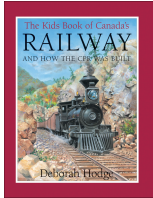


CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR

THE KIDS BOOK OF CANADA'S RAILWAY

BY DEBORAH HODGE



Use the following classroom activities to accompany your reading of *The Kids Book of Canada's Railway* by Deborah Hodge. The activities are designed to engage your students in thinking about the time in Canadian history when the first transcontinental railway was built (late 1800s). Free to print and share these activities with your colleagues. Thank you for your interest!

LANGUAGE ARTS

Ask your students to:

Imagine you are a surveyor, railway navvy, or a homesteader on the Canadian prairies and write a journal entry describing your typical day.

Imagine you are a Chinese navvy building the railway in British Columbia in the late 1800s. Write a letter to your family at home in China describing your life and work. What are the challenges you face?

Write opinion pieces, or stage a debate or dramatic performance with students taking differing points of view on the building of the railway across the Canada. Choose a variety of roles or positions including: surveyors, navvies, Metis, Aboriginal people, CPR and Canadian government.

Make a postcard with an illustration on one side and a message on the other describing your journey as a passenger on the first transcontinental train across Canada on July 4, 1886.

Compile a list of old railway terms, slang and definitions.

GEOGRAPHY

On a wall map of Canada, trace the route of the CPR — from Montreal to Vancouver. Point out the location of major cities in Canada (many of which developed as a result of the CPR)

Note the geography of various areas (Canadian Shield, Rocky Mountains, prairies etc.) and how they might have affected the construction of the CPR track.

HISTORY

Make a chart comparing "Canada Before the Railway" and "Canada Today." Include information on: population, areas of settlement, wages, transportation, immigration, communication and so on.

In a written or oral report, compare the living and working conditions and wages for different groups of railway workers: Chinese navvies, European labourers, and English speaking workers.

Many of British Columbia's first Chinese citizens came to Canada to help build the railway. What happened to these workers after the railway was built? Research the history of Chinese citizens in British Columbia over the last 100 years. What challenges did they face? What contributions did they make to Canada? Present your findings to the class. (See the *Canadian Encyclopedia* or the *Encyclopedia of British Columbia* for information on Chinese immigration to Canada.)

Take a field trip to a train museum. Go for a ride on an old steam train.

SCIENCE

Research the history and development of the steam engine and present your findings in a written or oral report.

Make a labeled diagram of a steam engine and its working parts.

Compare today's trains with those of the early railway days. What kind of engines power the trains? How fast do they go? What do they carry? Consider trains around the world. How are they alike and different from Canadian trains?

Use an atlas to determine average temperatures and precipitation for various seasons across Canada. Consider how the weather might have affected the working conditions of surveyors and navvies.

FINE ARTS

Paint or draw a scene from the early days of Canada's railway.

Design a brochure or poster advertising travel on the early CPR trains.

Build a model trestle or railway bridge with popsicle sticks or toothpicks.

Sing or listen to old railway songs such as "I've Been Working on the Railroad."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on Deborah's books or school visits, please see her website. Thank you for your interest!

WWW.DEBORAHHODGE.COM