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**Teacher's Guide**

# **GOING WEST:**

**The Story of the  
Transcontinental Railroad**

**By Greg Alexander &  
Dave Pierini**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER THE PLAY

Before the Play.....	3
Synopsis, Themes, Theatrical Terms	
Pre-Show Discussion Questions	
During and After the Play.....	4
Audience Behavior	
Post-Show Discussion Questions	

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Vocabulary and Science.....	5
Words of Determination	
Very Resourceful	
Writing, Speaking and Listening.....	6
What's Your Point?	
Tell Your Story	
What's in a Name?	
History and Social Science.....	7
The Big Move	
Community Builders	
Anti-Bullying and Character Counts.....	8
Anti-Bullying Thematic Questions for <i>Going West</i>	
Character Counts Thematic Questions for <i>Going West</i>	

## RESOURCES & ADDENDA

Further Reading and Learning, Index.....	9
"Words of Determination" Word Search.....	10

# BEFORE THE PLAY

## SYNOPSIS

Ready, set, go! Join the race to connect America's embattled East with its flourishing West. But building this modern marvel of engineering—the Transcontinental Railroad—will be no easy task. From blasting through the Sierra Nevada Mountains to exposing sabotage, this epic tale celebrates the men and women who made history by joining our vast nation together from sea to shining sea!

**THEMES:** California History, US History, Science, Anti-Bullying and Character Counts: Perseverance, Work Ethic, Cooperation

## THEATRE TERMS

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

3.0 Historical & Cultural Context

**SCRIPT:** The written play that tells actors what to say and what to do.

**ACTORS:** The people who say the words and do the actions on stage.

**CHARACTER:** The person or thing that an actor pretends to be or portrays.

**DIRECTOR:** The person who tells the actors how to say the words and how to do the actions.

**SCENERY or the SET:** The backdrops, furniture, and other pieces that show the audience where the play takes place.

**COSTUMES or WARDROBE:** The clothes and other objects an actor wears to show who they are.

**PROPS:** The things that actors use (such as a book or broom) during the play.

**SOUND:** The sound effects (like a doorbell or thunder) that help to tell the story.

**LIGHTING:** The lights that help the audience to see the actors and scenery on the stage.

**THEATER:** The place where a play is performed. It is from the Greek word *Theatron*, which means “watching place”.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration

3.1 4.1 5.1 6.1 7.1 8.1

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

3.6 4.6 5.6 6.6 7.6 8.6

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

California: A Changing State; Growth and Conflict

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

1. What is the difference between a play and a movie? What does it mean to adapt a story into a play or movie?
2. Introduce the terms listed in the Theatrical Terms list provided. Can you give examples of these terms from plays or movies you've seen?
3. In this play, you will meet the “Big Four”—Leland Stanford, Collis Huntington, Mark Hopkins, and Charles Crocker—as well as Theodore Judah. What do you know about these people?
4. The Transcontinental Railroad was built between 1863-1869. What else was going on in America and other parts of the world during this time? Record your answers for later use.
5. An immigrant is someone who travels from one place to build a new life in another. What groups of people have settled in your neighborhood or town and where did they come from? How have they influenced your community?
6. What natural resources are unique to California?

# DURING AND AFTER THE PLAY

## DURING THE PLAY

### AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

While watching a live theatre performance, it is important to sit quietly and listen. It does not mean that you need to be silent. Be sure to laugh at the funny parts (or cry at the sad parts), and certainly applaud at the end! Actors love it when an audience actively watches and listens.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration

3.1-3 4.1-3 5.1-3 6.1-3 7.1-3 8.1-3

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

3.6 4.6 5.6 6.6 7.6 8.6

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

California: A Changing State; Growth and Conflict

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

4.0 Aesthetic Valuing

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

1. Refer back to the Theatrical Terms list on page 3. What examples of these terms did you find in the play?
  - a. What did you think of the scenery, costumes, and props? Did they help you understand the story? Why or why not?
  - b. Could you tell which actors played which roles? How did the actors change from one character to another? Could you follow the story when each actor played multiple characters? Why or why not?
  - c. How did the music, lighting, and sound effects used during the show help you understand the story?
2. What themes did the play explore and how did you find them?
3. Who was your favorite character from the play and why? Who was your least favorite character and why? Who was your favorite actor and why?
4. Which characters from the play were immigrants? Where did they come from? Why did they leave their homelands? What knowledge and skills did they bring with them? How were they treated by Americans and other immigrants?
5. How did Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, Collis Huntington, and Mark Hopkins work together to build the Central Pacific Railroad? What did Theodore Judah do? Why did Judah's partnership with the Big Four fall apart?

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

## VOCABULARY

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

### Activity 1: Words of Determination

LANGUAGE: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

3.4 4.4 5.4 6.4 7.4 8.4

READING (Foundational Skills): Phonics and Word Recognition

3.3 4.3 5.3

Learn how to use some of the words you heard during the play.

- |                     |               |                   |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Transcontinental | 7. Productive | 13. Despondent    |
| 2. Pacific          | 8. Altitude   | 14. Elevation     |
| 3. Pioneer          | 9. Heroine    | 15. Corporation   |
| 4. Treacherous      | 10. Sheer     | 16. Hire          |
| 5. Engineer         | 11. Survey    | 17. Determination |
| 6. Route            | 12. Grade     |                   |

Use a DICTIONARY to do the following:

- Define each word and identify its part(s) of speech
- Divide each word into syllables and identify its root and language of origin plus any prefixes or suffixes. Can you add any prefixes or suffixes to make different words?
- Do any of these words have multiple meanings or usages? How do you know which meaning the author or speaker intends?
- Choose 3 words from the list above and see how many other words you can think of that rhyme with them
- Choose five of these words and see if you can use each in a sentence

## SCIENCE

### Activity 2: Very Resourceful

SCIENCE

Earth Science 6.6

As seen in the play, many of the supplies needed to build the railroad had to be shipped to California from the East. Building the railroad also allowed many towns to flourish because it brought them resources from other places.

Using the prompts below and ideas of your own, decide as a class what resources are needed and where they might have come from during the 1860s. What resources were available out West? What had to come from other places?

What do you need to...

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Build a railroad track   | • Build a wooden house   |
| • Make a dress             | • Build a ship           |
| • Build a stone Courthouse | • Make a set of earrings |

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

## Activity 3: A Good Investment

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

4.1 5.1 6.1 7.1 8.1

In order to build the Central Pacific Railroad, the Big Four had to get a lot of people to give them a lot of money. Write a letter explaining why you think someone should buy stocks and bonds to invest in the railroad. Consider the following points:

- What are the advantages of having a Transcontinental Railroad for California and the local community?
- Why might some people be against the idea of building a transcontinental railroad?
- What would someone gain from investing in the railroad project?

## SPEAKING AND LISTENING

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension and Collaboration

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Listen carefully to your classmates' presentations and ask them questions.

## WRITING

WRITING: Production and Distribution of Writing

1.5 2.4,5 3.4,5 4.4,5 5.4,5

WRITING: Range of Writing

LANGUAGE: Conventions of Standard English

LANGUAGE: Knowledge of Language

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

Be sure to revise and edit what you write.

## Activity 4: Tell Your Story

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

3.3 4.3 5.3 6.3 7.3 8.3

Review your answers from Question 4 of your Pre-Show Discussion. How would these events influence or be influenced by the construction of transcontinental railroad?

Drawing on this discussion, have your students write a story from the perspective of someone living during this time whose life is impacted by the building of the railroad. Have them describe an event that illustrates the impact of the railroad using sensory details, literary devices, and interactions with others. How does the railroad impact their community economically or socially? What new opportunities are available to them? What new challenges do they face?

Examples:

- A newly-freed enslaved person from the South
- A farmer immigrating from Ireland or Central Europe
- A member of the Sioux tribe
- A student from Sacramento looking to study law

## Activity 5: What's in a Name?

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

California: A Changing State; Growth and Conflict

WRITING: Text Types and Purposes

3.3 4.3 5.3 6.3 7.3 8.3

WRITING Research to Build and Present Knowledge

3.7 4.7 5.7 6.7 7.7 8.7

Throughout the play, you met many people who contributed to the growth of the Sacramento Valley and California. Some have places, like cities, public buildings or monuments, that bear their names.

For Example: Sutter's Fort, the City of Folsom, the Crocker Art Museum, Stanford University, Theodore Judah Elementary School

Think about the names given to towns, neighborhoods, public buildings, parks and natural features, or monuments near you and investigate how that place got its name using multiple sources. Write a short history of the place you chose and share it with the class.



# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

## HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

### HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Continuity and Change; California: A Changing State;

Making a New Nation, Ancient Civilizations; Medieval and Early Modern Times; Growth and Conflict

### VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

### Activity 6: The Big Move

In the play, Chinese and Irish immigrants helped to build the Transcontinental Railroad when they came to America. Immigration and emigration occur throughout the history of every civilization. People from a different place and culture will move in, or immigrate, while others from the civilization will move away, or emigrate. This movement is usually permanent and when people immigrate to a new place, they adopt some of the customs of their new home while introducing customs from the old.

Think about a civilization that you are studying and how immigration has influenced its history and culture. As a class or in groups, create a map, diagram, or storyboard that can answer following questions:

1. When did your civilization experience large amounts of immigration? Where did the immigrants come from and where did they settle?
2. Why did the immigrants choose to leave their home? Why did they choose to move into the new area?
3. What did the immigrants do once they settled? How did they participate in the local economy? How did they influence their new community culturally?

### Activity 7: Community Builders

The Transcontinental Railroad has been called the “Internet of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century”—wherever it went, it brought new economic opportunities as well as contentions between white settlers and Native American tribes who had lived in the West for thousands of years. Farms, ranches, and towns sprung up all along the railroad, which transported crops, cattle, and other goods back and forth across the country.

Have your students choose a business from the list below (or one of their own) to run in/near an imaginary railroad town. Have them make a poster or model showing their place of business (the inside or the outside) and describe their business to the class. Why would these businesses need the railroad to survive? What would the railroad bring them? What would it export for them? What other purposes would it serve?

General store

Doctor's office

Mill

Ferrier/Blacksmith shop

Ranch

Feed store (for animals)

Newspaper

Carpentry shop

Tailor's shop

Hotel

Restaurant

Farm

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

## CHARACTER COUNTS

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Comprehension & Collaboration

3.1-3 4.1-3 5.1-3 6.1-3 7.1-3 8.1-3

SPEAKING & LISTENING: Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas

1.4,6 2.6 3.6 4.6 5.6 6.6 7.6 8.6

VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS

5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications

### Anti-Bullying Thematic Questions for *Going West*

1. Which characters in the story were the bullies? Which characters got bullied?
2. What did the characters do to bully each other? Why are these types of behavior unacceptable?
3. In what ways did characters mistreat other characters? What were the consequences of these actions? What was learned through these experiences?
4. How did the bullied characters react? What did they do to stop others from mistreating them? How else could they have reacted?
5. What are some good or constructive ways to respond when you meet someone who is different from you in some way? What responses are inappropriate in this situation?

### Character Counts Thematic Questions for *Going West*

Perseverance:

1. What does it mean to persevere or to have perseverance?
2. Which characters from the show persevered and what was the consequence? Which characters did not persevere and what happened to them?
3. Are there any characters who could have persevered better or more? How so?
4. Describe a time when you persevered and were rewarded for your efforts. What did you do?
5. Can you describe a time when you wish you had persevered?

Cooperation and Communication:

1. What does it mean to cooperate with someone? When was the last time you cooperated with someone to get something done? What did you do?
2. When during the play did characters cooperate and what happened because of this? What happened when characters refused to cooperate?
3. What would have happened if...
  - a. Charles Crocker hadn't told Theodore Judah that he was crazy?
  - b. The Iron Men hadn't caught Durant when he tried to muck up the works?
  - c. James and Hannah hadn't helped Pearl start her restaurant?

Work Ethic:

1. To have a good work ethic is to be willing to work hard towards a goal even when working is difficult, tiring, or tedious. Why is it important to have a good work ethic? What are the benefits?
2. Some people say "work smarter, not harder." What does this mean? What are the benefits to "working smarter?" What are the drawbacks?
3. Which characters had a good work ethic and which characters did not? Were there circumstances that influenced a character's work ethic? Were these influences positive or negative and what were their results?
4. If you were in charge of team that had to work to achieve a goal, how would you help your workers develop or maintain a good work ethic?



## RESOURCES & ADDENDA

### FURTHER READING & LEARNING

#### Electronic Resources

The Transcontinental Railroad (Article and Video from the History Channel)  
<http://www.history.com/topics/inventions/transcontinental-railroad>

Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum  
<http://cpr.org/Museum/index.html>

#### Web Activities

Immigration: An Oral History Writing Workshop  
<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/activities/teaching-content/immigration-oral-history-writing-workshop/>

## INDEX

### READING

Foundation Skills: Phonics and Word  
 Recognition: 5

### LANGUAGE

Conventions of Standard English: 6  
 Knowledge of Language: 6  
 Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: 5

### WRITING

Text Types and Purposes: 6  
 Production and Distribution of Writing: 6  
 Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 6

### SPEAKING & LISTENING

Comprehension & Collaboration: 3, 4, 6, 8  
 Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas: 3, 4, 6, 8

### SCIENCE

Earth Science: 5

### HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE

Continuity and Change: 7  
 California: A Changing State: 3, 4, 6, 7  
 Making a New Nation: 7  
 Ancient Civilizations: 7  
 Medieval and Early Modern Times: 7  
 Growth and Conflict: 3, 4, 6, 7

### VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

1.0 Artistic Perception: 3, 4, 7  
 3.0 Historical & Cultural Context: 3  
 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing: 4  
 5.0 Connections, Relationships,  
 Applications: 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

# Words of Determination

## Word Search

Find these words in the word search.

- |                     |               |                   |
|---------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Transcontinental | 7. Productive | 13. Despondent    |
| 2. Pacific          | 8. Altitude   | 14. Elevation     |
| 3. Pioneer          | 9. Heroine    | 15. Corporation   |
| 4. Treacherous      | 10. Sheer     | 16. Hire          |
| 5. Engineer         | 11. Survey    | 17. Determination |
| 6. Route            | 12. Grade     |                   |

N D D H E G Y I C V S O R Q Q  
Y O M D L S Z J W S U R V E Y  
A H I B E G C U L Q O U M M D  
N X T T V S B I X J R U W T N  
F D M Q A S P G F E E M S O R  
R A E N T N N O N I H E I D E  
S O X K I Q I G N G C T R Y E  
X R U L O F I M R D A A M W N  
G Y C T N N E A R R E W P S O  
F O A Y E N D M O E R N K H I  
U Z O E I E V P Z O T V T E P  
I M R O G N R G Y K Q E K E L  
B G R D P O W I P M S H D R E  
J E H H C P R O D U C T I V E  
H E R I H M F E D U T I T L A

# SCHOOL MATINEES

## You come to us!



**"My kids absolutely loved it, as did the adults!"**

- 8th Grade Teacher, Arcade Fundamental Middle School

### THE GARDEN OF RIKKI TIKKI TAVI

September 29 - November 4, 2016

In this wild comic adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's famous book, the loveable mongoose Rikki Tikki Tavi squares off against Nag, the fearsome cobra. Ages 6 and up.

### ROBIN HOOD

November 17 - December 23, 2016

This action packed adventure brings to life the story of Robin Hood and his merry men as they steal from the rich to give to the poor. Featuring sword play, chivalry and lots of laughs! Ages 6 and up.

### GOING WEST: THE STORY OF THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

February 23 - March 31, 2017

This original work celebrates the men and women who made history by joining our vast nation together - from sea to shining sea! Ages 10 and up.

### JUNIE B JONES IS NOT A CROOK

April 20 - May 26, 2017

B Street Family Series beloved favorite Junie B Jones is back with an all new adventure. Join us for this delightful adaptation of Barbara Park's endearing book. Ages 5 and up.

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# WORKSHOPS & RESIDENCIES

## We come to you!

**"We've enjoyed the B Street Playwriting experience tremendously!"**

- 6th Grade Teacher, Encina Preparatory High School

### Introduction to Playwriting

Single interactive 90-Minute Playwriting Workshop designed to inspire and empower students to write their own plays.

### Playwriting Towards Production

Three interactive 90-Minute Playwriting Workshops designed to lead students from inspired ideas to completed drafts of original plays.

### After-School Workshops & Residencies

Our Teaching Artists will tailor your after-school program to suit your organization's needs. Participants:

- Learn theatre games and exercises!
- Develop communication and performance skills!
- Perform plays either from their own writing or from B Street's own catalog of scripts!



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[www.bstreettheatre.org/for-educators/workshops-&-residencies](http://www.bstreettheatre.org/for-educators/workshops-&-residencies)

# SCHOOL TOUR

## We come to you!



**"Our students laughed and were completely engaged the moment we were seated!"**

- 2nd Grade Teacher, St. James School

### FANTASY AMERICANAI

October 24 - November 23, 2016

A celebration of American Folk Tales & Legends! From the Little Big Horn, to the Top of Old Smoky, to the Legend of Blackbeard The Pirate - these tried and true tales are guaranteed to keep you engaged and in stitches!

### FANTASY AMERICANANA - WITH A TWIST!

November 28 - December 23, 2016

The B Street School Tour performers add our traditional holiday twist to these classic tales!

### HISTORY EXTRAVAGANZA 3

January 16 - March 10, 2017

From Ancient Greece to the California Gold Rush, from Medieval Europe to the Making of a New Nation, and onto the Industrial Revolution! Enjoy this veritable buffet of select plays written by students of ALL grade levels based on topics tied directly to curriculum.

### FANTASY FESTIVAL 31

March 27 - June 2, 2017

Now in our 31st year! The winning plays of our annual playwriting contest for kids. Behold the extraordinary results of putting a professional theatre's staff at the service of young writers' talents.

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