



Lesson Two: Wyoming Bound - Homesteaders

Grade Level: 2nd Grade

Time: 45-60 minutes

Essential question: How can we be stewards for Wyoming's agriculture to benefit current and future generations?

Objective: Students will be introduced to the history of agriculture in Wyoming and agriculture's significance for the state.

Purpose: Students learn about the history of agriculture in Wyoming. Students develop an understanding of the role of agriculture in Wyoming and why it is important to practice good stewardship.

Required Materials/Resources:

- Timeline (one per student)
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZrxvfAQbUs>
The History of Homestead (Source 1) *Video length: 1 minute 22 seconds.*
- *History of Agriculture* teacher read-aloud
- Chart paper
- Exit ticket (one per student)
- Possible book resources:
 - *The Homestead Act of 1862: A Primary Source History of the Settlement of the American Heartland in the Late 19th Century (Primary Sources in American History)* by Jason Porterfield
 - *The Homestead Act (True Books: Westward Expansion)* by Elaine Landau

Suggested Teacher Preparation:

- Preview *The History of Homestead* video.
- Review the *History of Agriculture* read-aloud listed above.
- Prepare anchor chart for step 4.

Standards:

Social Studies: SS2.4.1 (Explicit)

Vocabulary: (use a reference as needed)

- **Acre** - a unit of land area (about the size of a football field)
- **Crop** - a cultivated plant that is grown for food, fiber, or livestock feed
- **Cultivate** - preparation and use of the soil/land for crops
- **Diversity** - a range of different things
- **Farmer** - a person who cultivates land or crops and may also raise livestock
- **Homestead Act** - law that allowed people to head west and settle in Wyoming by claiming land as private property

Instructional Procedure/Steps:

1. Ask students to review the definition of agriculture and stewardship from the previous lesson with a partner or in small groups. Monitor discussions to ensure students have an appropriate understanding of the definition for agriculture and stewardship. Have students share out examples of agriculture and stewardship. Clarify definitions if needed. Say: **“In today’s lesson, we will be learning about the history of agriculture in Wyoming.”**
2. Provide background for agricultural development in Wyoming by showing the short video about the Homestead Act:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZrxvfAQbUs>. Before playing the video, say: **“While watching the video, think about this question: How did the Homestead Act contribute to people coming to Wyoming?”** After watching the video, have students share their answers to the question. *Students should understand that people came to Wyoming initially because the land was inexpensive, and*

TEACHER NOTE:
Wyoming is about 62 million acres. Discuss with students that almost half of Wyoming’s land is involved in agriculture.

many wouldn't have been able to afford land otherwise.

3. Pass out timelines to students. While you read the *History of Agriculture* text, have students follow along with the timeline to identify the type of crops grown in Wyoming.
4. When finished, lead the class in a discussion of how farming in Wyoming has changed through time. Have students share their responses after each question. Make note of observations on a class anchor chart. Ask students:
 - **“What do you notice about the timeline?”**
 - **“What do you notice about the number of farms in the state throughout the timeline?”**
 - **“What do you notice about the number of crops in the state throughout the timeline?”**
 - **“How has the change in the number of farms over time impacted our land?”**
 - **“How does the timeline give us evidence of Wyoming farmers practicing stewardship of the land?”**
5. Using observations about the timeline, have students share the following sentence stem:
“I noticed _____ which made me wonder _____.”

TEACHER NOTE: It is important during this discussion that students understand farming has continued and increased over time due to farmers being stewards of the land. Today's American farmer feeds about 155 people worldwide. In 1970, that number was 73.

Assessment:

Pass out exit tickets asking, “What are some ways farmers are stewards?” Collect when students are finished. Check that student responses make sense.

Credits/Sources:

1. University of Wyoming Extension Office. (2013, March 18). *The History of Homestead*. Retrieved June 22, 2017, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZrxvfAQbUs>
2. The Gazette. (2014, May 24). *Fact Check: Reynolds says one Iowa farmer feeds 155 people worldwide*. Retrieved September 4, 2018, from <https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/government/fact-check/fact-check-reynolds-says-one-iowa-farmer-feeds-155-people-worldwide-20140524>

3. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. (1991) *Homestead Act*. Retrieved June 22, 2017, from <http://www.history.com/topics/homestead-act>
4. State of Wyoming. (2013). *Wyoming History*. Retrieved June 22, 2017, from <http://www.wyo.gov/about-wyoming/wyoming-history>
5. US Department of Agriculture, National Agricultural Statistics Service. Rhonda Brandt, State Statistician