

# **THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD**

## **Instructions for Team 1: The Railway Promoters**

You are the owners and promoters of the railway. Each team member must create a brochure for the Central Pacific Railway. Your goal is to create customers for the journey as an exciting excursion. You will also want to promote settlement of the land you acquired from the Federal government when you built the railway. Only this way will you create a steady need for your services and thus insure that you remain a profitable enterprise. Your role is to "boost" the railway, to create some degree of "hype," to advertise the most exciting sights along the journey and the luxurious manner in which ticket holders will travel. To some degree you are creating the myth of the West in your brochure.

Below is an example of a poster advertising a Transcontinental Railway journey in 1908. It can give you an idea for what the graphics of your brochures might look like. [http://cpr.org/Museum/Maps/Overland\\_Route\\_1908\\_BCC.html](http://cpr.org/Museum/Maps/Overland_Route_1908_BCC.html)

Your brochure should include the following:

1. Map the route of the Transcontinental Railroad. Include three (3) significant places along the route. The journey should begin in Omaha, Nebraska and end in California.
2. Make a list of five (5) animals, towns or cities, and human endeavors that travelers in the 1870's would be excited to see.
3. Include the cost of the journey (the price of a ticket) and what would be included for the price of a ticket.
4. Explain how passengers would eat their meals and sleep on the journey.
5. How long would the journey have taken before the advent of the Transcontinental Railroad? How long it would have taken in the 1870's riding the Transcontinental Railroad?
6. Advertise the land for sale along the route. What would be the advantages of settling on it?
7. Your brochure should fill both sides of one (1) sheet of paper. It should also be visually interesting.

### **Suggested Web sites for research**

- The West, Episode 5: The Grandest Enterprise Under God  
<http://www.pbs.org/thewest/program/episodes/five/>
- The West, Archives: Episode 5  
<http://www.pbs.org/thewest/resources/archives/five/>
- The West, Places  
<http://www.pbs.org/thewest/places/>
- Union Pacific Railroad History  
<http://www.uprr.com/uprr/ffh/history/>
- Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum  
<http://CPRR.org/Museum/index.html>  
Click on "History" for a fabulous array of materials directly relevant to this project.)
- American Memory Project: Railroad Maps 1828-1900  
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/rrhtml/rrhome.html>
- American Memory Project (Library of Congress)  
<http://memory.loc.gov/>
- National Archives  
<http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html>

# **THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD**

## **Instructions for Team 2: The Chinese Immigrants**

You are men who have come from China and who worked for the Central Pacific between 1863 and 1869. You are the unsung heroes of this venture. The most widely circulated photographs of the historic meeting of the rails at Promontory, Utah left you out of the picture despite the incredible hardships you endured. You will write a series of letters home describing both the hardships and heroism of your fellow Chinese workers.

Before you begin to write your letters complete the following tasks:

- Research the region in China you are from and why you left it.
- Figure out the year you arrived in California and what you did to support yourself. (Note: you may have arrived during the Gold Rush years (1849-52) or you may have come directly from China to work on the railroad.)
- Imagine the family you have left behind and what their hopes are for you in America.
- Be able to describe the kinds of work you are most equipped to do as you undertake working on the railroad. Imagine what concerns you have for your safety and well being.
- Imagine what kinds of experiences you might have had as an Asian in a Caucasian world thus far.

### **Suggested Web sites for research**

- The West, Episode 5: The Grandest Enterprise Under God  
<http://www.pbs.org/thewest/program/episodes/five/>
- The West, Archives: Episode 5  
<http://www.pbs.org/thewest/resources/archives/five/>
- The West, Archives: Episode 7  
<http://www.pbs.org/thewest/resources/archives/seven/>
- The West, Places  
<http://www.pbs.org/thewest/places/>
- The Iron Road  
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/iron/>
- Central Pacific Railroad Photographic Museum  
<http://CPRR.org/Museum/index.html>  
(Click on "Chinese.")
- American Memory Project (Library of Congress)  
<http://memory.loc.gov/>
- National Archives  
<http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html>

After gathering the information you need, write three (3) letters home for the years you worked on the railroad. Each letter should be at least seven (7) sentences long. Include topics such as:

1. How the Chinese organized themselves into organized "gangs" of workers.
2. How they imported aspects of their lifestyles (food, clothing) and how their lifestyles contrasted with workers from other parts of the world.
3. What it was like working for Charles Crocker who ran the building of the Central Pacific.
4. The work of cutting through the Sierra Nevadas without any modern machinery.
5. The wage differentials paid to white and Chinese workers and other forms of discrimination you faced.
6. The horrible winter of 1865-66.
7. The strike of Chinese workers in 1867.
8. The stories of fellow Chinese workers with whom you work.
9. Your emotions when the last tie is laid at Promontory, Utah.
10. Your plans for the future.

### **Railroad Brochure Grading Rubric**

Map of the Transcontinental Railroad with 3 significant places	Up to 14 points
5 sights for travelers to see	Up to 14 points
The cost of the journey and what's included	Up to 14 points
How do passengers eat/sleep on the train?	Up to 14 points
Length of journey before/after the Transcontinental Railroad	Up to 14 points
Advertisement for land along the way	Up to 14 points
Visually interesting/full brochure	Up to 16 points

### **Chinese Letters Grading Rubric**

Are the letters imaginative and show creativity?	Up to 20 points
Style/grammar	Up to 20 points
At least three letters	Up to 20 points
At least 7 sentences per letter	Up to 20 points
Are the letters well researched?	Up to 20 points

Meet as a team to choose five words or phrases which best express your team's attitude toward the Transcontinental Railroad (in the roles you played). These words should be written down on large index cards, and decorated with appropriate images. These will later be put up on a class bulletin board display.