

*Oregon:
Adventures in Time and Place*



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Course Rationale:

What does it mean to be an Oregonian? When asked a question like this, some images of Oregon may come to mind: Mount Hood, the Columbia Gorge, salmon, the coast, trees, Rose Garden, and many more. Fourth graders in Oregon have the privilege of learning about this wonderful place that we call home. They will read about the mountains, valleys, lakes, and rivers, but they will also learn about the rich history of our state – about the people who lived here hundreds of years ago and the people who live here today. At the conclusion of this curriculum, a fourth grader will know more about Oregon and will also have some new ideas about what it means to be an Oregonian.

Generally speaking, fourth graders are at a stage in their life where they are eager to learn new things and put into practice reading and writing skills that they have been working on mastering in previous years. The group of students that I will be teaching in fourth grade at St. Clare in Portland this coming school year primarily come from middle to upper-middle class homes where a great deal of emphasis is placed on education. The opportunity for these students to study and learn about Oregon is very exciting because the possibilities are endless!

The Oregon curriculum is designed to provide students with the history from explorers and settlers to farmers, loggers, and office workers. This curriculum hopes to inspire students and allow them to realize that they are the ones that will continue to make Oregon a strong, growing state in the years to come.

My personal philosophy of education lies in learning with my students and respecting them as individual learners. The opportunity to teach about Oregon is something that I look forward to because there are numerous activities that I believe will

inspire the students and instill in them an excitement for learning. There are several field trips that I would like to incorporate throughout the curriculum. Any opportunity for students to be engaged in a hands-on experience where they are able to soak in their surroundings and actively participate is both wonderful and valuable. I also believe that there are many areas throughout the curriculum where respect and tolerance is a theme. This is a time where you can help instill the idea into students of respecting individuals for their accomplishments and differences.

Description of Assessment and Involvement:

In order to meet the needs of all your learners it is important to have a variety of activities and be willing to make accommodations for them when necessary. Providing a variety of assessment strategies is crucial for the different learning styles that you encounter as a teacher. One strategy that I have found to work well is the use of rubrics for assignments and projects. In using rubrics you are able to clearly state your expectations and there are no gray areas for students. I also think that it is important to find out what your students are interested in and provide them with the opportunity to explore their interests. Allowing students to choose a topic for research is just one way to do this. Most importantly teachers need to be aware of their students' needs and be willing to go the extra step to ensure success for every child.

Course and Unit Goals:

- Students will identify Oregon's four regions and define them by their landforms, climates, and resources.

- Students will discover that Native Americans and early explorers paved the way for future settlement of Oregon.
- Students will describe how settlers came to Oregon over the Oregon Trail and worked together to establish government for Oregon.
- Students will identify how Oregon achieved statehood and entered a period of expansion in industry and population.
- Students will discover that Oregon's diverse population depends on industry and government to meet a variety of needs.

Oregon Grade 5 Benchmarks are listed throughout the course plan.

Archdiocese Social Studies Goals and Objectives:

- To develop literacy in the areas of history, geography, civics and government, economics, anthropology, sociology and political science.
- To appreciate and respect the uniqueness of each human person created by God in His image and likeness and to acknowledge that because of this common origin the human race forms a unity of many nations having a rich variety of persons, cultures, and peoples inhabiting the whole of the earth.
- To promote the Catholic principles of peace and justice among all people and nations by promulgating Christian Catholic social ethics which recognize the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of life.
- To recognize the world as a global unit and accept our shared role within it as stewards responsible for care of the environment and the ethical use of the earth's resources.
- To develop an understanding of regions, location, place, relationships within places and movements in order increase awareness of physical and human spatial contexts and the interactive effects of relationships within these contexts.
- To understand the historical significance of past events and the impact these events have had on the evolution of human history.
- To grow in an understanding of major global trends noting specifically modes of governing, changing belief systems, shifts in geopolitics, power relations among nations, and the impact of new technologies and scientific discoveries on the human race.

- To develop an understanding of the people, events, problems, and ideas which have contributed to the shaping of the United States as a democratic, multicultural society.
- To understand the relevance of social studies as a tool for guiding ethical and moral decision-making.
- To develop a systematic approach for assessing student performance in social studies.

Planning Chart:

Unit 1	Studying Oregon	Two weeks
Unit 2	Early Oregon History	Two weeks
Unit 3	New Settlers Come to Oregon	Two weeks
Unit 4	Oregon Grows	Two weeks
Unit 5	Oregon Today	Three weeks

Course Plan:

A detailed course plan including the week, unit, content/goals, integration/activities, resources, and assessment is included for each of the 11 weeks of this curriculum. The course plan can be found on the following pages.

Resources:

Textbooks –

Oregon: Adventures in Time and Place, Macmillan/McGraw-Hill, 1998

Books –

Myths and Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Katharine Judson, 1997

Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest, Ella E. Clark and Robert Inverarity, 2003

Spirit Faces: Contemporary Masks of the Northwest Coast, Gary Wyatt, 1999

Oregon Trail, Steven Olson, 2004

Websites –

Mount St. Helens <http://www.fs.fed.us/gpnf/mshnvm/education/teachers-corner/>

Crater Lake <http://www.nps.gov/crla/index.htm>

Northwest Native American Myths <http://www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/NWmyths.html>
<http://www.eldrbarry.net/rabb/rvn/rvn.htm>

Fort Vancouver <http://www.nps.gov/fova/programs.htm>

PBS (The Whitmans) http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/s_z/whitman.htm

End of the Oregon Trail <http://www.endoftheoregontrail.org/eotic.html>

Timberline Lodge <http://www.timberlinelodge.com/defaultweb.asp>

Oregon Symphony <http://www.orsymphony.org/edu/index.html>

Portland Rose Festival <http://www.rosefestival.org/>

People –

Marilyn Isaac: Fourth grade teacher at St. Cecilia in Beaverton

Student resources are listed on a weekly basis throughout the course plan on the previous pages.

Reflection:

What was interesting, useful, or frustrating?

Initially this curriculum design project was a bit frustrating for me. Being the only elementary teacher in the class, I had a hard time connecting with the middle school teachers to get ideas going for how to design a project like this. Once I was able to establish my theme and what I hoped to achieve from it, I began to see the project in a different light.

What were the challenges?

As I stated above, it was difficult to collaborate with others in the class. However, I was able to speak with another fourth grade teacher who has been teaching about Oregon for years. Another challenge for me was that I am a new fourth grade teacher and I have never taught an Oregon curriculum. The challenges that I found during the project had to do with coming up with appropriate activities and trying to integrate them with other subject areas. As the project went along, this task did become a bit easier.

How would you apply your learning for future curriculum?

Reflecting back over the project, I am glad that I was required to put something like this together. Being that I am going to be teaching a new grade this year, I thought this was an excellent way to discover the new curriculum I am going to be working with.

I do plan to use a similar format for some of the other themes I will be teaching this coming year.

What resources were most useful?

Our society has obviously become very technologically oriented. It was very helpful to access a variety of websites that helped me in planning this curriculum project. I also found talking to colleagues at other schools who had experience in fourth grade was very useful for me.

How might you make this easier for yourself in the future?

It would have been a lot easier for me if I had teaching experience in fourth grade. So as I continue my teaching career and gain experience at this grade level, doing a curriculum project like this might be somewhat easier. Also, once you are able to put this curriculum into action you discover things that worked great and others that maybe you want to change a bit or discard.

What role do you want to play in curriculum development?

Curriculum development is very important to me. I am fortunate in working in a private school to have the freedom to plan my curriculum to how I think it will benefit my students the most. Certainly there are curriculum guidelines in place, but we are able to implement new things as we go along.

How did your team plan together? Describe your role.

I worked independently on this project since I was the only elementary teacher.