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Wagons of the Westward Movement

Objective: Through this webquest and other activities, you will learn about all aspects of the wagons that carried 2 million immigrants westward, especially the construction of the wagons, the routes the travelers took; after you complete these activities, you should be able to differentiate between types of wagons (prairie schooner, Conestoga, emigrant farm wagon), and explain how the wagons went West.

Task

Your job, in “families” of three, is to describe, in a report, a journey to the West, as if you were a pioneer in the 1800s, focusing on the wagons pioneers used. This report must be thorough enough that your peers and teacher, who, presumably, do not know anything about the transportation to the West, will understand how pioneers went West, focusing on the wagons they used. Decide what route you are going to take to West depending on where you will be settling, which wagon you will be traveling in, how much food and supplies you will be bringing in a certain amount of money. One family member, the treasurer, will be responsible for the amount of money spent on the trip, and track the expenses. Another member of the family, the leader of the wagon train, is responsible for deciding where to settle, the route the family will take, and the supplies taken. Family member three is the journalist, who will document all decisions and write the final report on the route, expenses and supplies of the journey, and the wagon that your group has decided to take (including the construction of the wagon, the cost, the maintenance needed, and places where the wagon is sold) that will be handed in to your teacher.

To do this, you must research information; some sites have been suggested in later pages to help you start. After you have decided how you will travel, you will face obstacles along the way. Make sure you know how a wagon is built so if it breaks down, you can fix it.

Directions

1. Get in groups of three, and decide the jobs each will do (Resources are on the following pages):
 - a) Group leader – is responsible for researching the popular destinations, types of wagons available, the different routes on the Oregon – California Trail, and the supplies wagoners brought with them.
 - b) Treasurer – is responsible for researching the amount of money that most pioneers had to begin with, the cost of supplies and repairs in “jumping-off” towns, and the cost of the different wagons.
 - c) Journalist – is responsible for researching best times to begin the journey, the daily lives on the wagons, and an ordinary day’s journey for the pioneers.
2. Each group member shares their findings with the group. The group leader decides what type of wagon you will use, and what your family will need on the trip including food and water, clothes, and supplies. Remember, your wagon determines how much money you have left to purchase supplies, and the amount of supplies your wagon can hold.
3. Group leader decides what exactly, your family will be able to take; the treasurer calculates the amount of money spent; the journalist records exactly what you are taking, at what time your group is leaving, the amount spent on supplies, and why you decided to take what you did.
4. The Journalist writes a report on the transportation of the pioneers, focusing mainly on the wagon your group chose (the construction, how much the wagon was designed to carry, and the cost of the wagon). Include some parts about the provisions loaded in the wagon, when the pioneers left, the routes they took, and where they settled. Your report will be graded by the teacher, based on its clarity and how much your peers were able to learn about the transportation on the prairies.

Resources

The Conestoga Wagon. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. (n.d.)

<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/ppet/wagon/page1.asp?secid=31>

This website was very detailed in describing the Conestoga wagon. It presented the facts clearly and precisely, making it easy to obtain information from it.

Hughey, Richard. (18 Nov. 1998). *Prairie schooner designed to ford streams, negotiate mountain trails.*

<http://www.mtdemocrat.com/columist/hughey13.shtml>

This article was detailed on the workings of the 49ers' prairie schooners. It includes the construction of the wagon and some history.

Jumping Off. (n.d.) <http://www.isu.edu/%7Etrinch/Jumpingoff.html>

This site includes comprehensive details on the beginning of the journey. It includes details about "jumping off" and wagon making.

Prairie Schooners. (n.d.) <http://www.endoftheoregontrail.org/wagons.html>

This site has details regarding the Prairie Schooner, and its construction. Additionally, it includes a great diagram of the wagon, and all of its parts are explained.

Provisions for the Trail. (n.d.) <http://www.endoftheoregontrail.org/outfit.html>

This site is the place to visit if you need info on the provisions that the pioneers brought with them. It includes the cost, and the amount of supplies.

Resources (cont.)

Types of Covered Wagons. (n.d.)

<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/trailofthe49ers/wagons.htm>

This site has three informative drawings of the types of wagons. It also includes a supply list, and quotes and tips from the movement.

Volume 6, Chapter 11-- Conestoga Wagons. (n.d.) <http://www.everettarea.org/tales/v06/v06c11.htm>

This website used simple language to illustrate a vivid picture of the Conestoga. It tells much about the parts of the Conestoga.

Wagons. (n.d.) <http://www.promotega.org/csu30026/wagons.htm>

This site was not very thorough on the wagons, but it did state some very interesting facts. Though not comprehensive, it did include the basics of the farm wagons.

Wagons. (n.d.) <http://204.234.22.1/SDGI/Newell/Wagons.html>

This site includes drawings of the Conestoga and Emigrant wagons. Additionally, it tells the weight of these wagons.

The Wagon. (n.d.) <http://www.lonehand.com/wagon.htm>

This site is useful for the group leader, and includes everything that the pioneers packed in their wagons. It additionally describes the actual wagon.

Characteristics of Prairie Schooner

Prairie Schooner Measurements:

- 4 feet wide and 10-12 feet long
- 23 feet long with the tongue and neck yoke attached
- 10 feet tall with the bonnet attached
- Wheel base 5 feet wide
- Box or bed was 2-3 feet (tar was added for sturdiness and was made from hardwood)
- Rear wheels were 50 inches in diameter
- Front wheels were 44 inches in diameter
- Weighed 1300 pounds empty
- The wagon was usually pulled by 4-6 oxen or 6-10 mules. The front wheels were smaller and allowed for sharper turns. Each wheel had iron tires to protect the wooden rims. The bonnets were made of cotton that was doubled over to keep water out.
- Many repairs had to be made along the long journey. The wagon was equipped with a jockey box that held extra bolts, pins, nails and other tools to help make repairs. The wagons were also filled with clothing, food, toys, and family heirlooms. Spare parts, tongues, axles and spokes were stored in the wagon box since these parts were most commonly broken. Spare grease, ropes, water were also stored for later use.
- Most pioneers used prairie schooners because of their light weights. Being a smaller size compared to the Conestoga wagon, it did not kill the oxen before the end of the trail.

Characteristics Conestoga Wagon

Conestoga Wagon Measurements:

- Bed, sloping upward from the middle = 16 feet in length x four feet in width x four feet in depth
- Flooring and side boards = 1/2 inch to 5/8 of an inch thick
- A dip toward the center took the weight of the load off the end gates.
- The end gates were held in position by a chain that allowed it to be dropped for easy loading and unloading.
- The number of hoops = could vary from six to thirteen
- These hoops were stapled to the side boards which supported the cloth bonnet.
- This fabric was often soaked in linseed oil for water-proofing.
- Front wheels = 3 ½ feet high
- Rear wheels = 4 – 4 ½ feet high
- Axles and crossbeams were made from tough hickory wood
- Iron tire rims = 2 – 6 inches
- Entire wagon = 26 feet long x 11 feet wide
- Weight = between 3000 – 3500 pounds
- Horses value = \$170 - 200
- The rear axle was where the jack, feed, water, and tar buckets were located.
- It took 4 labor worker's money earned to well equip the wagon. Horses could cover twelve to fourteen miles a day.

Characteristics Farm Wagon

Farm Wagon Measurements:

- Used to carry travelers' belongings to Oregon or California
- Ends were straight up and down
- Floor was not curved, but load was so tight, it could not shift
- capable of hauling from 1600 to 2500 pounds.
- Protected with bows reaching about 5 feet above the wagon bed
- Covered with some type of heavy, rain proof canvas-like material.
- The covered length at the top was 12-13 feet long
- Spare parts, tongues, spokes, and axles were carried, often slung under the wagon bed. Grease buckets, water barrels, heavy rope (at least 100 feet was recommended), and chains completed the running gear accessories. When store-bought grease, necessary for wheel bearings was exhausted, boiled buffalo or wolf grease served the purpose.
- The wagons were lighter in weight, able to turn in a small area, and easy to break down for river and mountain crossing. The disadvantage was that it had limited space to carry supplies needed.

Prices

On the trail:

- Indian moccasins: \$0.50
- Tanned buffalo hide: \$4.00
- Crossing bridges: between \$0.15 - \$0.50 per wagon
- Ferrying rivers: \$2.00 - \$5.00 per wagon
- Resupplying: at least twice the price of items back East.

For more prices visit <http://www.endoftheoregontrail.org/outfit.html>

*Reminder

Recommended for each adult: 150 lbs. of flour, 20 lbs. of corn meal, 50 lbs. of bacon, 40 lbs. of sugar, 10 lbs. of coffee, 15 lbs. of dried fruit, 5 lbs. of salt, half a pound of saleratus (baking soda), 2 lbs. of tea, 5 lbs. of rice, and 15 lbs. of beans

- Prices were generally more expensive in the West. Prices for farm produce were low during the summer and fall and rose during the winter and spring. Prices for imported goods dropped when several ships carrying such cargo arrived within a few weeks of one another. If struck with gold, you would be able to sell and live well.

Wagons Word Search

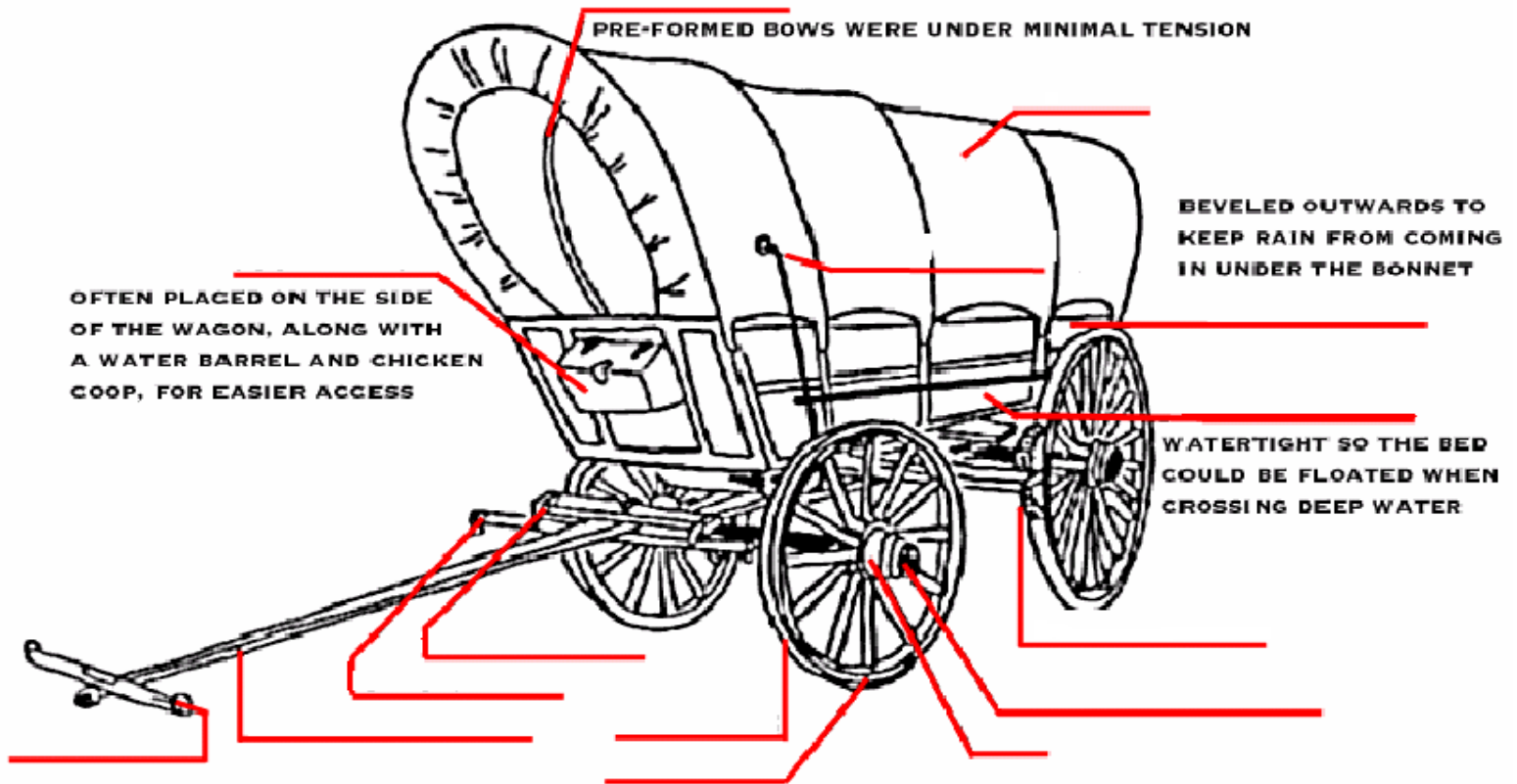
A L B Z I Q N N C C C Y A I O I S O Y T Y T N O E B V C I W
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J I H G Y W M W E N E O Y Z C E A A Y N H P F P Q B W O K Y
A G Z M V I R K N I A R T T X I Q K N S A Q U V A R I O H T
S Y V N V N A L T X B U A P L R X N A D B M J A K Q K S B H
I P S Q P R F T I O R Q S X I A O T I G C V E P E K R U S U
T B S O B J U F L T M C N H E G X R W R O A Z W G O P G L L
S N O I S I V O R P H R Q R A V V Y F Y P T R V H R I Q B Y
Y G F Q N X O A L O E V E W E M I G R A N T S T D D L Q D M
V T R H G E N V O Z J Z D E M Z N L V B F S W E M R O E T Z
U X G P Z L I N M G E N X Q N D Q J X T W S X R N A T M K I
M E V R X P E G L B I G U C D O C C V F C P I A C O O A O D
Q Q M G X R I H K W C Z W J G R I R O K X S S D L B C H C S
V R E E N O G A W J K U W Y X A J P R D S D R Q K Y Z P T P
A T T Q J O Q Q N W T M S M U B A P D M O R M O N Z L N V W
B E R P G B K I H E R C N A M Q F F I G N I H L H A O E E C
C N V Q L A F D E M I U R T N K M T N K J B T L G L S I I B
Z N M F L A G L J N G L U N S S Z X A T M P S P C M D O B F
E O V E P J R U M V A O W M Z L G Q R Y O C O S V X W Z L X
J B B X V Y S C C X N P Y P G M H W Y O B E N Z D I E A I Z
Y V S W I P S T A W J V F L L N G X K V H M A G G U R U G D
T M A A D M O R H R L G H V T V E W Y W R O F B D D W F N R
K K X B B L B Y O R K E F T C J C B M Q P A P T E U F M J G
Y D C G O K D B T J W Y W Z L G E N U Q E L I H J L S Z Z X

Words to Find

BONNET	BOWS	BRAKES
CALIFORNIA	CONESTOGA	EMIGRANT
HAME	HANDCART	LAZYBOARD
MORMON	ORDINARY	OREGON
PILOT	PIONEER	PROVISIONS
SCHOONER	TRAIL	TRAIN
WAGONEER	WINDWAGON	

Wagon Parts Quiz

Directions: Fill in the blanks of this Prairie Schooner (red lines) using words from the Word Bank on the next page



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From: <http://www.endoftheoregontrail.org/wagon.gif>

Wagon Parts Quiz Word Bank

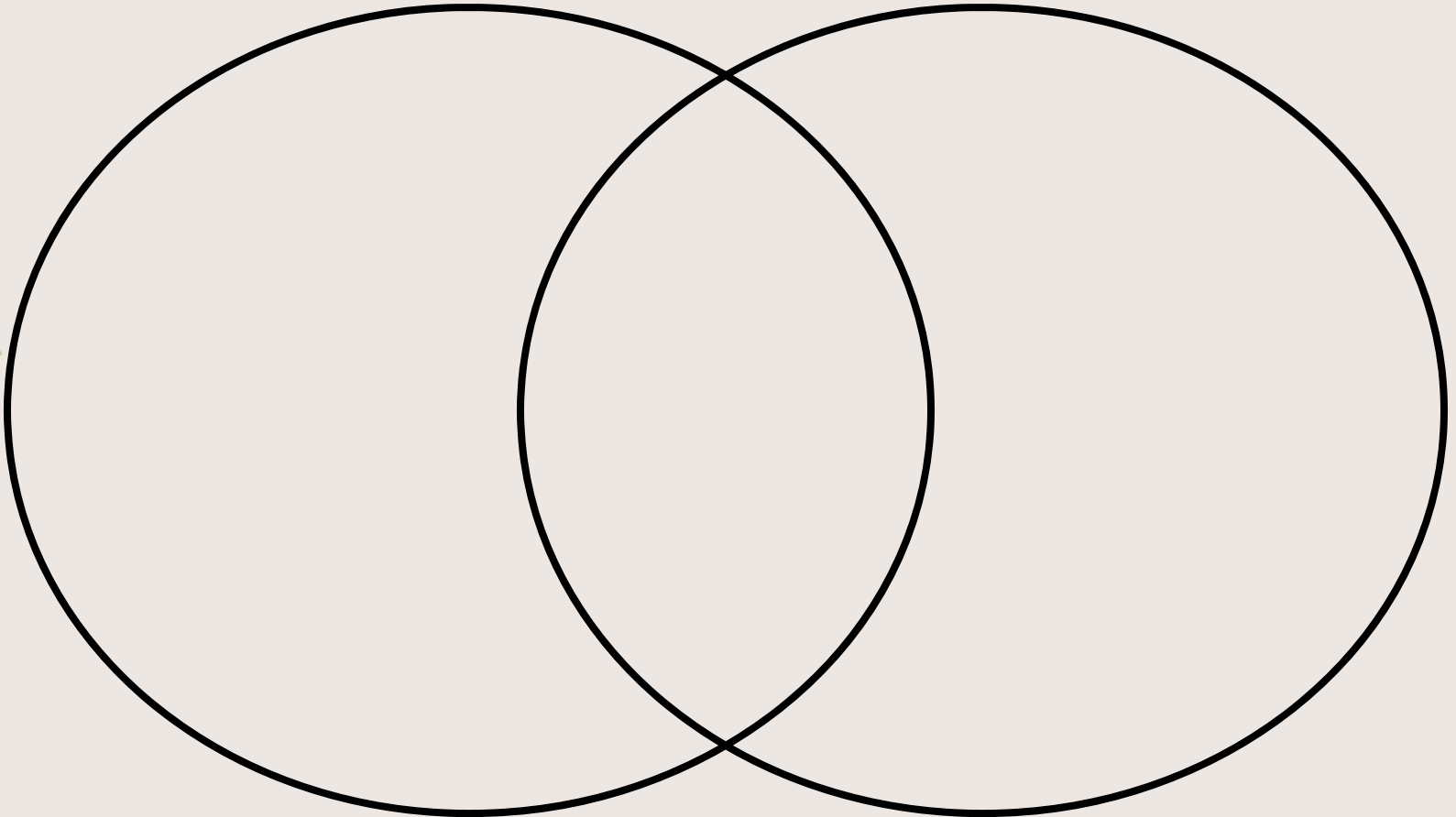
- Jockey Box
- Wagon-bow
- Bonnet
- Brake Lever
- Side Boards
- Yankee Bed
- Brake Block
- Iron Axle
- Hub
- Iron Tire
- Felly Rim
- Singletree or Doubletree
- Singletree or Doubletree
- Falling Tongue
- Neck Yoke

Venn Diagram

Compare and Contrast the Farm wagon and the Conestoga wagon.
Include at least 5 facts of each and 5 facts for both.

Farm Wagon

Conestoga Wagon



Final Test

Wagons of the Westward Movement Final Exam

This test is made up of 3 sections: multiple choice, fill-in, and vocabulary. This exam will test your knowledge of the Wagons used in the Westward Movement.

1. What was the Conestoga Wagon based on?
 - a. British Trade Vessels
 - b. The “Prairie Schooner”
 - c. Palatinate carts
 - d. French Royal Carriages

2. How many horses were used to pull the Conestoga Wagon?
 - a. nine
 - b. sixteen
 - c. four
 - d. six

3. What was the main role of the Conestoga Wagon?
 - a. To transport freight
 - b. To transport people
 - c. To transport weapons
 - d. To control riots

4. Every Wagon man would never leave without his:
 - a. Map
 - b. Axle and Wheel
 - c. Whip
 - d. Wagon Jack

Final Test (cont.)

5. What were the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints known as?
 - a. Mormons
 - b. Normans
 - c. Indians
 - d. Christians
6. What were the long lines of wagons called?
 - a. Prairie Schooners
 - b. Wagon Lines
 - c. Wagon Trains
 - d. None of the above

Word Bank

Westward Movement

Prairie Schooner

Conestoga Wagon

Farm Wagon

Windwagon

Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks with one of the words in the Word Bank.

7. The _____ was a time when people moved west.
8. _____ was a covered wagon used for transporting freight in the colonies.
9. Many poor people used _____ to get to the Wild West.
10. A _____ used wind to power itself.

Final Test (cont.)

Fill-in

Fill in the blanks with the answer that best completes statement.

11. The _____ was a small version of the Conestoga Wagon.
12. The emigrant farm wagon could hold up to _____ of cargo.
13. The windwagon owned by _____ was fairly successful and traveled quickly before it crashed and was abandoned.
14. ____ (number of companies) companies of Mormon pullcarts traveled in 1856.
15. The body of the Conestoga wagon was made with a _____ toward the back to balance the wagon

Rubric & Lesson Plan

1st Day

Pass out information on wagons.

Instruct students to get into their “groups” and decide which group member does which jobs.

Use the internet to view resource links.

2nd Day

Continue to view resource links.

Take notes on the internet sites according to the student’s jobs.

After the students have shared their info with their group, pass out Wagon Parts Quiz. Allow students 5-10 minutes to finish, working in their groups, without using the internet.

Grading: 15 questions.

14-15 correct	– 10 pts	A
12-13 correct	– 8 pts	B
10-11 correct	– 6 pts	C
8-9 correct	– 4 pts	D
7 or below	– 2 pts	F

Students who got a D or F must define all of the terms they missed.

3rd Day

Write the group report on the transportation (Journalist’s job) due tomorrow.

Students must prepare for tomorrow’s individual test.

Rubric & Lesson Plan (cont.)

4th Day

Group leaders hand in their reports to the teacher. Teacher passes them back randomly to groups, with no group receiving their own. Groups must read the other group's report and add constructive comments if necessary. Turn reports back in to the teacher after 15 minutes. Teacher grades the reports (100 points):

Clarity:

30 points: No grammar and spelling mistakes, and easily understandable; the information flows together in a logical sequence.

20 points: 1 page of good information, 3-4 grammar and spelling mistakes, understandable; info scattered in no order.

10 points: ½ page of information. Hurriedly done. Many mistakes, hard to understand.

Content:

70 points: An outstanding report. 1½ - 2 pages of good information, explains thoroughly the routes, construction, parts, cost of wagon and supplies; documents all decisions that the group made, and why they did that. Includes great research, and much effort. Has unusual and hard-to-find facts, including the time that is best for the wagoners to start their journey, etc.

50 points: A well-rounded report. 1- 1½ pages of useful info, explains the overall aspects of the wagons, and includes how the group made their decisions, backed up by some data; lacking details. Good research, effort, and few unusual facts.

30 points: A mediocre report. ½ - 1 page of information, that somewhat explains the wagon. Does not explain how the group made their decisions, and has almost no factual data. Some research, little effort, no unusual facts.

10 points: Poor quality report. Less than ½ page of information, not factual, and does not explain the wagon, or group decisions. Little research, almost no effort.

Pass out final test. Allow 20 minutes to finish the 15 questions.

Test is worth 150 points. Each question is worth 10 points.

Total possible points for this whole unit: 260 points

235- 260 pts – A (Good job! You are an official Wagon Scholar)

210- 234 pts – B (You can be the cargo of a wagon)

183- 209 pts – C (You can be the wagon)

158- 182 pts – D (You got run over by a wagon...Good Luck!)

157 pts or less – F (You can be food for the Donner party...Tough Luck!)

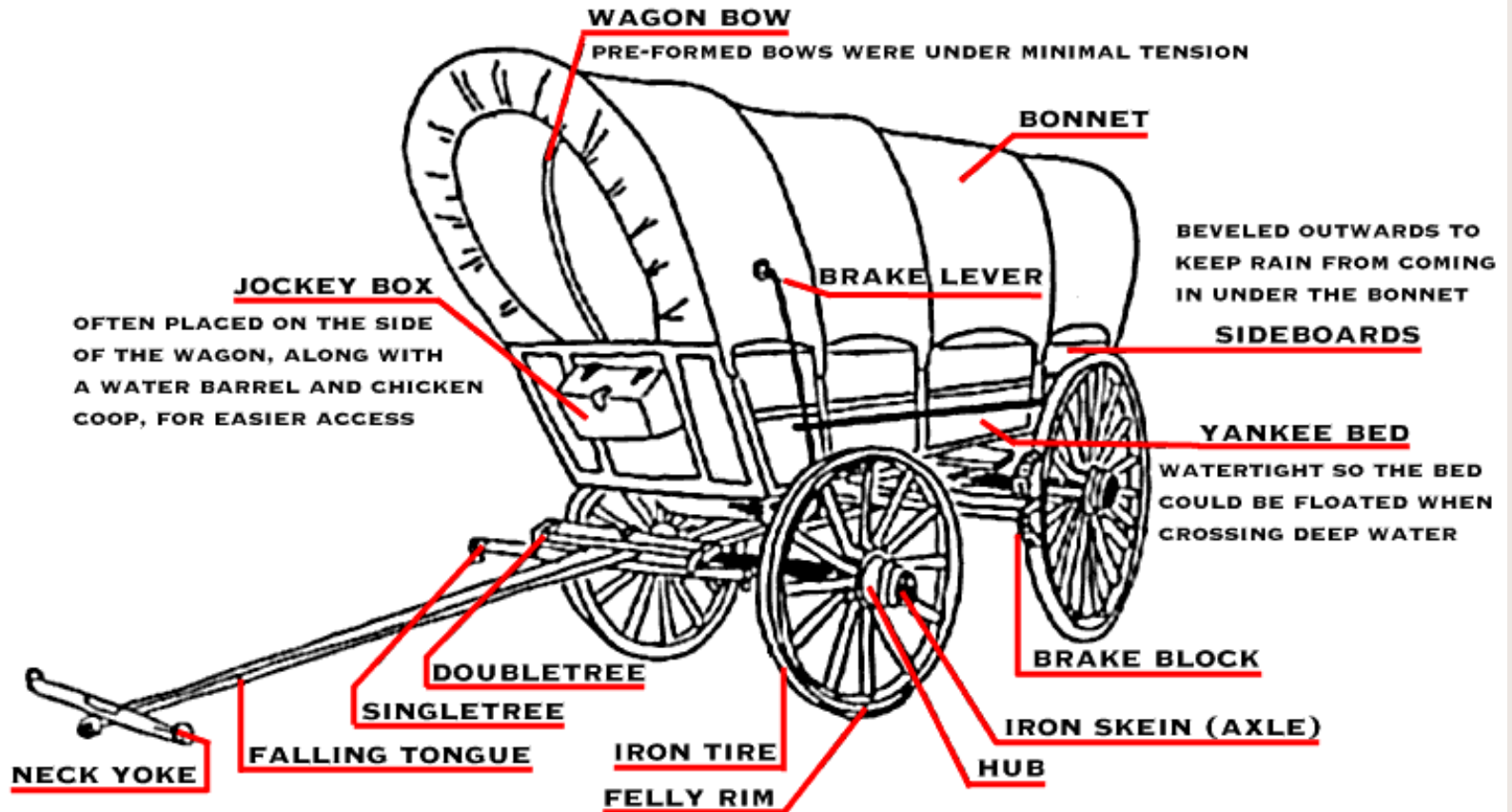
Answers for Wagon Word Search

+ + + + + + + + + C + + + + + + + O + + + + + + + + + + +
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 + + + + R + + + + + S + + + O + + G C + + + + + + + + + + + + +
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(Over, Down, Direction)

- BONNET(2,26,N)
- BOWS(29,11,NW)
- BRAKES(5,13,NE)
- CALIFORNIA(10,1,SW)
- CONESTOGA(27,19,NW)
- EMIGRANT(15,15,E)
- HAME(28,19,N)
- HANDCART(17,8,SE)
- LAZYBOARD(26,23,N)
- MORMON(20,21,E)
- ORDINARY(19,19,S)
- OREGON(18,1,SE)
- PILOT(27,13,S)
- PIONEER(18,20,NW)
- PROVISIONS(10,14,W)
- SCHOONER(13,12,SW)
- TRAIL(19,7,SW)
- TRAIN(13,10,W)
- WAGONEER(9,20,W)
- WINDWAGON(10,19,NE)

Answers to the Wagon Parts “Fill in the Blanks”



WAGON DESIGN COURTESY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

Answers to Venn Diagram

Farm Wagons:

Used to carry travelers' belongings to Oregon or California

Ends were straight up and down

Floor was not curved, but load was so tight, it could not shift

Could carry 4000 pounds – large

Could carry 2000-3000 pounds - small

Conestoga Wagons:

Top: 28 feet long

Ends slanted outward from bottom

Covering provided protection from rain

Floor was curved so load wouldn't shift

Could carry 5000 pounds

Most used on Santa Fe trail – trail for trading

Both:

Came in 3 parts: cover, running gear and undercarriage, and wagon box

Wheels were part of running gear

Back wheels were bigger than front wheels

Pulled by mules, oxen, or horses

Made of wood

Different kinds of wood were used for different parts

Hickory were used for tongue and bows

Spokes were oak

Iron was used for axle and tire

Early wagons didn't have brakes, but later ones did

Answers to the Wagon Final Test

1.c

2.d

3.a

4.d

5.a

6.c

7.Westward Movement

8.Conestoga Wagon

9.Farm Wagon

10.Windwagon

11.Prairie Schooner

12.three-quarters of a ton

13.Samuel Peppard

14.Five

15.Curve