ferns and over logs. He waded through streams. He trudged from shrub to bush to hedge. He hiked up muddy trails and slid down steep hillsides. Finally Anansi found the tallest tree in the jungle.

“This is the perfect hiding place,” he said. “The calabash will be safe and sound. No one would ever guess that I have hidden such a valuable treasure in such an unusual place.”

Using a thick rope, Anansi tied the heavy calabash around his neck so that it dangled in front of him like a locket on a necklace. He started up the tree trunk, but climbing was hard. The calabash flopped and swayed. It banged Anansi’s belly. It bruised his knees and elbows. The rope burned the back of his neck. But even though Anansi was aching and battered, he did not stop. The thought of getting rich kept him going.

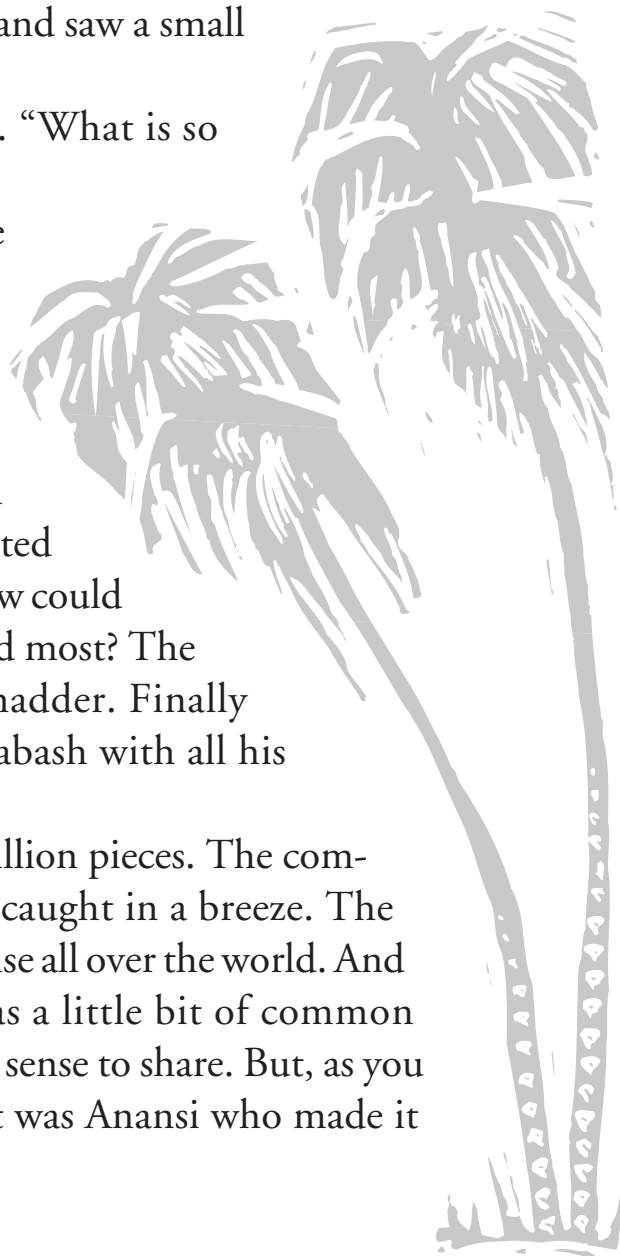
As Anansi was struggling upward, he heard someone giggling below him. He looked down and saw a small boy leaning against the tree trunk.

Anansi called down to the boy. “What is so funny?” he asked.

“*You* are,” said the boy. “Anyone with a pinch of common sense knows that it is easier to carry things on your back—especially if you are climbing a tree. How foolish can you get?”

The boy’s words made Anansi furious! Anansi thought he had collected all the common sense in the world. How could he have missed the one piece he needed most? The thought made Anansi madder and madder. Finally he lost his temper and swung the calabash with all his might against the tree trunk.

The calabash shattered into a million pieces. The common sense spilled out and pieces got caught in a breeze. The breeze blew little pieces of common sense all over the world. And that explains why today everyone has a little bit of common sense to use and a little bit of common sense to share. But, as you yourself know, nobody got all of it. It was Anansi who made it happen that way.





The GREENHOUSE Effect

The greenhouse effect is the rise in temperature that Earth experiences because certain gases in the atmosphere trap energy from the sun that is reflected off Earth—energy that would otherwise escape back into outer space. Scientists now believe that the greenhouse effect is making Earth warmer, enough to drastically change the climate. An increase in global temperature of just one degree can impact rainfall patterns and sea levels. The rise in temperature can cause problems for plants, wildlife, and humans.

Water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), ozone (O_3), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) are the “greenhouse gases” in our atmosphere. These types of gases behave much like the glass panes of a greenhouse. The glass lets in light but prevents heat from escaping, causing the greenhouse to heat up, much like the inside of a car parked in the sun on a hot day.

People are contributing to Earth’s warming by increasing the CO_2 in the atmosphere. Trees, like all living things, are made mostly of carbon. When people burn forests, the carbon in trees is transformed into CO_2 . Trees, like other plants, use photosynthesis to absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen. When people cut down forests, less carbon dioxide is converted into oxygen. People also increase CO_2 in the air by burning “fossil fuels.” These fuels include gasoline used in cars, SUVs, and trucks and fuels like coal and natural gas used by power plants to create electricity. Whenever fossil fuels are burned, CO_2 is released into the air.



Marine Mammals

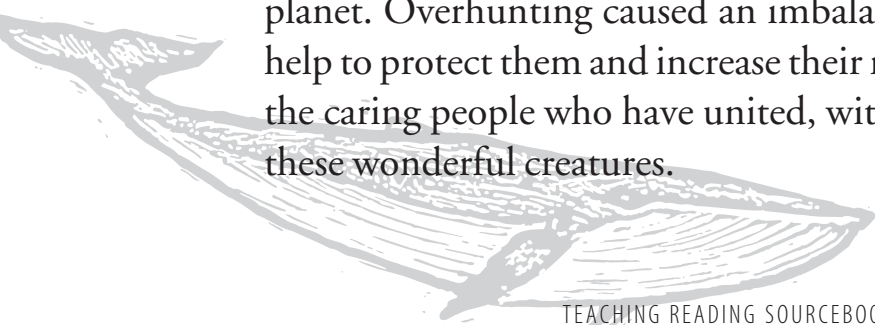


MAMMALS ARE WARM-BLOODED ANIMALS. Marine mammals, such as whales, live in the ocean. Unlike fish, marine mammals cannot breathe underwater. They can dive very deep to find food. They can stay under the water for a long time. However, it is impossible for them to stay below the surface for an indefinite amount of time. They regularly need to resurface to get air.

One marine mammal is the largest animal ever to be found on Earth. This huge creature, called a blue whale, can be 90 feet long. It can weigh more than 100 tons. The blue whale is also the loudest animal on earth. It makes a deep, resounding rumble that has no comparison on land or sea. Whenever the blue whale has the impulse to talk to other whales, it sends out a noise that travels uninterrupted through the ocean. Other whales react when they hear the call even if they are many miles away.

The blue whale requires an unusual amount of food each day. You might think that it hunts big game in the sea, but you would be incorrect. It lives on an infinite number of extremely tiny creatures. They are called krill. With its mouth gaping wide, the whale swims into a school, or group, of krill. The whale scoops up the krill, along with a big mouthful of seawater. In place of teeth, the whale has rows of fringe-like filters called baleen. Baleen is made of material that looks like stiff bristles or hairs. It acts like a strainer. It lets the seawater flow out of the whale's mouth but traps the krill.

Blue whales may be mighty giants, but they are endangered. Though once they were abundant, today very few blue whales remain on our planet. Overhunting caused an imbalance in their population. New laws help to protect them and increase their numbers. We should be grateful for the caring people who have united, with a goal of ensuring the survival of these wonderful creatures.



Percussion Instruments

From primitive cave dwellers to modern city dwellers, people have always played percussion instruments. A percussion instrument is any musical instrument that you play by striking or hitting using either sticks or your hands. There are many kinds of percussion instruments, including drums, cymbals, and xylophones.

Of all the percussion instruments, drums are the most prevalent. They are commonly found all over the world. Every culture has developed its own type of drum. The drums may differ from culture to culture, place to place, and group to group, but all of them possess the same basic elements. They usually have a hollow shell, or frame, and a round drumhead.

The shell can come in many shapes and sizes. Shells are usually made out of metal or wood. They can be shallow like a snare drum's or deep like a conga drum's. They can be shaped like a cereal bowl, an hourglass, or even a kettle. The shell acts like a speaker to amplify the sound, or make it louder. A small drum, like a bongo, will sound faint compared to the huge noise made by a big bass drum used in a marching band.

The drumhead is usually made from an animal hide. The animal hide, or skin, is stretched tight over the drum shell. When the drummer hits the drumhead, it vibrates, or moves very quickly back and forth. This vibration creates a resonant, or deep and rich, sound. A drum's pitch depends on the size and the tightness of the drumhead. A smaller, tighter drumhead makes a higher-pitched sound.

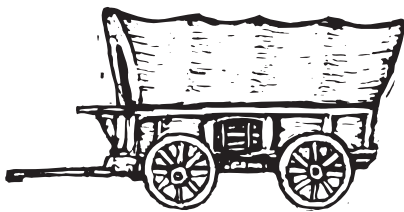
Drumbeats are like beating hearts.
You can hear their rhythms through the ages.



Pioneers on the Oregon Trail

*“Ourselves moving
on in the general
throng, sand
reflecting back the
heat of the sun
in your face and
making the sweat
trickle down.
Oh, this is going
to Oregon.”*

—HELEN STEWART, 1853



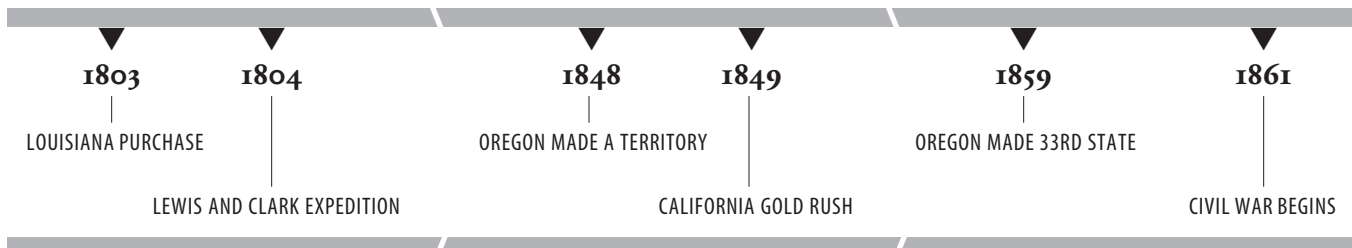
The Way West

In the early 1800s, Lewis and Clark explored the territory west of the Mississippi. No one knew what they would find. As they traveled, they made maps. They wrote in their journals. They described miles and miles of beautiful land with tall trees, good soil, and rushing rivers.

News about the wonders of the West spread. People began to dream about a new life in a new land. And before long, they began traveling west on the Oregon Trail. At first there were only a few adventurers. In 1843, two hundred families crossed the Oregon Trail. Then in 1848, gold was discovered in California. Soon after, thousands of people began heading west, hoping to make their dreams come true.

Packing for the Journey

Traveling west was not easy. The Oregon Trail was thousands of miles long and took between four and six months to cross. Pioneers had to pack everything they would need in a covered wagon that was not much bigger than a double bed. Once food, tools, and supplies for the journey



SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR 1 PERSON

- 100–200 lb.of bacon or salt pork
- 5–25 lb.of coffee
- 1/2 bu.of cornmeal
- 1/2 bu.of dried beans
- 10–20 lb.of dried fruit
- 200 lb.of flour,crackers, biscuits
- 10–20 lb.of lard
- 10–25 lb.of rice
- 2–4 lb.of baking soda
- 10–20 lb.of salt
- 25–50 lb.of sugar
- 1–3 lb.of tea
- pickles
- vinegar
- 3–5 full sets of clothing
- sturdy boots or shoes
- winter coat
- candles
- soap
- eating utensils

SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR 1 FAMILY

- butter churn
- cooking supplies
- water keg
- pail
- watch
- compass
- lantern
- tools
- hunting and fishing supplies
- rope
- chain
- spare wagon parts
- 500 matches

were packed, the wagon was nearly full. As a result, there was no room left for personal belongings. But the pioneers left behind more than the comforts of home and their special treasures. They said good-bye to family and friends they never expected to see again.

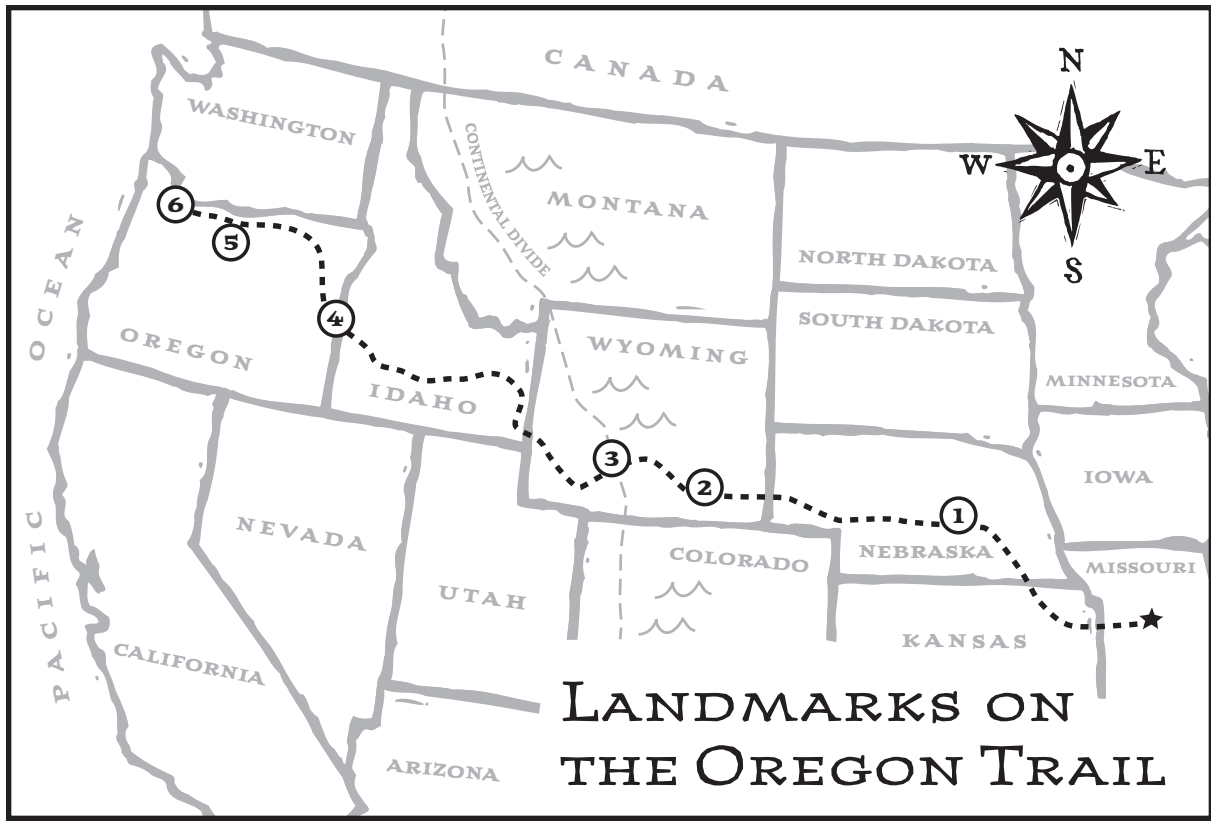


Wagons Ho!

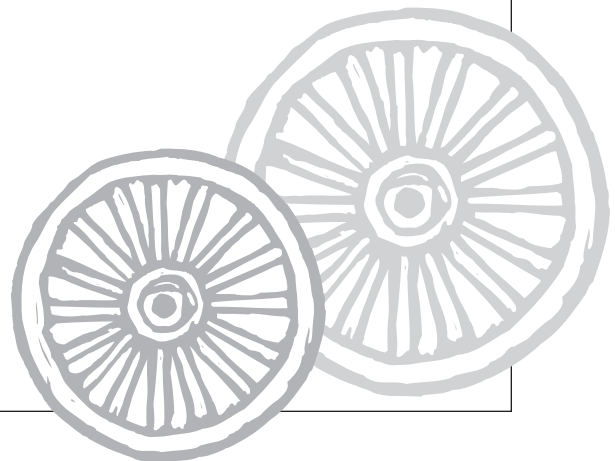
Pioneers gathered at starting points between Independence, Missouri, and Council Bluffs, Iowa, to join up with wagon trains heading west. It was safest to travel with ten to fifteen wagons in a group. Wagon trains did not set out until there was enough grass growing on the prairie to feed the animals along the way. At the same time, they could not wait too long. The wagons had to get over the mountains before it started to snow.

A wagon train on the move could be one mile long and one mile wide. Bumping along inside a cramped wagon was a hard and uncomfortable way to travel. Pioneers often trudged beside the wagons instead. Consequently, most people *walked* slowly all the way to Oregon—nearly two thousand miles.

As the pioneers headed west, they watched for famous landmarks along the way. Some of the landmarks showed how far the pioneers had traveled. Others were especially steep mountain passes or dangerous rivers that had to be crossed. Others were forts where the pioneers could get news and supplies.



- 1 The **Platte River**, which curves through the prairie, had to be crossed several times, with the wagons fording or ferrying across the river.
- 2 Wagon trains had to reach **Independence Rock** by July 4th in order to stay on schedule; if they were late, they risked being caught in the snow.
- 3 At the **South Pass**, the pioneers passed into Oregon Territory.
- 4 Wagon trains came to the **Blue Mountains** late in the trip. This was one place where it was easy to get caught in an early snow.
- 5 At **The Dalles**, the pioneers could ferry down the Columbia River to Fort Vancouver.
- 6 Pioneers had to use ropes or chains and inch their wagons down **Laurel Hill**, one of the most terrifying parts of the journey but only a few days away from the end of the trail.





DID YOU KNOW?

Pioneers would milk their cows in the evening. Then in the morning, they would put the cream into the churn and set the churn inside the wagon. The constant rocking motion of the wagon would turn the cream to butter by the time they stopped for supper.



A Day on the Trail

If you were traveling in a wagon train on the Oregon Trail, you tried to travel at a steady pace. On a good day, you could go about fifteen miles. On a stormy day or over a bad part of the trail, you might go only one mile.

You would wake up at daybreak. Morning chores, including fixing breakfast, milking the cows, taking care of the animals, and packing up the wagon, would take a couple of hours. Then you would hitch up the mules or oxen and set out.

At noon you would find a place to stop and rest. Animals would graze and get water. You would eat a meal, rest, and make any repairs that were needed. Then you would set out again and keep going until four or five o'clock. You had to stop in time to get your chores done before nightfall.

Now the evening meal had to be cooked, which might mean gathering firewood, hunting or fishing, picking berries, and so on. Wagon repairs, cleaning and mending clothes, and other chores could be done. If you were lucky, you might find time to rest and relax. Musicians might pull out fiddles and harmonicas for singing and dancing by the campfire. Then it was time to go to bed, so that you could get up and do it again.

The End of the Trail

After four or five months of traveling, pioneers finally reached the Willamette Valley. Oregon City was the end of the Oregon Trail, where pioneers staked their claims to ranchland and farmland. Then the hard work really began.

The first winter in Oregon could be very hard. Supplies were low, and the weather turned rainy and cold. It was important to get busy and clear your land and build a cabin before the start of winter. But the end of the trail was where the dream of living in the West began. The pioneers who survived the trip had risked everything for a new life in the West.



Studying the Sky



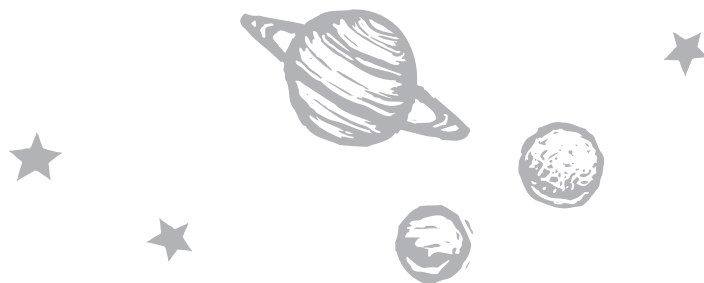
ASTRONOMY is the study of the planets, stars, and galaxies. People have been watching the movement of the sun, moon, planets, and stars since ancient times. So astronomy is a very, very old science.

From early times, people tried to make models of the universe. For many years, no one wanted to believe that the sun was the center of the solar system. It took a long time for people to accept this heliocentric model, with the earth orbiting around the sun with the other planets.

It is interesting to study the night sky like the astronomers from centuries ago. You can see even the most distant stars with your eyes alone. And you may be able to identify constellations, or groups of stars. Constellations make pictures in the sky, such as Canis Major (the Great Dog) or Ursa Minor (the Little Bear).

A telescope can be used to see faraway things more clearly. With a telescope, you can see details like the craters of the moon and other features of the lunar landscape, the moons of Jupiter, and the rings of Saturn.

Astronomy is like taking a trip back in time. This evening you can look at the same planets and stars that ancient astronomers observed so long ago.



TV Dinner

BY THE SAN FRANCISCO MIME TROUPE

Characters

Announcer: a TV announcer

Madam Video: Video Central's evil empress

Cosmo and Dodo: two raccoons

Pauline: a twelve-year-old TV fanatic

Henrietta: Pauline's pet guinea pig

ANNOUNCER: Pauline watches too much TV. She's behind on homework, forgets to wash the dishes, and has no time to play with Henrietta, her pet guinea pig. One night Henrietta is "pignapped" by two raccoon servants of Madam Video. Pauline sets out to find her.

ANNOUNCER: The setting is Madam Video's control room at Video Central. The walls are lined with TV monitors. Cosmo and Dodo are playing around. Henrietta is strapped to a special chair. Madam Video enters the room.

MADAM: (*speaking to audience*) Hi, kids. What a glorious night for my experiment—full moon, low-lying fog. If my Video Visor invention works—which lets you watch more TV in less time—I'll rule the mind of every kid within reach of this tower. (*to Cosmo*) Have you found me a subject?

COSMO: A perfect subject, primed and ready, your coldness.

MADAM: (*to Cosmo*) Excellent. Have some Bubbleicious Gum. If all goes well tonight, I'll show you something really special: six segments of "South Park"—uncut, prime stuff.

COSMO: Uncut, ooh, wow! Kyle and Stan and Cartman and Kenny.
Awesome!

MADAM: Place the Video Visor on the subject. (*as Cosmo goes to do so, Madam sees the subject*) What is this?

HENRIETTA: I'm a guinea pig.

COSMO: It is a guinea pig, your monstrosity, just as you ordered.

MADAM: (*chasing raccoons*) You fools! You lazy bums!
You, you—animals! I ask for a guinea pig to conduct my experiment
and you bring me a . . . a . . .

COSMO: A guinea pig.

MADAM: I can't bear it. The experiment is ruined. It's worthless. You'll
pay for this. I'm cutting you off. No TV.

COSMO: No TV? No, please, I can't stand it. (*falls on floor in a fit*)

DODO: Can we have just an hour's worth? Fifteen minutes?

MADAM: I'm pulling the plug.

DODO: No "Jeopardy"?

COSMO: How about Discovery Channel?

MADAM: Nothing. Not even bowling (*raccoons cry*) . . . until you bring me
a real live child. (*an alarm sounds*) The video alarm! (*scans video screen*)
A little girl is approaching. Perfect timing. Quick, lock that pig in the
pantry. And get out of sight. (*raccoons obey, and Madam also hides*)

PAULINE: (*peeks in, stage right*) Henrietta? Henrietta? Where are you?
(*walks around room*) Wow, look at all those TVs. This place is like a
dream come true. (*turns on a TV*)

ANNOUNCER: Hello, America. Welcome to your favorite new show,
"Reality Idiots". (*squabbling voices are heard*)

PAULINE: Oh, this is the show where people will do anything just to be
on TV. (*turns off first TV and turns on another*)

ANNOUNCER: Got milk? It's fast food that's good for you.

PAULINE: *(to audience)* Milk? Yuk. *(turns off second TV)*

MADAM: *(entering)* Hello, dear.

PAULINE: Uh, are you real?

MADAM: As real as anything you'll ever see.

PAULINE: Hi, uh, my name is Pauline. I, uh, didn't mean to bust in, but . . . I'm looking for my pet. Two raccoons pignapped her and I gotta find her.

MADAM: Those naughty raccoons—they only wanted to play. But I scolded them, gave them all lettuce sandwiches, and then put them down for a nap. Why don't we let them sleep? *(taking Pauline to chair)* You and I can watch television.

PAULINE: Great—I didn't expect to end up in such a safe place. Can we watch "24"? My parents aren't into it.

MADAM: Anything you like, dear. Do you watch a great deal of television?

PAULINE: Not too much—only six hours a day. *(Madam puts Video Visor on her)* What's this?

MADAM: My new Video Visor. It lets you watch more TV in less time.

PAULINE: Wow. *(Madam turns on Visor)* What an awesome monitor! I could watch this forever.

MADAM: *(triumphantly)* You will, you will. *(calls)* Cosmo, Dodo! *(the raccoons enter)*

DODO: Yes, your repulsiveness.

COSMO: Coming, your grease. *(Pauline can tell that something's wrong and begins to struggle)*

MADAM: Program thirty minutes of commercials in ten seconds. *(raccoons bump into each other; Dodo programs the computer and Cosmo goes to read printout)*

COSMO: Maximum and rising.

MADAM: Brain activity?

DODO: Minimum and falling.

MADAM: (*removing Visor*) Little girl, can you hear me?

PAULINE: Yes.

MADAM: Try a Grease Burger . . .

PAULINE: . . . so tasty and good for you!

MADAM: Tired all day? Can't sleep at night? Ask your doctor about . . .

PAULINE: . . . Snooze Away. Side effects may include bad breath and pimples.

MADAM: What do you want for Christmas, little girl?

PAULINE: Webkins, an American Girl doll, and Baby Mastercharge.
I answered all the questions, what's my prize?

MADAM: Stupid. (*to audience*) This is thrilling. (*back to Pauline*)
What's your favorite food?

PAULINE: Baby Bottle Tops, Jolly Ranchers, Air Heads, Wing Pops . . .
(*singing*) Wing Pops, Wing Pops, Wing Pops.

MADAM: It works! It works! My Video Visor works! First the raccoons,
then the children. From this tower, I'll beam programs to make
everyone in the entire world my obedient slaves.

COSMO AND DODO: (*dancing and singing*)
Madam Video will rule the world. Rule the world.
You will buy things you don't need. You don't need.
No one will remember how to read. How to read.
You may think her plan's insane,
But no one will dare complain.
You'll all be too busy watching your TVs.

Weekend Campout



THE FRANCO FAMILY loves to be outdoors. They spend almost every weekend camping. Fay Franco adores camping more than anything. She will even pitch her tent in the backyard just to sleep outside.

Fay has been to lots of campgrounds. Mar Vista Shores is her favorite. The campsites are in the tall trees. Each spot has a beach view.

At Mar Vista Shores, noisy birdcalls wake Fay early. She hears loud squawking and jumps up for breakfast. Then she packs a picnic. Fay and her dad drive to the trailhead. It is the place where the hiking trails start. They choose a path to take. Dad carries a daypack. It holds a first aid kit, sweatshirts, food, and water. The path leads sharply uphill to a waterfall. It is a steep climb! They hungrily devour their lunch by the riverbank. From the rocks, Fay can watch the water plummet over the cliff.

In the afternoon, Fay and her mom go to the seashore. Mom is a rock hound. She hunts for neat-looking stones. Fay makes sandcastles. Using wet sand, she builds high walls and towers. Sometimes she pokes around the tide pools. She looks for crabs and starfish in the rocks along the beach.

At dinnertime, the Franco family usually has a sunset cookout. They light a campfire. They roast hotdogs. The sky turns pink over the water. Nighttime falls. Fay gets into her sleeping bag. She looks up to see the stars twinkle overhead.

Fay thinks that weekend campouts are almost perfect. The only flaw comes when it is time to go home.



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