

# Gaming in the Classroom - Lesson Plan

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## Wii - The Oregon Trail

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Grades: 6-8 Subject Area: Language Arts

### Overview

In this series of lessons, students will be able to play The Oregon Trail game on the Wii in groups of four, review the importance of order in expository writing, outline a five paragraph expository essay on how to survive the Oregon Trail, then write and edit the essay.

### A. Topic: Expository Writing Assignment: How to survive the Oregon Trail

### B. Objectives: Common Core Standards

Reading #1	Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
Reading #3	Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
Writing #3	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
Writing #4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
Writing #5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
Writing #6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
Language #1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
Language #2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
Language #3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

### C. Instructional Resources:

Wii Gaming System	The Oregon Trail game for the Wii
Wii remote plus nunchuck	Criterion Writing Program <a href="https://criterion.ets.org/">https://criterion.ets.org/</a> (or a word processing program)
Projector/White board	Additional print/digital resources on the Oregon Trail

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### D. Procedures:

#### Teach:

1. Review/Introduce the concept of the Oregon Trail in U.S. history and have students discuss their background knowledge of this time period as well as life on the trail.
2. Introduce the game on the Wii and show students how to steer the wagon, etc. Explain that students will need to read different forms of communication throughout the game in order to make informed decisions as they travel the trail.
3. Divide students into teams of four to work together to travel the trail for 15-20 minute intervals each. (I had four groups of four and the groups not playing the Wii were working on different reading/journaling/grammar assignments.)
4. At some point during the week, conduct a mini-lesson on expository writing and the importance of using correct order in this type of writing. We wrote a brief essay together on how to brush teeth. The importance of order was easy to show in this simple exercise.
5. Once all groups have taken their turn on the trail, introduce the expository writing assignment: Surviving the Oregon Trail. (Using the Criterion writing program, I just created my own expository writing prompt.) Review outlining procedures and lead students through the process of outlining a five paragraph essay on this topic.
6. Once outlines are complete, students begin work on their essays.
7. Students work to edit their essays once they have submitted the first draft.
8. Final essays are then scored using a 6 point rubric system.

#### Closure:

\*After the essays have been finished, conduct a class discussion regarding what the group feels are the important elements of surviving the trail. Once a list has been generated, ask the students to rank the elements in order of necessity. Then have small groups of students discuss their ordered lists and work together to compromise on a new list the whole group can support. Have groups share lists and reasons with the rest of the class.

#### Assessment:

1. Teacher observation of cooperative game play.
2. Expository writing assignment graded by 6 point rubric in Criterion and reviewed by Teacher for final grade.
3. Writing outline (pre-writing) collected and scored for completion.
4. Teacher observation of closing class discussion and group work.

#### Connections:

\*Direct connection to Social Studies and the study of the expansion of the U.S. This would lend itself nicely to a cross curriculum project.

\*Possible connection to narrative writing (have students write a tale about their journey on the trail).

\*Connection to the study of the geography of the U.S.

\*Connection with Math through the use of word problems involving mileage and time needed for traveling the trail.

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