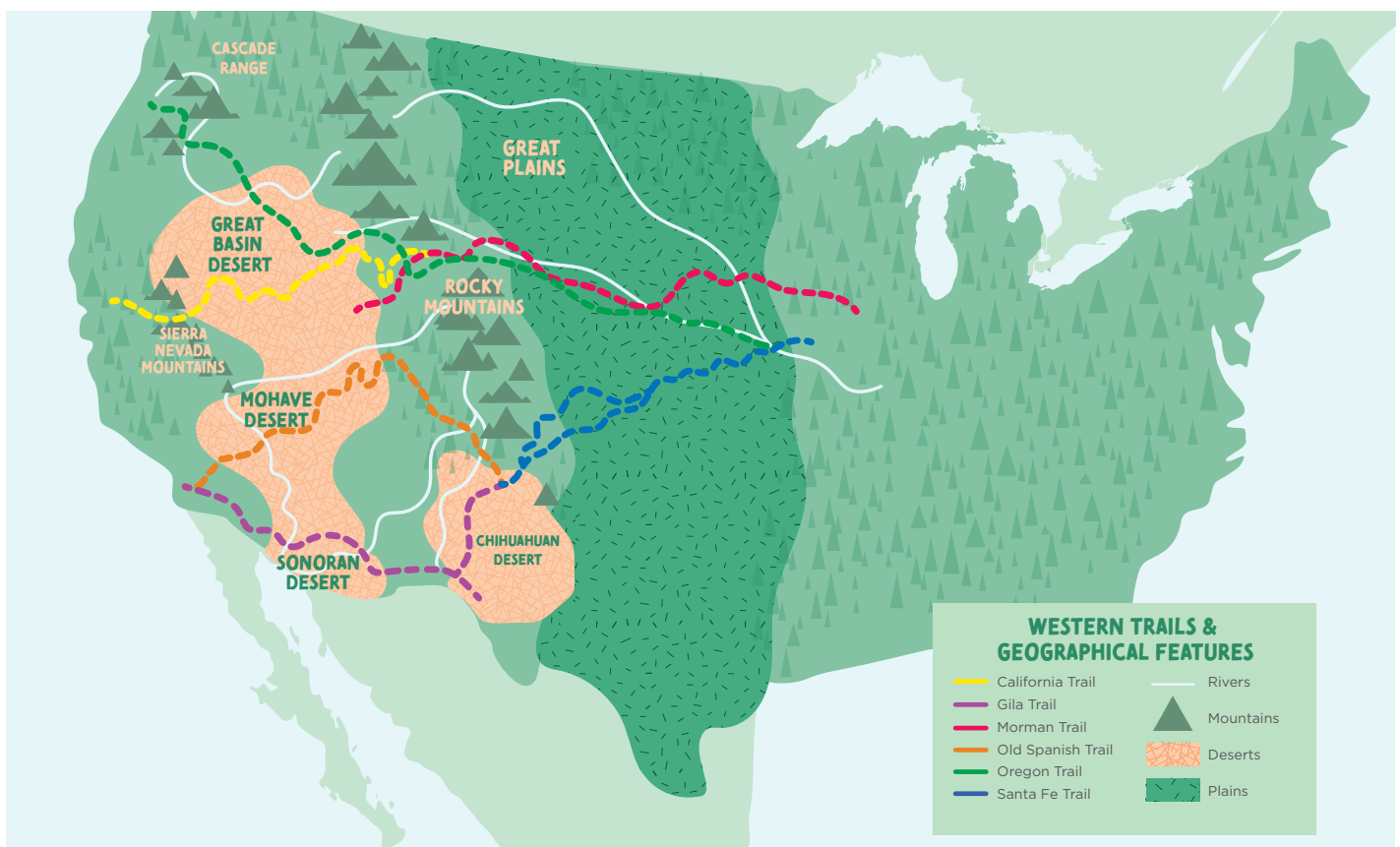


Westward Expansion

Six Trails West

PART 1 – Millions of *pioneers*, both American-born and *immigrants* from other countries, moved westward from the *original thirteen colonies* across the country during the 19th century. These brave pioneers journeyed west for about five to six months along *overland trails* such as the California Trail, Gila River Trail, Mormon Trail, Old Spanish Trail, Oregon Trail, and the Santa Fe Trail for many different reasons. The journey was uncomfortable, physically demanding, and *hazardous* with limited food and water along most of the trails. Read the “Six Trails West” summaries to learn more about how and why people moved west during the 1800s. Please look for definitions of the italicized words in the box to the right of the trail.



Glossary

Pioneers: people who explore a place or the first people of his or her culture to go to live in a place

Immigrants: people who move from one country to another country

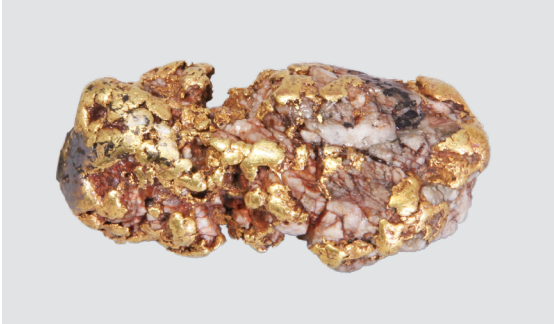
Overland trails: any of several trails of westward migration in the United States

Hazardous: risky, dangerous

Original thirteen colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia

Westward Expansion

Six Trails West



Gold nugget. Autry Museum of the American West; 91.221.583

California Trail: The California Trail was a 2,000-mile journey through *arid* plains, mountains, and vast deserts from Independence, Missouri to Sacramento, California. The last part of the trail was difficult traveling through 40 miles of desert and then over the Sierra Nevada mountains. In use since 1845, over 250,000 people walked this dusty route to look for gold in California during the *California Gold Rush*.

Arid: extremely dry, not a lot of rain

California Gold Rush: the time between 1848-1855 when people from all over the world rushed to California in search of gold



Concord Mail Stagecoach, circa 1855. Autry Museum of the American West; 93.21.261

Gila River Trail: The Gila River Trail was a 750-mile journey through arid desert from Santa Fe, New Mexico to San Diego, California. It was one of the oldest trails in the United States. *Artifacts* at least 15,000 years old were found near this trail. Mountain men also used this trail to trap beavers. Unlike the other trails heading west, this trail was never used by *covered wagons*. *Stagecoaches* and *pack animals*, like mules and oxen, were used to carry goods and people along this route of *commerce* and travel.

Artifacts: any objects made by human beings

Covered wagons: large wagons with high, bonnet-like canvas tops

Stagecoaches: large, closed, horse-drawn (or mule-drawn) wooden carriages used to carry passengers or mail along a regular route

Pack animals: animals used to carry heavy loads

Commerce: the activity of buying and selling something



Andrew P. Hill (1853-1922), *Crossing the Plains*, circa early 1900s, gelatin silver print. Autry Museum of the American West; P.12974

Mormon Trail: The Mormon Trail was a 1,300-mile journey through arid plains and high mountains from Nauvoo, Illinois to Salt Lake City, Utah. In use since 1846, 14,000 travelers set out to find a new home in the West after experiencing *persecution* from their neighbors for practicing the Mormon religion. Mormons were very organized and set up camps along the way to make it easier for future travelers. Many people also pulled two-wheeled handcarts along this trail to carry food, supplies, and personal belongings to Utah where they could start a new life.

Persecution: treated unfairly and cruelly

Westward Expansion

Six Trails West



F. H. Maude (1858–1959), *The Canyon of the Little Colorado River in Arizona*, circa 1890s, gelatin silver print. Autry Museum of the American West; P.36149

Old Spanish Trail: The Old Spanish Trail was a 1,200-mile journey through arid deserts, high mountains, and deep canyons from Santa Fe, New Mexico to Los Angeles, California. Native American trails were first used by Spanish explorers as early as 1520, but the full trail was established in 1829. The trail became mainly a route for traders and merchants using *mule-laden pack trains*. It was considered the most difficult of all the *trade* routes ever *established* in the United States.

Mule-laden: mules that are weighed down with a load

Pack trains: groups of animals, used to carry heavy loads, that are moving in a line

Trade: switch something for something else

Established: started something that was not there before



Samuel Augustus Mitchell (1792–1868), *A New Map of Texas, Oregon, and California: With the Regions Adjoining*, 1846. Autry Museum of the American West; 90.253.289

Oregon Trail: The Oregon Trail, nicknamed “The Great Migration of 1843,” was a 2,000-mile journey through the arid plains and mountains from Independence, Missouri to Oregon City, Oregon. After Lewis and Clark explored the West, *fur trappers* and Christian *missionaries* traveled along the Oregon Trail. In 1843, 1,000 people traveled this trail by covered wagons to move west. Bad weather, disease, and accidents made the traveling difficult. But at the end of the trail, many of these travelers received free land.

Fur trappers: people who hunt and trap animals

Missionaries: people who are sent by a church to travel and tell other people about their religion, teach them, or help them



Santa Fe Trail: The Santa Fe Trail was a 900-mile journey through arid plains, deserts, and mountains from Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico. In use since 1821, this trail was used primarily for trade opportunities with Mexico. Traders traveled on this trail in wagons and on pack animals such as mules. This was a very dangerous trail as there was a shortage of both food and water.

Benjamin West Kilburn (1827–1909), *Burro Pack Train, on the way to Leadville, Col. U.S.A.*, circa late 1800s; paper, albumen print, mounted on curved cardboard. Autry Museum of the American West; 90.253.1764.2

Westward Expansion Six Trails West

PART 2 – PICK A TRAIL

You will be going on a journey west. What trail will you take? Pick ONE trail from the Six Trails West and write down information about the trail in the space below or on a separate piece of paper.

Trail name:

How many miles the trail is:

Reason why people traveled the trail:

What transportation people used to travel the trail:

Geographical features of the trail:

What people experienced along the way:

Geographical features: features on the earth's surface like rivers, mountains, deserts, or plains

PART 3 – PACKING LIST

Prepare for your journey west! Imagine you are traveling west during the 19th century. On a piece of paper or in the space below, make a packing list (words or pictures) of the items that you will bring with you. Only include the items that you will need to survive.

Food and Drink: (Think about food and drink that can stay for a long period of time or can be made easily while traveling.)

Clothing: (Think about clothing for different types of weather—cold, dusty, hot sun.)

Nighttime Items: (Think about lamp, blanket, pillow, tent, and more.)

Tools: (Think about tools for cooking, eating, drinking; tools for fixing things; medicine.)

One extra item of your choice:

Westward Expansion Six Trails West

PART 4 – JOURNAL ENTRY

Read the journal entry sample before creating your own journal entry.

Journal Entry Sample

August 10, 1850

We was on the trail, sun 1 hour high. Traveled 25 miles. The road has been very crooked, stony and mountainous. Tired. Nearly all of us have to walk and we all feel very tired. We have come all day without any grass and 12 miles. We found no water. Our horses is about beat out, and tonight nothing but browse for them to eat. We got a few lbs. flour at 62-1/2 cents today and enough pork for our dinner tonight. We ate all our flour up. I believe we are about 25 miles from the diggings.

-George Bonniwell

Write a Journal Entry

Share what you've learned about the trail by writing a journal entry about your experience along that trail. Use a separate piece of paper or write in the space below. Use complete sentences and include the following information:

- Reason you are traveling west
- Who is traveling with you
- How many miles you will travel
- What transportation you use
- What you brought with you
- Geographical features you travel across
- What you experience along the way
- Did your packing list help?
- How was your transportation?
- How you feel during your journey

We are traveling on the _____ Trail because _____
