

The Erie Canal

Social Studies-Grade 4 Lesson Plan

Georgia Performance Standards:

SS4G2 The student will describe how physical systems affect human systems.

e. Describe physical barriers that hindered and physical gateways that benefited territorial expansion from 1801 to 1861 (SS4H6a).

SS4E1 The student will use the basic economic concepts of trade, opportunity cost, specialization, voluntary exchange, productivity, and price incentives to illustrate historical events.

e. Describe how trade promotes economic activity.

f. Give examples of technological advancements and their impact on business productivity during the development of the United States

SS4G1 The student will be able to locate important physical and man-made features in the United States.

a. Locate major physical features of the United States; include the Atlantic Coastal Plain, the Great Plains, the Continental Divide, the Great Basin, Death Valley, the Gulf of Mexico, the St. Lawrence River, and the Great Lakes.

b. Locate major man-made features; include New York City, NY; Boston, MA; Philadelphia, PA; and the Erie Canal.

INFORMATION PROCESSING SKILLS-Identify and use primary and secondary resources

Enduring Understandings:

K-5 EU: The student will understand that moving to new places changes the people, land, and culture of the new place, as well as the place that was left.

Movement/Migration: The student will understand that the movement or migration of people and ideas affects all societies involved.

Why did moving west attract so many people?

How did New York City become a major city?

How did rivers assist westward travelers?

How did mountains hinder westward travel?

How did the geography of the west assist and hinder travelers?

Technological Innovations: The student will understand that technological innovations have consequences, both intended and unintended, for a society.

K-5 EU: The student will understand that new technology has many types of different consequences, depending on how people use that technology.

How did the completion of the Erie Canal impact the expanding United States?

How did the introduction of the steamboat impact American commerce?

How did the completion of the Erie Canal impact the growth of New York City?

Objectives: The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the students to the Erie Canal and its impact on the United States.

1. Students will analyze primary sources of Erie Canal sites.
2. Students will describe what life was like along the Erie Canal.
3. Students will explain the impact the Erie Canal had on movement, migration, commerce, and the growth of America using multimedia resources.
4. Students will explain the need for locks.
5. Students will demonstrate how a lock works by drawing the basic process.

Materials:

- U.S. Map
 - Black and white map of New York and the Great Lakes- including a map of New York State clearly showing the Erie Canal and the cities and towns built along it, and a list of about ten New York towns, such as Albany, Binghamton, Buffalo, Plattsburgh, Poughkeepsie, Rochester, Saratoga Springs, Schenectady, Syracuse, Utica, and Watertown
 - Audio of “Low Bridge, Everybody Down” , “Paddy on the Canal”, “Song of the Diggers”, “We’re Going to Pump Out Lake Erie” , “Down the River”, “Oh, That Low Bridge!”
 - Lyrics to “Low Bridge, Everybody Down”, “Paddy on the Canal”, “Song of the Diggers”, “We’re Going to Pump Out Lake Erie” , “Down the River”, “Oh, That Low Bridge!”
 - Digital Resource Kit
 - Locks worksheet
 - Life on the Erie Canal worksheet
 - Teacher made Digital Story of the Erie Canal
 - Discovery Education Videos- “Construction of the Erie Canal”; “How the Erie Canal Influenced New York”
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Lesson 1 (1 day)

Procedures:

Watch the digital story “The Erie Canal” and Discovery Education’s videos “Construction of the Erie Canal” and “How the Erie Canal Influenced New York”.

Brainstorm examples of how humans have changed the physical environment, and why. Begin with examples from the video; then ask students to think of others. Record their responses on the board.

Examples:

- digging canals to speed up shipping and open new areas to settlement
- building roads and rail lines to speed up transportation over land
- building dams and using irrigation to bring water to dry places
- constructing bridges and tunnels to travel over, under, and around rivers, mountains, etc.

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Distribute one map of New York State to each student. Discuss the location of major towns and cities on the map in relation to bodies of water. Have students locate the Erie Canal on the map and color it blue. Ask students which places were probably built after the Erie Canal was constructed.

Generate at least two class definitions of the word “lock.” Invite students to recall the definition in the context of the video. Challenge them to consider the word in other contexts (e.g., a lock of hair, a lock on a safe). Sample definitions:

1. Part of a canal with gates at each end, used to raise and lower boats from one level to another
2. A secure closure usually opened with a key or combination

Discuss the physical environmental conditions of the path of the Erie Canal (rocks, forest, mountains). Discuss the limited tools available at that time for digging. (no power equipment, horses and wagons for hauling, hand picks, shovels, ropes, etc.)

Distribute the worksheet on Locks to each student. Have students explain why there needed to be locks built along the Erie Canal.

Lesson 2 (1 day)

Procedures:

The teacher should be familiar with the history of the music of the Erie Canal prior to teaching this lesson. The following resource will be helpful.

http://www.citylore.org/pdf/gotham-newsletter_winter09.pdf

Provided students with the lyrics of the song “Low Bridge, Everybody Down” and play the music for the class. Students may take turns reciting or singing aloud. Discuss why songs would be written about a canal. The teacher will lead a discussion on the difficulty of travel before trains, highways, powerboats, and bridges. Discuss how that effected migration (building supplies, goods, commerce). Discuss how speeding up shipments of goods effected commerce. Amounts of materials shipped increased while prices decreased.

Group students to analyze two Erie Canal songs, comparing and contrasting the information they find. Each member of the group will receive the same two primary source documents.

Explain to students that they will now analyze songs sung by people who built and worked on the Erie Canal in the 19th century.

Hand out the pairs of documents listed below. Students will use Venn diagrams to analyze their songs. Write facts from the first song on the left hand circle, facts from the second on the right hand circle, and similarities in the shared space in the middle.

Each student should work individually to decode the facts. When the students are finished, they will compare and discuss their results.

Discuss and post results of the investigation and discuss findings. What details do the songs provide about the history of the period on the canal? (e.g. “Song of the Diggers” tells us men dug the canal in the mud.)

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Song Sets

“Paddy on the Canal”

[audio can be found on George Ward’s Oh! That Low Bridge!]

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amsshtml/amsshhome.html> [search by keyword]

http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?amss:2:/temp/~ammem_IVI3:::@@mdb=aasm,ftvbib,berl,lbcoll,rbpebib,tccc,cwband,coplandbib,musdibib,papr,fine,dcm,flwpabib,afcreed,cowellbib,toddbib,afcnyebib,lomaxbib,afcwgbib,raelbib,hurstonbib,gottlieb,molden,aipn,omhbib,vv,mussm,dukesm,amss,varstg

(lyrics)

“Song of the Diggers”

[audio can be found on George Ward’s Oh! That Low Bridge!]

Bond of Union: Building the Erie Canal and the American Empire By Gerard Koeppl

Text at Google Books online (page 318-319):

http://books.google.com/books?id=9UEEKg2fItOC&pg=PA318&lpg=PA318&dq=we're+cutting+a+ditch+through+the+mire+right+up+to+our+necks&source=bl&ots=Gw8z8_971s&sig=RfoydT_TCOrvBTTnqoFfi0qmOmo&hl=en&ei=ShizTZG0JpO-tgfEoJqDg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0CBUQ6AEwA#v=onepage&q&f=false

(download at <http://www.mulesong.com/>)

<http://www.archive.org/details/SongOfTheDiggers> [see Appendix for lyrics]

“We’re Going to Pump Out Lake Erie”

[accompanied audio files on the Library of Congress’ site]

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/afcnye:@field\(DOCID+afc1937002t25a\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/afcnye:@field(DOCID+afc1937002t25a))

(text)

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/afcnyebib:@filreq\(@OR\(@field\(TITLE+@od1\(Disc+27,+Side+B:+Take+a+Trip+on+the+Canal;+We're+Going+to+Pump+Out+Lake+Erie++Audio+\)\)\)+@field\(ALTITLE+@od1\(Disc+27,+Side+B:+Take+a+Trip+on+the+Canal;+We're+Going+to+Pump+Out+Lake+Erie++Audio+\)\)\)+@field\(RESOURCE+@od1\(sound_recording\)\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/afcnyebib:@filreq(@OR(@field(TITLE+@od1(Disc+27,+Side+B:+Take+a+Trip+on+the+Canal;+We're+Going+to+Pump+Out+Lake+Erie++Audio+)))+@field(ALTITLE+@od1(Disc+27,+Side+B:+Take+a+Trip+on+the+Canal;+We're+Going+to+Pump+Out+Lake+Erie++Audio+)))+@field(RESOURCE+@od1(sound_recording))))

(audio)

“Down the River”

[accompanied audio files on the Library of Congress’ site]

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/afcnye:@field\(DOCID+afc1937002t25b\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/afcnye:@field(DOCID+afc1937002t25b))

[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/afcnyebib:@filreq\(@OR\(@field\(TITLE+@od1\(Disc+25,+Side+B:+Moonlight+Dance;+Canal+Boat+Wedding;+Down+the+River++Audio+\)\)\)+@field\(ALTITLE+@od1\(Disc+25,+Side+B:+Moonlight+Dance;+Canal+Boat+Wedding;+Down+the+River++Audio+\)\)\)+@field\(RESOURCE+@od1\(sound_recording\)\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/S?ammem/afcnyebib:@filreq(@OR(@field(TITLE+@od1(Disc+25,+Side+B:+Moonlight+Dance;+Canal+Boat+Wedding;+Down+the+River++Audio+)))+@field(ALTITLE+@od1(Disc+25,+Side+B:+Moonlight+Dance;+Canal+Boat+Wedding;+Down+the+River++Audio+)))+@field(RESOURCE+@od1(sound_recording))))

(audio)

“Oh, That Low Bridge”

<https://jscholarship.library.jhu.edu/bitstream/handle/1774.2/28686/072.084.001.webimage.JPG?sequence=5> (text)

<http://www.eriecanalsong.com/Oh-That-Low-Bridge.php> (audio)

(New York City Community School District 28, 2009)

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Lesson 3 (1 day)

Procedures:

The students will be using the Internet to view Web sites devoted to the Erie Canal. They will answer questions on a work sheet as they watch a virtual tour of the Erie Canal.

Have the students go to the following Web site:

<http://www.epodunk.com/#http://www.eriecanal.org/locks.html>

The students should view the virtual tour first. Students should click on the “Launch Canal Tour” link. Once they have view the tour, they should continue exploring the site paying careful attention to the “Red Dot” route. Students should click on the various red dots and read the information and view the “Postcards” and “Panoramas” links to see primary source photographs from each area.

As the students view the site, they should complete the Erie Canal Worksheet.

Assessment: Students will be assessed based upon their participation in the classroom activity and discussion. Students will be assessed based upon the completion of the Erie Canal worksheet with an emphasis on creativity, structure and relevance of answer to the question presented with an emphasis on the following criteria:

- Did the students understand what the lesson was about?
- Did the students reach the objective?

Worksheet Answer Key

1. a complicated system of rivers and roadways
 2. 363 miles
 3. the Hudson River and Lake Erie
 4. they were pulled by mules
 5. varied depending on the song selected
-

Lesson 4 (3 days)

Procedures:

Students will work alone or in groups to create a short digital story or PowerPoint presentation using the Erie Canal digital resource kit. Students should include photos and text to explain how the completion of the Erie Canal affected one or more of the following:

- Migration to the West
- NY economy (trade and costs)
- Immigration
- Growth of cities along the canal
- Engineering and transportation

(The more advanced students will be required to include music and/or voice narration.)

Completed presentations will be presented in class.

Name _____ Date _____

Life on the Erie Canal Worksheet

Directions: Answer the following questions while reviewing the following Erie Canal Web site:
<http://www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal/index.html#>

1. How did people ship goods before the completion of the Erie Canal?

2. How many miles long was the Erie Canal?

3. What two bodies of water did the Erie Canal connect?

4. How did boats travel through the canal?

5. Listen to some of the songs under the “Canal Songs” tab. Choose your favorite song and list three facts about life on the canal that you learned from the song:

Song Name: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

If you finish before the rest of the class, please explore the Erie Canal Locks:
<http://www.eriecanal.org/locks.html>

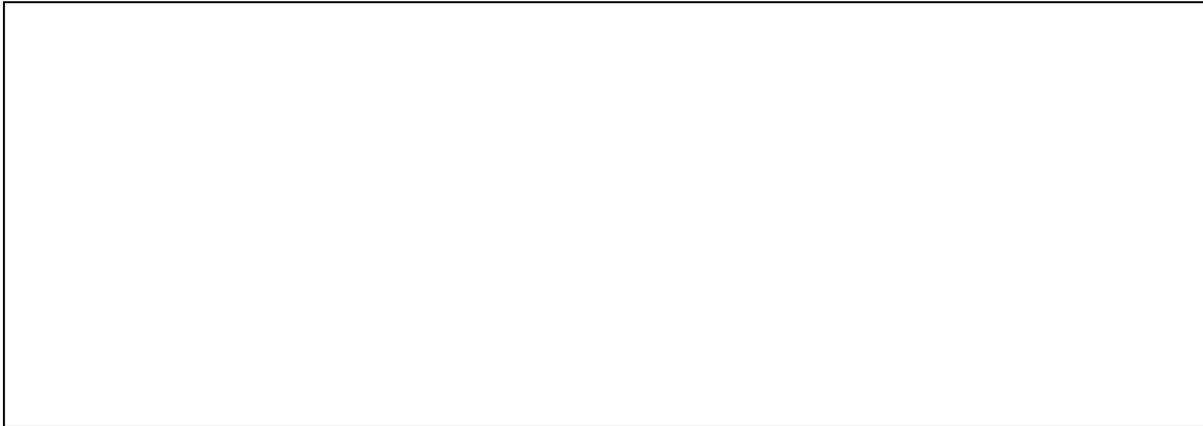
(Monroe Fordham History and Social Studies Department, 2011)

Name _____ Date _____

Locks

Write a sentence explaining why engineers had to use locks on the Erie Canal.

Describe how a lock worked by drawing a diagram. Include labels and written descriptions of important features.



Write a paragraph about how people modified the environment where you live. Explain the benefits and drawbacks of the changes they made.

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**"Low Bridge, Everybody Down (The Erie Canal)"
by Thomas S. Allen, 1905**

I've got a mule, and her name is Sal,
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal.
She's a good ol' worker an' a good ol' pal,
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal.
We've hauled some barges in our day,
Filled with lumber, coal, and hay,
And we know every inch of the way
From Albany to Buffalo.

(chorus)

Low bridge, everybody down!
Low bridge, for we're comin' through a town!
And you'll always know your neighbor,
You'll always know your pal,
If you've ever navigated on the Erie Canal.

We'd better look around for a job, ol' gal,
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal!
'Cause you bet your life I'd never part with Sal,
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal!
Git up there, mule, here comes a lock,
We'll make Rome 'bout six o'clock,
One more trip and back we'll go
Right back home to Buffalo.

(chorus)

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“Low Bridge (Erie Canal)” By Thomas S. Allen (1905)

I've got an old mule and her name is Sal
Fifteen years on the Erie Canal
She's a good old worker and a good old pal
Fifteen years on the Erie Canal
We've hauled some barges in our day
Filled with lumber, coal, and hay
And every inch of the way we know
From Albany to Buffalo

Chorus:

Low bridge, everybody down
Low bridge for we're coming to a town
And you'll always know your neighbor
And you'll always know your pal
If you've ever navigated on the Erie Canal
We'd better get along on our way, old gal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
'Cause you bet your life I'd never part with
Sal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
Git up there mule, here comes a lock
We'll make Rome 'bout six o'clock
One more trip and back we'll go
Right back home to Buffalo

Chorus

Oh, where would I be if I lost my pal?
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
Oh, I'd like to see a mule as good as Sal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
A friend of mine once got her sore
Now he's got a busted jaw
Cause she low

Chorus

Don't have to call when I want my Sal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
She trots from her stall like a good old gal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
I eat my meals with Sal each day
I eat beef and she eats hay
And she ain't so slow if you want to know
She put the "Buff" in Buffalo

Chorus

I've got an old mule and her name is Sal
Fifteen years on the Erie Canal
She's a good old worker and a good old pal
Fifteen years on the Erie Canal
We've hauled some barges in our day
Filled with lumber, coal, and hay
And every inch of the way we know
From Albany to Buffalo

Chorus:

Low bridge, everybody down
Low bridge for we're coming to a town
And you'll always know your neighbor
And you'll always know your pal
If you've ever navigated on the Erie Canal
We'd better get along on our way, old gal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
'Cause you bet your life I'd never part with
Sal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
Git up there mule, here comes a lock
We'll make Rome 'bout six o'clock
One more trip and back we'll go
Right back home to Buffalo

Chorus

Oh, where would I be if I lost my pal?
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
Oh, I'd like to see a mule as good as Sal
Fifteen miles on the Erie Canal
A friend of mine once got her sore
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I eat beef and she eats hay
And she ain't so slow if you want to know
She put the "Buff" in Buffalo

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erie_Canal

(Monroe Fordham History and Social Studies Department, 2011)

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<http://www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu/eriecanal/Download.htm>

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