

Central NC JA – Middle School Program

JA America Works

JA America Works provides students with examples of how business and entrepreneurship affected the economic development of the United States during the 19th century.



JA America Works enhances students' learning of the following concepts and skills:

Concepts—Benefit, Boomtown, Capital resources, Communication, Competition, Cost, Cost-benefit analysis, Demand, Emigration, Entrepreneurship, Human resources, Immigration, Industrialization, Innovation, Invention, Modes of transportation, Natural resources, Opportunity cost, Productive resources, Productivity, Pull factor, Push factor, Risk, Scarcity, Supply, Technology, Telegraphy

Skills—Analyzing information, Critical-thinking skills, Decision-making, Decoding messages, Encoding messages, Gathering, interpreting, and organizing information, Math calculations, Oral and written communication, Planning, Reading and interpreting data, Working in groups

America Works Lesson Plan

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| <p>Session One: Who Am I?</p> <p>Immigrants flocked to the United States during the second half of the 19th century (1800s), bringing a variety of languages, customs, and cultural practices. Immigrants made many contributions to their new home, especially to its economy and workforce. Students learn more about these contributions and about the immigrants themselves through reviewing biographical summaries and identifying immigrant groups, based on clues provided in the text.</p> | <p>Key Learning Objectives</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• provide examples of immigrants' contributions to the U.S. economy during the 19th century.• identify key information and characteristics related to select immigrant groups. |
| <p>Session Two: Roughing It</p> <p>Students recognize the significance agriculture played in the economic development of the United States through various examples provided during this session. Working in groups, students take the role of pioneers who moved across the American West to participate in the Homestead Act of 1862. Students learn there are opportunity costs in each decision they make.</p> | <p>Key Learning Objectives</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• give examples of how pioneers or settlers used their knowledge, skills, and experience to acquire a homestead and produce food for themselves and others.• recognize the significant role agriculture played in the economic development of the United States during the 1800s.• identify the risk factors as well as the costs and benefits involved in making a decision. |

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| <p>Session Three: Strike-It-Rich</p> <p>Students learn how natural resources played a significant role in the development of the United States economy. They also look at how supply and demand, job opportunities, entrepreneurship, and mining played a part in the rise and fall of boomtowns during the California Gold Rush.</p> | <p>Key Learning Objectives</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify examples of natural resources. • describe the boomtown businesses that were needed to support the miners and mining industry. |
| <p>Session Four: In Pursuit of Progress</p> <p>Students learn about prevalent modes of transportation used in America during the 19th century. They also work in groups to identify the productive resources—natural, human, and capital—that were necessary for the expansion of transportation during that time period. They play a game that simulates competition between a railroad company and a canal company to construct a transportation route between two towns.</p> | <p>Key Learning Objectives</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • list several basic modes of transportation used in 19th-century America. • identify the productive resources—natural, human, and capital—that influenced the development of transportation during the 19th century. |
| <p>Session Five: Communication Transformation</p> <p>Students learn how different means of communication developed in America during the 19th century. They are introduced to the telegraph, one prominent form of communication developed and used during that time that helped to expand commerce across the country. Students learn about and then use Morse Code to decipher messages in the same way Americans did during the 19th century.</p> | <p>Key Learning Objectives</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain how methods of communication developed in the 1800s helped expand commerce in the United States. • explain how the invention of the telegraph expanded business opportunities across America. |
| <p>Session Six: Now What?</p> <p>Students learn how entrepreneurs bring innovative and affordable products to market. They learn how industrialization increases productivity.</p> | <p>Key Learning Objectives</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe how industrialization led to increased productivity during the 19th century. • describe the role of entrepreneurs in bringing new products to market. • create a plan for a new innovation. |