EXPLORE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM. LEARN INSIDE OUR STATE.

Extra Credit: Pony Express

Background: The Pony Express was a mail service that used a horse and riders to deliver mail from East to West. The route covered 1,800 miles from Missouri to California. Riders could carry their mail in 10 days or less by changing horses about every 10 miles. In existence for less than two years from April 1860 to October 1861, the company never made money and the service stopped due to improved and much faster communication service of the transcontinental telegraph.

Visit the National Park Service Pony Express website for more information on the route. This short video also provides an overview of the Pony Express.

Pick up a Pony Express brochure at the Welcome Center to learn more about the route. Make sure to check out the statue commemorating the Pony Express just outside the Colorado Welcome Center.

Word Alert:

> **Mochilas**—Spanish word for special leather bags used by the riders.
> **Transcontinental**—going across the continent, in this case from Missouri to California.
> **Telegraph**—a system of sending messages along a wire.

Questions to Ask:

1. How do we send messages now? *(letters in the mail, phone calls, text messages)*
2. How did people in the 1860s send messages? *(letters and in some areas the telegraph)*
3. What was the job of a Pony Express rider like? *(very hard due to the long rides, weather conditions)*

Activity: Complete the matching activity after watching the [Pony Express video](#) and reviewing the brochure and to see how much you learned about the Pony Express.

[K-2nd Grade Matching Activity](#)
[Answer Key: K-2nd Grade Matching Activity](#)

[3rd - 5th Grade Matching Activity](#)
[Answer Key: 3rd - 5th Grade Matching Activity](#)

Additional Activity: Discuss with an adult how long-distance communication has changed in his/her lifetime (depending on the age of the person, answers could include no computers, no cell phones, telephone attached to the wall). What changes could occur when you are an adult?