

Explore More—Modes of Transportation

Directions: Listen to your teacher talk about the types of transportation that immigrants used in the 1700s and 1800s as they moved west. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

Which immigrant groups moved west?

Many immigrants, including British, German, Swedish, and Norwegian, moved west in search of land and opportunity.

Where did they go?

Once they arrived in the United States, many immigrants traveled into the Ohio and Mississippi valleys and through the Cumberland Gap. The Cumberland Gap is located in the Appalachian Mountains between the present-day states of Kentucky and Virginia. At one time, the Appalachian Mountains were a barrier to western settlement. However, once the gap was found, many people moved into the Ohio River Valley. This area was a good place for farms because it had fertile soil and available water.

Many immigrants also settled in the Midwest, the region that spreads from the Great Lakes to the Rocky Mountains.

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What modes of transportation did immigrants use?

Some immigrants walked and rode horseback through the Cumberland Gap. They took steamboats—boats powered by steam engine—down the Mississippi and up the Missouri rivers. Others loaded their belongings on flatboats and rafts and floated down the Ohio River. Some immigrants went by boat through the Erie Canal and the Great Lakes. Then they loaded their belongings on overland wagons and followed trails westward. After the railroads were built, some immigrants took advantage of cheap fares and cheap land.

What did they do once they settled?

Many of these immigrants became farmers. They cleared the land for farming and built small towns. They grew more food than they needed, and sold their extra food to make money. ❖

YOUR TURN!

1. Name three modes of transportation that immigrants used to move west.

Modes of Transportation
1.
2.
3.

2. What modes of transportation do people use today when they travel long distances?

3. Is travel today easier or harder than it was in the 1700s and 1800s? Explain your answer.
