

Title: Lesson 1 – History of our Postal System

Key Words- Postmaster, Postal System, Time-Line, Mail Carrier, Pony Express, Quirky, Modern

Grade Level- Second Grade

Time Allotted- 45 minutes (or two 30-45 minute lessons) depending upon time constraints and number of children in the class

Lesson Overview	The students will understand what a letter is and how they were delivered during the Age of Lincoln. Students will listen to a book and see a video that demonstrates how our postal system developed over time. They will construct a time-line that illustrates that development through history.
Guiding Question(s)	What are letters? How were letters delivered during the age of Lincoln? How long did it take to get a letter in the 1800s? How long does it take today? What historic events facilitated the mail system to develop more rapidly?

Learning Objectives (SWBAT – Students Will Be Able to)

- The students will understand what letters are and how they were delivered during the 1800's.
- The students will identify what historic events encouraged the U.S. mail system to develop rapidly.
- The students will construct a chronological postal transportation time-line and demonstrate their understanding of how it developed.

Standards of Learning-SOLs

History:

K.1 the students will recognize that history describes events and people of other times and places by

a) Identifying examples of past events in legends, stories, and historical accounts of Pocahontas, George Washington, Betsy Ross, and Abraham Lincoln;

2.3 The student will identify and compare changes in community life over time in terms of buildings, jobs, transportation, and population.

OAH Historical Skills Taught:

Chronological Thinking:

- Students will tell the story of the U.S. Postal System using a time-line that puts the events in order.

Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making:

- Compare and contrast what it was like mailing and receiving mail in the 1800s to today.
- Identify the events in history that facilitated the development of our mail system.

Assessment Tool(s) –

- Time-line completed and in correct order, which includes a summary to a fellow student or the teacher.
- Exit Slip answering key questions through student journaling.

Materials/Resources needed

- Multiple copies for each group, of a rare pony express artifact, envelope that took two years to reach its destination:

Found at this link:

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/A-Rare-Pony-Express-Artifact.html>

Video “The Quirky Ways of the Postal System” from website:

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/video/The-Quirky-Ways-of-the-Postal-Service.html>

- The Post Office Book: Mail and How It Moves, by Gail Gibbons



- Copies for each group: Nine word-only templates and nine corresponding transportation photos to cut and paste--(modified from Postal Pack for Elementary School Students, National Postal Museum, Smithsonian Institution) Attached to this lesson in files marked.

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- “Window into the Past” question sheet (copies for each group) (Teacher created-attached in file)



window into the past.docx

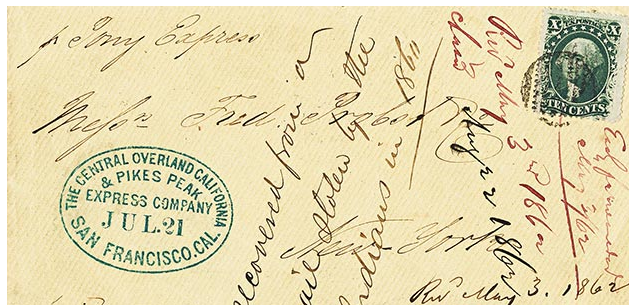
- Large, language experience sharing chart
- Student journals

Modifications (to meet needs of diverse learners)

- Students with special needs will be paired up with other learners to produce the timelines.
- Students with special needs will be asked to repeat back directions to check for understanding.
- Information is presented in various modes, auditory and visual so that all students can understand in the way that is most meaningful to them.
- Students of various reading levels are paired up so that they can “buddy read” text to clarify understanding.

Instructional Procedures/Process (How will you guide your students through this activity)

- **Opening Hook:** Students will be placed in small groups to examine a photo of an original pony express envelope from 1860.



- Each group will observe, reflect and ask questions about this envelope, recording their answers on their “Window into the Past” question sheet.
- The groups will then come together to share their reflections and make decisions about the mail of that time period. The teacher can record these responses on a large chart.

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Teacher Scholars Program

- Discussion questions will include: What it would have been like trying to send letters before the development of our modern mail service? What would it have been like to wait nearly a year or more for a reply to a letter?
- The teacher will read--- The Post Office Book: Mail and How It Moves, by Gail Gibbons. After the story, the teacher and students will list on chart paper the main components of how the mail system developed in our country over time.
- Students can check their understanding by viewing a short (5:09), on-line video from the www.smithsonianmag.com website called, "The Quirky Ways of the Postal Service," which shows how over the years, the mail has been delivered by train, donkey, bus, truck and even rocket.
- Students will be given nine blank-worded templates and eight pictures to cut out (one picture will be drawn with their idea). They will read and cut and glue to match transportation pictures with corresponding text to construct their own 9-page postal transportation time-line. One picture template will remain blank, so students can draw their own prediction for the future of mail delivery.
- Students then work together to place the completed templates in order by the years that visually represent the evolution of delivering mail and communication in our country.

Closure

- Students "buddy up" with a partner to share their time-lines and teacher checks understanding by making sure timelines are in correct order.
- An exit slip is checked off by each "buddy" to see that each student has included illustrations and dates for the main ways that that written communication has evolved over time: (1) 1852-clipper ship, (2) 1858-Butterfield's Overland Express, (3) 1860-Pony Express, (4) 1869-Fast Train, (5) early 1900s-Steam ships, (6) 1918-Early Airmail Planes, (7) 1890 to present-Mail Trucks, (8) Today- jets, (9) Future-?
- An exit slip is completed by students responding in their journals to the following questions:

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- (1) What are some of the historic events that encouraged the U.S. postal system to develop quickly?
- (2) Why was it important in the 1860s for people to get their mail?
Why is it important today?
- (3) What is the most interesting thing you learned and why?