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# Transcontinental Railroad

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*Decorah High School – Decorah School District*

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# Transcontinental Railroad

Created by: Tyler Balow  
Decorah High School – Decorah School District

Grade Level (Req.): 9th-12th grade	Content Area (Req.): American History, Human Geography	Unit (Opt.):
Connections to Other Disciplines (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		
Time Frame (Req.): 1-2 class periods	Goal (Req.): To understand how the transcontinental railroad began and its construction.	
	Objective (Req.): Students will map their own routes for the transcontinental railroad. Students will read and analyze several maps in order to design their routes based on the geographical factors.	
Materials Needed (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of U.S. population density from 1860</li> <li>• Map of the U.S. and territories from 1860</li> <li>• Topographic map of the United States</li> <li>• Worksheets with a blank map of the United States – need to be created</li> <li>• Information for lecture (found at <a href="http://www.tcrr.com/">http://www.tcrr.com/</a>)</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	New Vocabulary (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	
Anticipatory Set/Introduction [Inquiry Question is required] (Req.): This lesson should follow prior lessons on pioneer life in the U.S. At the beginning of class, have students discuss with a neighbor the following question: How were the locations of roads in their community or state decided? Point out that there can often be debate on where the location of the specific road should be placed depending on geography, ownership of land, etc.		
Instructional Sequence/Procedure (Req.): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pass out a blank map of the U.S., a map of U.S. population density from 1860 and a topographic map of the U.S. to each student.</li> <li>2. Have students create 3 possible routes for a transcontinental railroad that they think is the most logical based on their understanding of the maps.</li> <li>3. Have each student pick what route they believe would be the easiest and most efficient to build.</li> <li>4. Have students share their reasoning for the route they picked in small groups. Then as a class, discuss what factors would be considered when deciding where to build a railroad.</li> <li>5. Complete a short lecture on the debate of where to build the transcontinental railroad and the impact that the railroad had on the U.S.</li> <li>6.</li> <li>7.</li> <li>8.</li> <li>9.</li> </ol>		

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Formative Evaluation (Req.): Teachers should observe the classroom, listen to small group discussions and be available to answer questions while group work is being completed.

Assessment (Req.): Guiding the in-class discussion should provide teachers a time to evaluate students understanding of map reading. Teachers may also collect student-created maps to see how individual students interpreted various maps.

Iowa Core Curriculum Standards Used (Req.):

- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand the use of geographic tools to locate and analyze information about people, places, and environments.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how human actions modify the environment and how the environment affects humans.
- Geography, grade 9-12: Understand how culture affects the interaction of human populations through time and space.
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Common Core Curriculum Standards Used (Opt.):

- Speaking and Listening, grade 6-12: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups and teacher-led) with diverse partners on specific grade level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
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NGS Standards Used (Req.):

- How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective
- The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human population on Earth's surface
- How human actions modify the physical environment
- How physical systems affect human systems
- How to apply geography to interpret the past
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Five Themes of Geography Used (Req.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Location</li><li>• Place</li><li>• Human-Environmental Interaction</li><li>• Movement</li><li>• Region</li></ul>	School District Standards and Benchmarks (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>
21 <sup>st</sup> Century Universal Constructs (Opt.):	
Other Disciplinary Standards (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	
Other Essential Information (Opt.):	
Other Resources (Opt.): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li><li>•</li></ul>	