

Printable Teaching Guide
A Day in the Life – A Young Person’s Life on the Frontier

Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about a young person’s life on the frontier.
- Discuss the day-to-day responsibilities of pioneer children.
- Write and illustrate a journal entry about living on the frontier.

Brief Description of Internet Site

The *Pioneers* website offers information about life as a pioneer.

Build Background

- Explain to students that boys and girls living on the frontier helped their parents with many everyday tasks. Life on the frontier was hard. The whole family helped out on the farm with crops and animals. Ask: *What responsibilities did pioneer children have?* (Girls helped their mothers manage the house and tend to the other children. They also learned to make candles, knit, and sew. Boys helped their fathers work in the fields and bring food home for everyone to eat. They also helped cut firewood for heat and for cooking meals.)
- Tell students that colonial education was very practical. Students were taught to read, write, and do arithmetic in colonial schools. Students learned to read so they could read the Bible. They learned to write so they could write letters. They learned arithmetic so they could keep track of money. Not every town had a schoolhouse, so parents sometimes taught their children at home. Ask: *What are other reasons a pioneer child might not go to school?* (Often children had to stay home to help with all the chores on the farm. Teachers sometimes traveled from home to home to teach.)
- Tell students that most of the pioneer’s clothes were homemade. Colonial children’s clothing resembled adult clothing. Men wore breeches, which were pants that ended just below the knees and had buttons instead of zippers. Women wore long dresses and had one set of clothes for weekdays and another for Sundays. Children wore clothing like the adults starting at age five or six. Ask: *What kinds of materials were used to make pioneers’ clothes?* (Clothes were made from wool, cotton and other materials. The clothes were hard to make, but were sturdy and strong.)

Teach

What to do:

- Connect to:
http://www.museum.siu.edu/university_museum/museum_classroom_grant/Museum_Explorers/school_pages/hinckley/pioneer.htm
- Select One Room School. Read about schools on the frontier and look at the pictures. Ask: *What were some of the rules pioneer children had to follow at school?* (1. Never make noises or disturb others. 2. Do not leave your seat without permission. 3. Wash your hands and face and bare feet.)
- Select Children’s Clothing. Read about pioneer children’s clothing and look at the pictures. Ask: *Until what age did pioneer boys wear dresses?* (Boys wore dresses until they were six or seven years old.)

Close

- Have students discuss what they learned about a young person's life on the frontier.
- Have students imagine that they are pioneers. Have them write and illustrate a journal entry about living on the frontier.