

EXPLORE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM. LEARN INSIDE OUR STATE.

Transportation on the Santa Fe Trail

Comanche National Grassland

Educational Activity: Explore Comanche National Grassland, a National Historic Trail site, where remains of wagon ruts, trail markers, and exhibits detail life along the Santa Fe Trail.

Significant sites on the grasslands include:

1. The [Sierra Vista Overlook](#), features spectacular views of the grassland, the distant Spanish Peaks, the Santa Fe Trail route, sandstone Santa Fe Trail markers, two information kiosks and a hiking trail to the Timpas Picnic Area Trail.
2. The [Timpas Picnic Area](#) offers picnic facilities, three information boards, Santa Fe Trail markers and a loop trail.
3. [The Vogel Canyon Picnic Area](#) is situated on a spur of the Santa Fe Trail, features sections of a stagecoach road, the ruins of a stage station, picnic facilities and hiking trails.

Observation: Watch this video about the Santa Fe Trail for an overview of the trail and those who traveled it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jeVVhns6oE>

Questions to Ask:

1. *What kinds of transportation did people use on the trail?*
2. *What kind of role would you want to take on the Santa Fe Trail – trader, settler, mail deliverer, soldier?*
3. *Name the five most important things you would choose to take with you on the trail? Why are they important?*

Additional Activity: Read these verses from the poem, "The Santa Fe Trail", from the collection *The Santa Fe Trail and Other Poems* by Joseph R. Wilson, 1921, International Printing Company, Philadelphia. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009575787>

Moving twenty miles a day,
With mules and horses straining
Through the deep and parching sand,
The wagon wheels a-squeaking,
With the hot sun beating down ...

Oh! That never ending trail,
Through canyon and arroyo,
And that cursed, cruel plain,
The parched wastes of the desert,
A mile above sea-level,
Not a tree or shrub upon it,
Without a drop of water,
'Tween the Arkansas river
And the spring at Cimarron

Questions to Ask:

1. *Is this a happy or a sad poem?*
2. *What clues do you have?*

Additional Resources:

- Watch this video about southeastern Colorado.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sglgGwOV2XI>

Read about the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail in the Colorado Encyclopedia.
<https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/santa-f%C3%A9-trail-o>