Overview

From the earliest days of pioneer settlement, a large segment of Oregon’s economy has been based on resource extraction of one kind or another. The Pacific Northwest is especially rich in natural resources such as timber, fish, water, minerals, and soil. Harvesting these commodities allowed the economy of the region to develop quickly, but over the years, the people of Oregon learned some hard lessons about what can result when too much of a natural resource is used up too quickly. This lesson will focus on the history of one of Oregon’s most impactful resource industries: timber extraction.

Oregon Common Core State Standards

Language Arts Standards: See below for a full list of applicable standards.

- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.6-8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.6-8.3 Delineate a speaker’s argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.6-8.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Social Studies Standards:

- Historical Knowledge 6.2 Identify examples of the social, political, cultural, and economic development in key areas of the Western Hemisphere.
- Historical Thinking 6.8 Analyze cause-and-effect relationships, including the importance of individuals, ideas, human interests, and beliefs.
- Geography 6.11 Distinguish among different types of maps, and use them to analyze an issue in the Western Hemisphere.
- Geography 6.15 Explain how people have adapted to or changed the physical environment in the Western Hemisphere.
Geography 6.16 Explain how technological developments, societal decisions, and personal practices influence sustainability in the Western Hemisphere.

Materials

- Historic Oregon Newspapers website
- Access to the Internet
- Copies of articles
- Copies of maps
- Copies of role background
- Poster paper (optional)
- Graph paper (optional)

Lesson

- Introduction: Introduce the topic of study.
  - Students will be using the Historic Oregon Newspapers website to build background knowledge on the historic prominence of the timber industry in Oregon.
- Building background knowledge: Internet research using website and analysis of lumber export.
  - Direct students to the advanced search page.
  - Students will type in the complete phrase “lumber mills.”
  - You may wish to give students certain newspapers to research.
  - Give students adequate time to sift through the newspaper results.
- Discussion: Bring students together to discuss their findings and observations.
- Some discussion questions to consider:
  - How many page matches does the search turn up?
  - What did the articles say?
  - What is your initial reaction to what you saw in the results?
- Additional background knowledge: Now that students have an understanding of the significance of lumber in Oregon history, they will analyze the amount of lumber that was exported in 1904.
  - You may wish to perform this activity as a whole class or in small groups.
  - Pass out copies of the article “Commerce with the Whole World” from Morning Oregonian.
  - Each section describes the amount of goods that were imported. Each section is organized into parts of the world: the Orient (Asia), South Africa, Europe, Australia, South America, and Papeete (Polynesia). At the end of each section, “Recapitulation” tallies up all major exports.
  - Have students browse each section to see patterns and find the level of lumber exports that were delivered to each country.
  - This can be done as a class or in small groups.
  - Chart the board feet, as well as the dollar value.
- Discussion: Bring the class together to discuss the levels of lumber exported.
Some discussion questions to consider:
  o What was the total board feet of Oregon lumber exported from Portland in 1903?
  o What was the total dollar value of these exports?
  o Which regions of the world bought the most Oregon timber?
  o Why do you think so?
  o Why do you think some didn’t buy as much timber?

Additional background knowledge: To further build background knowledge, provide students with a visual record of Oregon’s turn-of-the-century lumber industry.

You may wish to present these pictorial features to the whole class:
  o “From Forest to Mill” from Sunday Oregonian, September 30, 1900
  o “Through Mill to Market from Sunday Oregonian, October 7, 1900
  o “Millions in Oregon Lumber” from Morning Oregonian, January 1, 1903
  o “And Up-to-Date Oregon Logging Camp” from Sunday Oregonian, May 21, 1905
  o For an additional visual, you may wish to provide students with a map of the historic progression of deforestation across North America. One has been provided below, or at the Penn State College of Earth and Mineral Sciences website.

Discussion: Pose the following question for discussion.
  o What conclusions can we draw after examining maps showing the extent of U.S. old-growth forests in 1620, 1850, 1920, and the present day?

Transition: Prepare students for debate.
  o What we think of as “environmental awareness” is a relatively new concept. In the pioneer days, people who settled in Oregon had an entirely different way of looking at the land. From their journals and letters, we know that many appreciated Oregon’s unspoiled, natural beauty. At the same time, they couldn’t help but view the environment in light of its economic potential. The “bounties of nature” in the Pacific Northwest seemed inexhaustible. So little, if any, thought was given to preserving nature for future generations.
  o As the 19th century came to a close, a new relationship toward the environment emerged. This time period was known as the Progressive Era, and many of the country’s old assumptions were being reexamined by a new generation of thinkers and political leaders. Among them were Theodore Roosevelt, president of the United States; Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the U.S. Forestry Service; and John Muir, the celebrated naturalist and founder of the Sierra Club.
  o As a precursor to the debate activity below, students may be assigned biographic research on Roosevelt, Pinchot, and Muir.

Lesson activity: Debating forest preservation.
  o Break students into three groups: Laissez-Faire, Conservationist, and Environmentalist.
  o Pass out a role sheet for each student to prepare for the debate.
  o Quickly discuss each position.
  o Remind students to stay in character, even if they disagree with the position.
  o Give students time to research and prepare arguments. Resources are provided below.
  o Giving students enough time to debate their position’s concerns, offering rebuttals and questions.

Discussion: Bring students together to discuss the debate.
Some discussion questions to consider:
- Do you disagree or agree with your position? Why?
- Did someone persuade you to his or her side?
- What is your idea to help prevent deforestation?

Debrief: Bring students together to debrief and connect the debate to present-day issues.
- Most of the world’s remaining virgin forestland is tropical rainforest. Here, we see many of the same patterns of deforestation playing out as they did in the United States in previous centuries. It is here that the contemporary environmental debate is centered.
- The U.S. Geological Survey maintains Earthshots, the website showing environmental changes as viewed from space. A series of satellite images of Rondônia, Brazil, illustrate the spread of deforestation over an 18-year period. Sharing these images with the class can be an excellent way to tie in this lesson from Oregon’s past to the present day.
Resources

Historic progression of deforestation across the North American continent.
Links

- Earliest mention of “forest preservation” in a digitized Oregon newspaper: “Tree Culture-Information Wanted,” *Willamette Farmer*, April 4, 1884
- “Use the Forests: President Says They Must Not Be Destroyed,” *Oregonian*, January 6, 1905: [http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn83025138/1905-01-06/ed-1/seq-4](http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn83025138/1905-01-06/ed-1/seq-4)
- “Take Steps to Protect the Forests of America,” *Coos Bay Times*, December 10, 1908, pages 1 and 4: [http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn85033159/1908-12-10/ed-1/seq-1](http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn85033159/1908-12-10/ed-1/seq-1) [http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn85033159/1908-12-10/ed-1/seq-4](http://oregonnews.uoregon.edu/lccn/sn85033159/1908-12-10/ed-1/seq-4)
The **Laissez-faire** position held to the belief that legal property rights were sacred and binding: owners of private property, including timber companies, should be able to do whatever they saw fit with land they owned. This approach, in their eyes, was the most conducive to business and commerce, creating the most jobs and profits for the national economy. (This was the position of lumber business leaders and their allies.)

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You Are: **Conservationist**

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<td>The <strong>Conservationist</strong> position stressed that the laissez-faire approach was wasteful and inefficient. Rather than allowing individual businesspersons free rein to dispose of natural resources under their control, they preferred a national plan and regulations devised by experts to maximize the long-term economic benefits of natural resources. (This was the position of Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot.)</td>
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You Are: **Environmentalist**

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<td>The <strong>Environmentalist</strong> position asserted that nature was nearly sacred and humans were intruders. People could visit and look upon nature on a limited scale, but they shouldn’t be allowed to alter or exploit the natural environment. It strenuously opposed timber cutting on most lands. (This was the position of John Muir and the Sierra Club.)</td>
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Debate Rules

You Must...
- Be Respectful.
- Stay in character.
- Take a turn to speak.
- Use evidence-based info.

You Can...
- Ask questions.
- Ask for clarification.
- Provide rebuttals.
- Provide an opening statement.
- Provide a closing statement.

You Can’t...
- Use personal views.
- Attack an opponent on a personal level.
Continued list of applicable Language Arts standards for grades 9-12

- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.11-12.3 Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Continued list of applicable Social Studies standards for grades 8-12

- Historical Thinking 8.8 Evaluate information from a variety of sources and perspectives.
- Historical Thinking 8.9 Construct or evaluate a written historical argument demonstrating an understanding of primary and secondary sources.
- Geography 8.13 Explain how current and historical technological developments, societal decisions, and personal practices influence sustainability in the United States.
- Historical Knowledge HS.6 Analyze ideas critical to the understanding of history, including, but not limited to: populism, progressivism, isolationism, imperialism, communism, environmentalism, liberalism, fundamentalism, racism, ageism, classism, conservativism, cultural diversity, feminism, and sustainability.
- Historical Thinking HS.12 Construct and defend a written historical argument using relevant primary and secondary sources as evidence.
- Geography HS.20 Analyze the impact on physical and human systems of resource development, use, and management and evaluate the issues of sustainability.