The Birth of a Rocky Mountain City and Railroad: Georgetown and the Loop Railroad

Students examine the evolution of a town.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Geography Standards</th>
<th>Arizona Geography Strand</th>
<th>Other Arizona Standards</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELEMENT TWO: PLACES AND REGIONS 4. The physical and human characteristics of places.</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELEMENT FOUR: HUMAN SYSTEMS 9. The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human population on earth's surface.</td>
<td>Strand 4 Geography</td>
<td>Strand 1 American History</td>
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<td>PO 1 Describe how the following regions exemplify the concept of region as an area with unifying human or natural factors:</td>
<td>PO 4. Describe how manufacturing, textiles, transportation improvements, and other innovations of the Industrial Revolution contributed to U.S. growth and expansion.</td>
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<td>b. West, Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest</td>
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<td>Concept 4 Human Systems</td>
<td>ELA Common Core Standards</td>
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<td>PO 2 Explain the effects of human migration on places (e.g., economic, cultural, environmental, political).</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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ELA Common Core Standards
Reading
Reading Informational Text
Key Ideas and Details
5.RI.2 Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

Writing
Production and Distribution of Writing
AZ5.W.4 Produce clear and coherent functional writing (e.g., formal letters, recipes, experiments, notes/messages, labels, timelines, graphs/tables, procedures, invitations, envelopes) in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

Language
Conventions of Standard English
AZ.5.L.1
f. Construct one or more paragraphs that contain:
• a topic sentence,
• supporting details,
• relevant information, and concluding sentences.
The Birth of a Rocky Mountain City and Railroad

Overview

This lesson demonstrates how and why a city evolves. It is the story of the historic city of Georgetown, located on the western slopes of the Rocky Mountains.

Purpose

In this lesson, students will learn how humans use, adapt to and modify natural elements that define regions in the United States.

Materials

- Letter writing materials
- Story: The Birth of a City and Railroad in the Rocky Mountains
- Letter prompt and checklist

Objectives

The student will be able to:

- relate how and why the city of Georgetown and the Georgetown Loop Railroad were developed.
- write a friendly letter.

Procedures

1. Brainstorm reasons why towns/cities grew in the places that they did. Bisbee, Arizona is an excellent example of a town that was built because of rise and fall of the copper mining industry. Morenci and Jerome are other examples. Today's lesson looks at the rise and fall of Georgetown in the heart of the Rocky Mountains.

2. Discuss the physical features of the Rocky Mountains.

3. Locate Georgetown, Colorado on a map.

4. Discuss the altitude and weather conditions including the short spring and summer seasons.

5. Read the Story "Birth of a Rocky Mountain City and Railroad."

6. In small groups, discuss what life must have been like for an early prospector, and list the events that took place in the development of the city and railroad.

7. Have each student write a letter home from the perspective of a silver miner explaining what it has been like to live in Georgetown from the time of the silver boom to its bust. The students will write from the following prompt: "You are a prospector in the silver mines writing a friendly letter home to your parents describing what it has been like to live in Georgetown during the silver boom to its bust."

Assessment

The friendly letter home assesses knowledge of geography by answering the question of how were the Rocky Mountains changed by the mining, the creation of a town, and the impact of a railroad. Use ideas/content criteria form the Six-Trait Writing Rubric. Mastery will be considered 4 out of 6.

The friendly letter can be graded for organization and voice on the Six-Trait Writing Rubric. Mastery will be considered 4 out of 6. This will provide a reading and writing assessment.

NOTE: The checklist supplied with this lesson can serve as an assessment tool as well.

Extensions

Build a model of the Loop Railroad out of toothpicks and marshmallows.

Locate on a map the other mining towns in the Rockies and research one of them.

Research an Arizona mining town and compare it to Georgetown.

Sources

Georgetown, Colorado History
http://www.georgetowncolorado.com