

C3 Teachers

4th Grade

Westward Movement and the Need for Improved Transportation

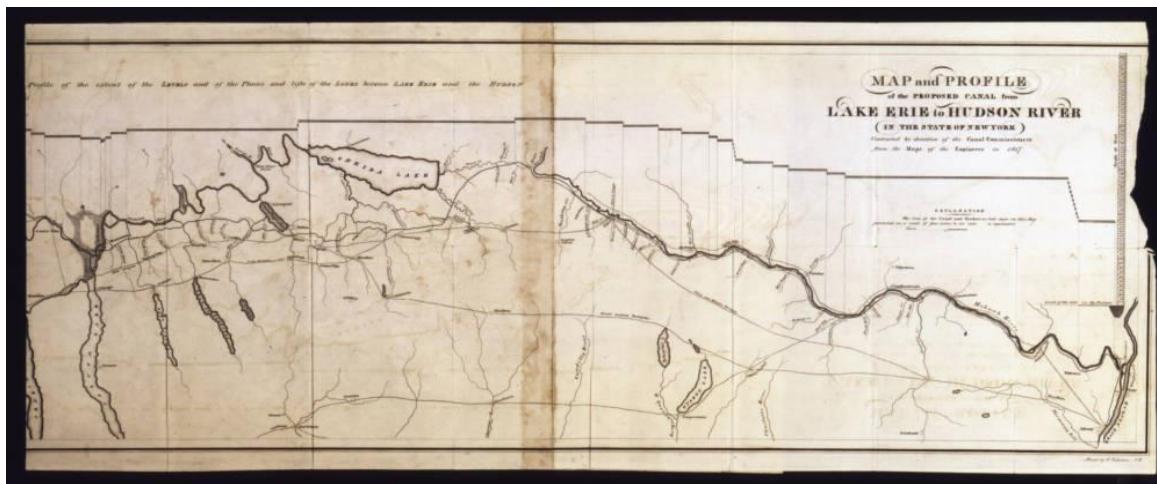
Why Did New York and the Nation Need the Erie Canal?

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Supporting Questions

1. Where were people moving and settling in the aftermath of the American Revolution?
2. Who was moving and how was movement possible?
3. Why did state and federal governments expand their roles in the growth of the economy in the aftermath of the American Revolution?



1817 map of the route for the Erie Canal as proposed by the New York Canal Commissioners. Courtesy of Archives at SUNY Fredonia and the Empire State Digital Network.

Why Did New York and the Nation Need the Erie Canal?

New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea & Practices	<p>4.6a Westward Movement and the need for improved transportation. Students will look at maps and census data of the United States ca. 1790-1850, identifying key ports, populations of major cities at the time as well as reviewing information about the changing landscape of American foreign and domestic policy, infrastructure, industry, and agriculture following the American Revolution.</p> <p>Chronological Reasoning and Causation Gathering, Interpreting, and Using Evidence Comparison and Contextualization</p>		
Staging the Question	Participate in a discussion about the movement of goods and people across distances, past and present.		
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	
Where were people moving and settling in the aftermath of the American Revolution?	Who was moving and how was movement possible?	Why did state and federal governments expand their roles in the growth of the economy in the aftermath of the American Revolution?	
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	
List major ports and their populations in America after the American Revolution, as well as new land acquisitions through 1815.	Make a claim about the importance of a reliable overland route to the west in America around 1810.	Identify key policies impacting a national interest in promoting domestic economic development.	
Featured Sources	Featured Sources	Featured Sources	
<p>Source A: The American Merchant Marine; Its History and Romance from 1620 to 1902 by Winthrop L Marvin: https://guides.loc.gov/ship-registers/history</p>	<p>Source A: Oxcart used by early settlers of Minnesota https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b28218/</p>	<p>Source A: Washington's Farewell Address: https://www.loc.gov/item/2003666401/ (image), and text, pages 8-10): https://blogs.loc.gov/law/2013/02/washingtons-farewell-address/</p>	
<p>Source B: US Census data 1790-1850 (population of cities): https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/fast_facts/1790_fast_facts.html</p>	<p>Source B: A map of the United States of North America, 1750-1823: https://lccn.loc.gov/2014589399</p>	<p>Source B: Henry Clay's "American System" http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mjm.20_0859_0861</p>	
<p>Source C: Treaty of Ghent boundaries: https://www.loc.gov/law/help/us-treaties/bevans/b-gb-ust00012-0041.pdf</p> <p>Treaty of Paris boundaries: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3700.ar306800</p>	<p>Source C: Map of two millions acres of land, West Genesee, in the State of New York http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3802n.ct005648</p> <p>Source D: Maps of City of Clinton in DeWitt County, Illinois and of Dewitt in Clinton County, Iowa found in:</p>	<p>Source C: Exhibition: Rivers, Edens, Empires: Lewis & Clark and the Revealing of America: https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/lewisandclark/lewis-before.html</p> <p>Source D: Robert Fulton to George Washington, February 4, 1797 (original):</p>	

Louisiana Purchase map: http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3300.ct001126	https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/october-26/#the-erie-canal	https://www.loc.gov/item/mgw440477/ and transcription: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99-01-02-00250 Dewitt Clinton to Thomas Jefferson, March 27, 1817 (original): http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib022802 and transcription: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-11-02-0182 Letter from Thomas Jefferson to Dewitt Clinton, April 14, 1817(original): http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mtj.mtjbib022821 and transcription: https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-11-02-0225
Summative Performance Task		ARGUMENT What factors led to the decision to build the Erie Canal across New York? Construct an argument that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and evidence.
EXTENSION Write an advertisement to entice people to move west		
Taking Informed Action		UNDERSTAND Collect data about how greater access to markets enhances economic growth ASSESS Brainstorm ideas about how to “market” the Erie Canal today in New York and the nation ACT Create a public service announcement to promote the importance of the Erie Canal to people in New York

Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of why the Erie Canal was critical to the growth of both the State of New York and to the United States in the time following the American Revolution. Through examining the events following the American Revolution, when the new nation of states was struggling to survive and build its national economy, students will be prepared to develop arguments supported by evidence that answer the compelling question “Why did New York and the Nation Need the Erie Canal?” Subsequent inquiries could be developed around other “internal improvements” across the country over time (the National Road, Transcontinental Railroad, Interstate Highway System, even the Internet) and their impact on New York and the nation. In addition to the Key Idea expressed earlier, this inquiry covers the following Conceptual Understandings:

- (4.6b) How physical geography determined where to build the canal; impact on Native Americans and; how the canal created communities and how it was used to transport local products across the state and country.
- (4.6c) How improvements in the technology of transportation, manufacturing, and communication affected communities in New York and the nation, including
- (4.6f) How the Erie Canal led to increased industrialization in New York and the Nation

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take five to six 30-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “Why Did New York and the Nation Need the Erie Canal?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and sources in order to construct an argument supported by evidence while acknowledging competing views.

Staging the Compelling Question

To begin the inquiry, teachers might introduce the core concept of movement of goods and people across distances in the past and today (Amazon, FedEx, USPS, UPS), including asking: Who decides what gets moved where? And, “what factors improve movement of goods and services? What would hinder such movement? Students begin to understand there are people making decisions about what gets moved where and how. Stakeholders compete in this process from the standpoint of being producers and consumers, not just of goods and services, but also of the

infrastructure needed to make movement possible. This was also true when the new American nation was establishing its economic and political foothold in the nation and abroad. The reason for building the Erie Canal across New York State at that time was not just a matter of geographic feasibility, but of other considerations as well. This activity takes students into a deeper dive of the events surrounding the building of the Erie Canal and its impact on American westward expansion, as well as the expansion of federal authority in political and economic events.

Explain to students they will be examining some primary and secondary sources to look for evidence to help them answer *Why Did New York State and the Nation Need the Erie Canal?*

If students have not yet worked with primary sources, the teacher may want to introduce what these are by carrying out an activity, such as ["Mr Lincoln's Pockets"](#) from the Library of Congress.

Teachers can be given the supporting questions, or could be asked to come up with questions that would help answer the central question. (Possibly a QFT activity). Students can be separated into three groups and given all three supporting questions, the related formative task for each (see IDM), and primary source sets to work through together or, each of the three groups can be given one supporting question and the corresponding primary source set to work on (time dependent).

Teachers reflect on how this might evolve in their classrooms, identifying any potential challenges for their students. The teachers discuss how they would provide support to the student groups as needed, and how they might have students present their findings and their argument to the whole class.

Assessment can be based on class work (create a checklist of accomplished tasks) and/or a final written argument produced by each student, based on what they learned from all three groups.



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