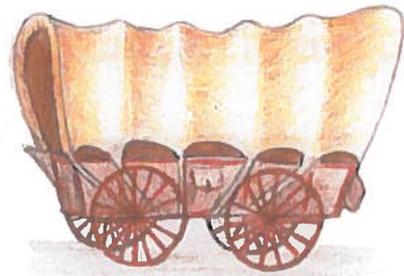


An Oregon Trail Diary

This is a fictional account of the overland journey on the Oregon Trail. It is written in the form of a journal.

Sunday, January 30, 1852

We're going to Oregon! I heard Mother and Father talking late into the night last night. Father says that Oregon is beautiful, and all the land is rich and good. He says that we will prosper there. Mother doesn't seem so sure. She doesn't really want to leave our little farm here in Missouri. She has her chickens and turkeys and her milk cow and garden. Of course she won't be able to take them with us. I think she is a little bit sad. But I am excited! I heard Father say that we will travel in a covered wagon. Uncle Pleasant and Aunt Ellen are going too. That means that Cousin Amy will be with me! I can't wait to go.



Tuesday, February 16, 1852

It snowed this morning. All the trees look as if they have been dipped in sugar. It makes a pretty picture, but we are all hoping it will be the last snowfall of the season. We are eager for spring to come. We want to get started on our journey.

Saturday, March 16, 1852

The wagons are almost loaded. Today I helped Mother pack up all the things we will need to do our cooking along the trail. We packed everything in a wooden box that Father built. The front of the box folds down on hinges and makes a shelf where Mother can work. She calls the box our "camp kitchen." We put a Dutch oven and a large frying pan in the box. We also packed some wooden spoons, two sharp knives, and some tin plates and cups.

We have lots of food in the wagon. There are bags of dried apples and plums, sacks of beans and flour, and buckets of molasses. We have bacon and cured hams and some smoked fish. We have cornmeal and coffee and tea. We want to make sure that we have enough to eat on the journey.

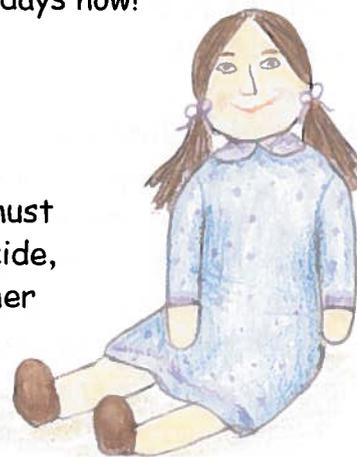
Tuesday, April 12, 1852

Father has been very busy. He bought some oxen to pull the wagon. He has been gathering ropes, leather to repair harnesses, medicines for the animals, and who knows what all. He is taking tools like axes, shovels, and chisels. We will need many things when we get to Oregon, but we don't have room to carry very much. Father will use the tools to build us a house when we get there and to make beds and tables and chairs.

Mother is feeling happier about the trip. It has been hard work to get ready to go, but it is fun too. Just a few more days now!

Friday, April 15, 1852

Amy and I are going to sleep in the wagon tonight. And before daylight in the morning, we are leaving. I am going to bring my journal, but Father says I must choose just one toy to bring. It is very hard to decide, but I think I will bring Brenny, my rag doll. I love her most because Grandmother made her for me.



Monday, May 2, 1852

We are camped on the banks of the Missouri River. It is the biggest river I have ever seen. We cross tomorrow. At first I was afraid. But I have been watching the other wagons crossing on the flat ferryboats, and I think we will make it just fine.

It has been a good trip so far. The weather has mostly been sunny, which is lucky. The rainy days are hard to bear. We get so damp and cold, and it is hard to light a fire for cooking. The mud is very tiresome. It coats our shoes and splashes our stockings and aprons, and it is not easy to wash things. So we are glad for the sunshine. I had better go to sleep now. Tomorrow we cross to the west!

Tuesday, May 17, 1852

This prairie is so beautiful it takes my breath away. The grass is tall and waves in the wind. There are flowers everywhere. Amy and I picked our aprons full today as we walked. The only trees are near the river. We are camping for the night under the trees. The oxen are all drinking at the river now. Father is building a cooking fire. I will go and help Mother make something to eat. This is a glorious trip!



Goldenrod



Purple Clover



Pale Purple
Cone Flower

Wednesday, June 29, 1852

We passed Independence Rock late this morning. This means we are making good time. It is important to make Independence Rock by the 4th of July, and we are nearly a week early! Immigrants always write their names on the rock. We all were eager to read the names, so we stopped to have something to eat and take a little rest. Father and Uncle Pleasant found the names of two friends who made the trip last year. Many of the people in our train added their own names to the rock.

After lunch we went a few more miles. We camped by the Sweetwater River. It is magnificent, with high cliffs on both sides. There is plenty of grass for the animals to eat. It is a lovely camp and I wish we could stay here a few days. But we have to keep moving. We still have a long way to go.

Sunday, July 17, 1852

Today we crossed some high mountains. They were covered with enormous pine trees that smelled wonderful in the hot sun. Even though the sun was very bright and hot, the air was cool and fresh. Amy and I found lots of wild berries. In camp some of the men caught some silvery trout from the stream that tumbled down the mountain. It was so nice to have fresh food for dinner.

Tuesday, August 9, 1852

The last few days have been very difficult. We had to cross a lot of country that is poor and dry. Some of the animals have died from sickness and want of water. Some of the people have been sick too, and everyone is very tired. We have not been able to rest much. We had to keep going so that we could get to a place where there is water. I think we will be all right now. Our camp here on the Burnt River is good. Some Indians came into camp with some large fish they wanted to trade. Mother gave them some corn bread and an old apron in trade for a fish, and we had a nice dinner.

Monday, September 5, 1852

These are mountains! The path we traveled today was steep and full of rocks. The men had to chop away fallen trees. As we go along, the way seems to get only steeper and higher. We are camped high up in these mountains with only a tiny stream for water. Aunt Ellen says she feels that we are on top of the world. It is hard going, and quite cold as evening comes on.



Thursday, September 8, 1852

We came down from the mountains today. The trail plowed straight down the mountain. The oxen were slipping and sliding. The heavy wagons pressed on them. All the men had to help hold the wagons back. The trail was so narrow and steep that we feared the wagons would pitch right over the side. All of us children had to stay away from the trail because it was so dangerous. We had to find our own way down the hill, and it was a hard job because there were huge boulders and fallen logs strewn over every inch of the mountainside. I am still shivering with fright and tiredness.

Monday, October 3, 1852

Another adventure. We sailed the Columbia River today. The Indians took us in their canoes. It was rainy and blustery all day. The waves were wild and kept splashing over the sides. Amy was terrified, but for some reason I quite enjoyed the excitement. Perhaps it is because our journey is nearly at an end.



Sunday, October 16, 1852

This is a day to give thanks. Father and Mother have found the land for our new home. Our family will claim 640 acres. We are camping on the land tonight. Father says he will start to work on a cabin right away, but we will have to stay with some other settlers for the winter months. Our land is wonderful. There is a spring of sweet water and there is deep grass, and the soil is dark and good. The air smells like mint. We are full of joy.

Questions about An Oregon Trail Diary



1. Father wanted to go to Oregon _____.

- to get some good, rich land
- to get a job in a factory
- because his friends lived there
- because Mother wanted to go

2. How did Mother feel?

3. How did the girl who wrote the diary feel?

4. The journey had both pleasant and unpleasant experiences. Tell about two of each.

Tell It in Order



Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

1. Did the family load the wagons before or after February 16?

before after

2. Did they pass Independence Rock before or after the Fourth of July?

before after

3. Did they travel in Indian canoes before or after they crossed the mountains?

before after

4. Did the girls pick flowers before or after they picked berries?

before after

5. Did they buy fish from the Indians before or after Father bought some oxen?

before after

6. Was Father planning to make furniture before or after they arrived in Oregon?

before after

Fantastic Fact

One of the first things pioneers did when they got to their new homes was to buy land. The price of land was about \$2.00 an acre. This was a lot of money for many pioneers.

What Does It Mean?



Write the words below in the correct columns.

Foods

People

Feelings

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

fright

father

terrified

apples

beans

uncle

mother

corn bread

molasses

Amy

flour

bacon

fish

glad

gloomy

joy

excitement

cousin

plums

grandmother



Understanding What You Read



Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

- The family traveled to Oregon in _____.
 - small plane
 - a covered wagon
 - a pick-up truck
 - a passenger train
- What did the family take to eat on the journey?
 - beans
 - bacon
 - dried apples
 - all of the above
- While the girls were in the mountains, they picked some _____.
 - berries
 - flowers
 - walnuts
 - tomatoes
- Items used for cooking were stored in _____.
 - a canvas sack
 - a tin can
 - a wooden box
 - a plastic crate
- Which toy did the little girl decide to take with her on the journey?
 - jump rope
 - checker set
 - rag doll
 - yo-yo
- It was important for the family to camp in a grassy area at night because _____.
 - grass is nice to sit on
 - their animals needed grass to eat
 - the children wanted to play ball
 - looking at the pretty grass made them feel happy

Compound Words



Combine each word from List A with a word from List B to create compound words. Write the compound words on the lines below.

A

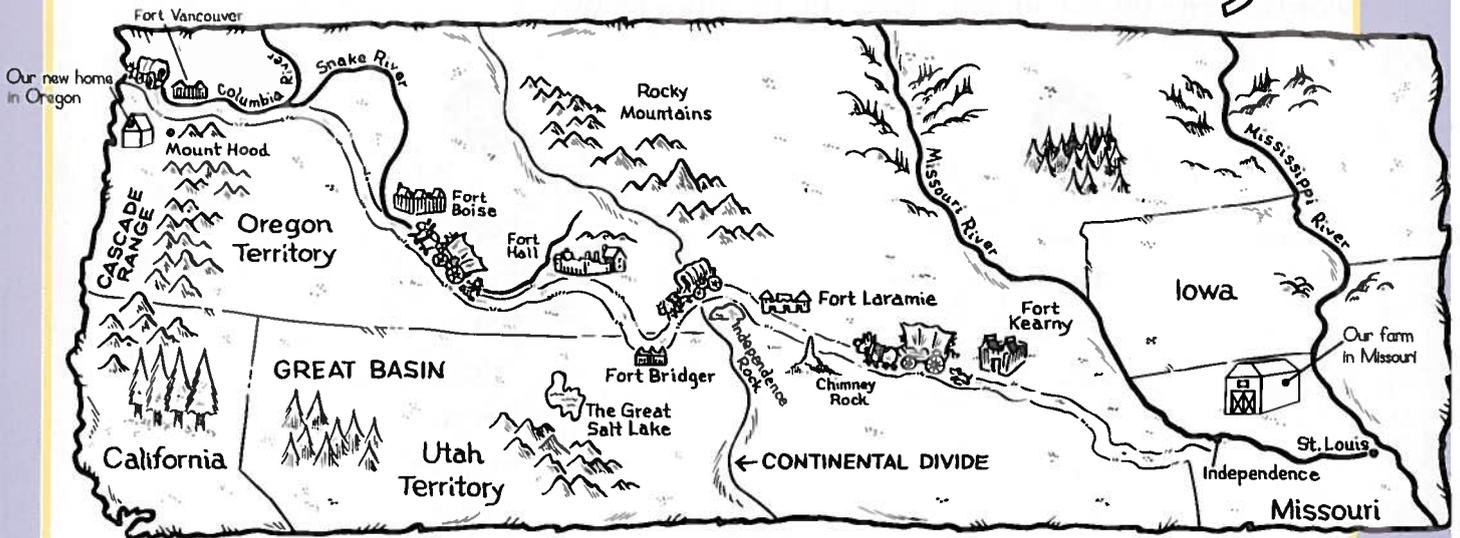
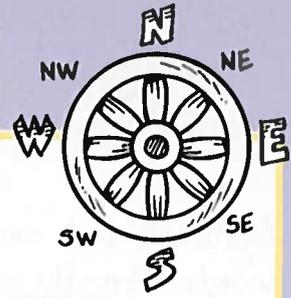
every
day
grand
sun
corn
ferry
fish
rain
farm
mountain

B

boat
light
top
meal
house
mother
where
shine
fall
hook



The Journey to Oregon



Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

1. The Oregon Trail passed to the _____ of the Great Salt Lake.

- (A) north
- (B) south
- (C) east
- (D) west

3. The Rocky Mountains are to the _____ of the Cascade Mountains.

- (A) north
- (B) south
- (C) east
- (D) west

2. Which is the first fort the family would have come to on their journey?

- (A) Fort Bridger
- (B) Fort Hall
- (C) Fort Boise
- (D) Fort Kearny

4. Which river forms the eastern boundary of Missouri?

- (A) Mississippi
- (B) Columbia
- (C) Missouri
- (D) Snake

How to Make a Pair of Stilts

Have you ever tried to walk on stilts? It's harder than it looks, but it is lots of fun. It is a good way to improve your balancing skills. Ask a parent or an adult to help you make a pair of stilts.

You will need:

- a tape measure
- a hammer
- a saw
- nails
- wood glue
- handles—2 6' (1.8 m) lengths of 1" x 2" (2.5 x 5 cm) lumber
- steps—2 10" (25.5 cm) lengths of 2" x 4" (5 x 10 cm) lumber
- sandpaper
- paint (optional)

Make the handles

1. Ask your helper to measure the distance from the ground to the top of your shoulders. Add 1 foot to this measurement.
2. Cut each piece of the 1" x 2" lumber to this measurement.
3. Sand these handles carefully. You want to make sure there are no splinters!

Add the steps

1. Spread wood glue on one long side of each 2" x 4" piece of lumber.
2. Attach these steps to the bottom of the handles. Make sure that the bottom of the handle is even with the bottom of the step.
3. Use the hammer to drive four nails through each handle and into the step.
4. If you like, paint your stilts to make them more colorful and fun to look at.

Tips for walking on stilts

1. Practice standing on the stilts first. Ask your helper to steady the stilts until you feel comfortable on your own.
2. Hold the handles of the stilts so they are behind your arms.
3. Use the handle of each stilt to pull the step up against your foot as you walk.
4. Be patient. Keep trying. As your skill improves, you can make new stilts with taller steps.





Reading a Graph

Stilts are fun because they make you tall.



Use the information in the graph to answer these questions about some tall things!

How tall is the giraffe?

How tall is the building?

Which is taller, the tree or the building?

Which is taller, the giraffe or the flagpole?

Ask someone to help you measure yourself to see how tall you are.

I am

What's the Opposite?

A. Write the number of each word on the line in front of its antonym.

- | | | |
|-------------|-------|-----------|
| 1. tall | _____ | sour |
| 2. happy | _____ | rough |
| 3. push | _____ | miserable |
| 4. smooth | _____ | over |
| 5. under | _____ | calm |
| 6. rise | _____ | tiny |
| 7. cool | _____ | pull |
| 8. enormous | _____ | heavy |
| 9. asleep | _____ | short |
| 10. sweet | _____ | fall |
| 11. excited | _____ | warm |
| 12. light | _____ | awake |

B. Draw two pictures in each box to illustrate the pair of opposites given.

even

uneven

smooth

rough

The Old Woman Who Lived in a Vinegar Jug

Once, long ago in merry old England, a magic bluebird was flitting about in the woods. She heard a noise and followed it to a small clearing. There, between the trees, was a large vinegar jug. Outside the jug there was a little old woman. She was pacing back and forth in front of the vinegar jug.

When the old woman saw the bluebird, she began to grumble.

"Woe is me. Woe is me. It's ever so unfair. Why must I live in a vinegar jug? I should live in a sweet little cottage with a fireplace and windows and flowers by the door. Woe is me. Woe is me."

The kindhearted bluebird took pity on the little old woman.

"All right," said the bluebird. "Just snap your fingers three times and see what happens." With that, the bluebird disappeared.

The old woman snapped her fingers three times. She climbed into her rough, little bed and went to sleep. When she awoke in the morning, she found herself in a pretty bedroom. Sunlight streamed through the windows. A fire crackled in the fireplace. Outside, flowers bloomed by the door. She was very excited, but she thought no more of the little bluebird.



Time passed and a year rolled away. The magic bluebird decided to go see the little old woman. She wanted to see the happiness her gift had brought. When the bluebird arrived, she was surprised to find the little old woman pacing back and forth in front of the cottage.

When the old woman saw the bluebird, she began to grumble.

"Woe is me. Woe is me. It's ever so unfair. Why must I live in a simple cottage? I should live in a two-story house with fine furniture and china dishes. Woe is me. Woe is me."

The bluebird was a little hurt that the old woman didn't even bother to say thank you. But as you will remember, she was a kindhearted creature.

"Oh well," thought the bluebird. "She has never had nice things. It is not so much to ask."

"All right," said the bluebird. "Just snap your fingers three times and see what happens." And with that, the bluebird disappeared.

