

Read the text and answer questions 1–9.

Antoine of Oregon

A Story of the Oregon Trail
by James Otis

Susan rode with me, as she had from the beginning of the journey. Nothing of note happened to us, unless I should set down that this day was stormy, and on that day the sun shone, until we came into the valley of the North Fork of the Platte, through a pass which is known as Ash Hollow.

There we drove down a dry ravine on our winding way to the river bottoms, stopping now and then to gather a store of wild currants and gooseberries which grew in abundance.

Near the mouth of the ravine we came upon a small log cabin, which had evidently been built by trappers, but the emigrants on their way into the Oregon country had converted it into a post office, by sticking here and there, in the crevices of the logs, letters to be forwarded to their friends in the States. Hung on the wall where all might see it, was a general notice requesting any who passed on their way to the Missouri River to take these missives, and deposit them in the nearest regular post office.

The little cabin had an odd appearance, and Susan confessed that, almost for the first time since leaving Independence, she was growing homesick, solely because of seeing this post office.

After crossing the stream we came upon a party of emigrants from Ohio, having only four wagons drawn by ten yoke of oxen, and driving six cows.

Truly it was a small company to set out on so long a march, and when the leader begged that they be allowed to join us, I could not object, understanding that unless the strangers had someone of experience to guide them, the chances were strongly against their arriving at the Columbia River.

There was in the company a girl of about Susan's age, whose name was Mary Parker, and from that time I had two companions as I rode in advance of the train.

I could have found no fault with these new members of our company, for they obeyed my orders without question from the oldest man to the youngest child.

Mary Parker was a companionable girl, and she and Susan often cheered me on the long

way, for even when the rain was coming down in torrents, drenching them to the skin, they rode by my side, laughing and singing.

On the twenty-fourth day of June we arrived at Fort Laramie, in the midst of a heavy storm. We had traveled six hundred sixty-seven miles since leaving Independence, if our course had been the most direct; but allowing for the distances some of us had ridden in search of cattle or here and there off the trail looking for a camping place it must have been that we made at least a hundred miles more.

Fort Laramie is on the west side of a stream known as Laramie's Fork and about two miles from the Platte River. It is a trading post belonging to the North American Fur Company, and built of adobe, by which I mean sun dried bricks, with walls not less than two feet thick and twelve or fourteen feet high.

This fort, if it can be called such, is simply a wall enclosing an open square of twenty-five yards each way, along the sides of which are the dwellings, storerooms, blacksmith shops, carpenter shops, and offices all fronting inside, while from the outside can be seen only two gates, one of which faces the north and the other the south.

Just south of the fort is a wall enclosing about an acre of land, which is used as a stable or corral, while a short distance farther on is a cultivated field, the scanty crops of which give good evidence that the soil is not suitable for farming.

About a mile below Fort Laramie, and having much the same appearance as that fortification, although not so large, is Fort John, which is in possession of the St. Louis Fur Company.

We were given quarters inside Fort Laramie, which was much to our liking.

Then, when we set off once more, it was with greater cheerfulness and increased hope, for the way could not have been improved nor made more pleasant.

Ten days after we celebrated the independence of this country we encamped near the Narrows, within sight of the snow-capped Wind River Mountains, and then it was that our company got some idea of what a herd of buffaloes looked like.

When we broke camp in the morning it seemed as if the entire land was covered with the animals. They were in such throngs that the sound of their hoofs was like the rumbling of distant thunder.

One could compare the scene to nothing more than to an ocean of dark water surrounding us on every side, pitching and tossing as if under the influence of a strong wind.

It was such a sight as I had seen more than once, but to my companions it was terrifying at the same time that it commanded their closest attention.

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Item	Grade	Claim	Target	DOK	Standard(s)
#2	8	1	2	3	RL.2

Evidence Statement
The student will determine or summarize a theme or central idea of a text using supporting evidence.

What is the author's message about the Oregon Trail? Use details from the text to support your answer.

Score	Rationale	Exemplar
2	<p><u>A response:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives sufficient evidence of the ability to determine/summarize the theme/central idea/message, or to analyze the development of the central idea Includes specific examples/details that make clear reference to the text Adequately explains the theme/central idea/message or analysis with clearly relevant information based on the text 	<p>The author's message is about even though the journey may be tough, with great people around, you can make it in the end and can have a great reward. In the text, it states that Susan and Mary Parker were great companions and cheered her on. It also says that they were glad to have quarters in Fort Laramie. They faced many roadblocks traveling to Fort Laramie, including storms and being homesick, but made to the camp and pleased to be there. They felt rewarded for their tough journey.</p>
1	<p><u>A response:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives limited evidence of the ability to determine/summarize the theme/central idea/message, or to analyze the development of the central idea Includes vague/limited examples/details that make reference to the text Explains the theme/central idea/message or analysis with vague/limited information based on the text 	<p>The authors message is that the Oregon Trail is hard and heart-breaking. Some people may even die. People can also get homesick, but it is nice when you have friends to keep you company.</p>
0	<p><u>A response:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives no evidence of the ability to determine/summarize the theme/central idea/message, or to analyze the development of the central idea <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives the theme/central idea/message or analysis, but includes no examples or no examples/details that make reference to the text <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives the theme/central idea/message or analysis, but includes no explanation or relevant information from the text 	<p>The authors message is that its a hard trail to go on.</p>