

Load Up Your Wagon!

PIONEER LESSON 1

What is a *pioneer*? Someone who is the first to do something! In American history, it's the name we often give to the people who ventured first into a new area to settle there permanently.

Calling these settlers "pioneers" can be a little confusing, though, since we know they were not really the first people to live in Florida. Native Americans were here a long time before the arrival of folks whose roots were in Europe or Africa. But since Florida was seen as very much a wilderness when these new residents arrived in the 19th century, the name "pioneers" stuck for settlers who came to develop the land and make permanent homes here



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Here in Central Florida, pioneers moved into the wilderness during much of the 19th century. Before the Civil War, the new arrivals were mostly southerners, but after the war, northerners and immigrants from other countries came to make a new life in Florida as well.

We call the land where pioneers settle the frontier, which means an area that is largely wild land, without houses, farms, or towns.

Life for pioneers on the Florida frontier was hard! Imagine coming to a strange new place that does not already contain the things you need to live. When the pioneers arrived in Central Florida, there were no grocery stores where they could buy something to eat. How would they have gotten food? They had to find or create their own, by hunting, fishing, raising animals, or growing crops.



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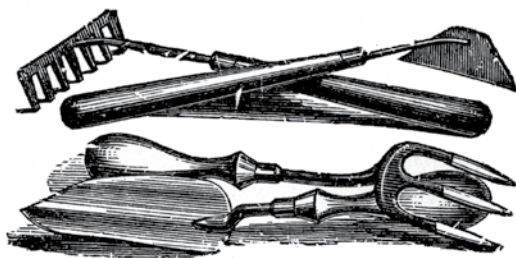
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They also had no stores where they could buy clothes, soap, or dishes – or even the tools or supplies for their houses. In fact, they didn't even have houses to move into at all!

How did the Florida pioneers get the things they needed to survive on the frontier? They learned to rely on the wilderness around them to provide some things, and they also brought some things with them. Since they traveled by wagon, though, they faced tough choices before their journey. The wagon had to hold all their supplies and also have room for the whole family to travel as well.

What kinds of things do you think the pioneers would try to bring with them? What things would they rely on the wilderness for? Would they have brought the lumber to build a house with them? Probably not, since there were trees in the wilderness they could use. What about food? Would they have brought barrels of food with them?

Maybe some, but the better plan would be for them to bring the things they would need to get food from the wilderness, such as hunting supplies or seeds to grow crops.



Load Up Your Wagon!

ACTIVITY

Make a list of things you would need to survive on the Florida frontier. Could you get them from the wilderness or would you need to pack them in your wagon? Think about what you would need in an entire day, like clothes, toys, furniture, or dishes. Once you have your list, you'll create your wagon and load it with your supplies. Do you think you'll have enough space to bring it all?

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Three sheets of paper
- Markers or crayons
- Classroom glue (or tape)
- Scissors



Load Up Your Wagon!

ACTIVITY

WHAT TO DO:

1. Cut two sheets of paper into 8.5" squares.
2. Color one square brown. (This will become the inside of the wagon.)
3. Cut the top corners of both squares to round them, so they are in the shape of a covered wagon.
4. Fold the white square in half like a hot dog, and cut it down the middle.
5. Glue or tape the white pieces to the brown square along the outside edges.
6. Fold back the white pieces to create the wagon flaps, so that you can see inside the wagon.
7. On the remaining sheet of paper, draw all the supplies from your list of things to bring with you.
8. Cut out your supplies and glue or tape them into your wagon.

Do you have enough space for all your things to fit without overlapping on top of one another? If you don't have enough space, you may need to make some hard decisions about what to leave behind!



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This lesson helps reinforce these Florida State Standards for K-5th grade:

- SS.K.A.2.1 Compare children and families of today with those in the past.
- SS.1.A.2.1 Understand history tells the story of people and events of other times and places.
- SS.1.A.2.2 Compare life now with life in the past.
- SS.2.A.2.5 Identify reasons people came to the United States throughout history.
- SS.4.A.1.2 Synthesize information related to Florida history through print and electronic media.
- SS.4.A.4.2 Describe pioneer life in Florida.

