



## Transcontinental Railroad

By Jodi Howell  
4th and 5th grades  
Social Studies/Drama

Fifth Grade Social Studies Standard 4.

Objective 1: Investigate the significant events during America's expansion and the roles people played.

Fourth Grade Social Studies Objective 3.a:

Describe how and why humans have changed the physical environment of Utah to meet their needs (e.g. reservoirs, irrigation, climate, transportation systems and cities).

Theater Standard 4th and 5th.T.P.4:

Communicate meaning using the body through space, shape, energy and gesture.

Theater Standard 4th and 5th.T.P.5:

Communicate meaning using the voice through volume, pitch, tone, rate, and clarity.

Theater Standard 4th and 5th.T.P.6: Use imagination to support artistic choices.

**Objective:** Students will learn about the trans continental railroad by developing a soundscape and tableaux based on pictures of the railroad.

**Hook:** Today we are going to be celebrating the Transcontinental Railroad. When I think of trains, I think about the sounds that trains make. We will be focusing on creating soundscapes today. To get us started- we are going to have a little warm-up activity to help you practice.

**“Pass the Sound”** (Warm-up, Focus) (<http://www.bbbpress.com> )

### **Procedure:**

1. In a standing circle, pass a “whoosh” around the circle. This is done by saying “whoosh!” and throwing your hands toward the person next to you.
2. After it goes around a couple times stop the “Whoosh!” and send a “Bing!” going the opposite way, using a different hand gesture.
3. Now tell the kids they need to put their focus caps on, because you’re going to send a “Whoosh!” going one direction, then a “Bing!” going the opposite direction.
4. At some point they of course will overlap over one student so that student needs to be prepared.
5. Try this out a few times. If they’re up for it, try adding in a 3rd layer, “Ooga!”.

### **Instruction:**

Break up students into groups of 5. Give each group a kit with their soundscape instructions, and the pictures of their part of the railroad to represent.

1. Create a Tableau (frozen picture) inspired by your pictures
2. Bring the pictures to life to “tell the story” of the Transcontinental Railroad.

3. The sequence you need to create:
  - a. Frozen picture (remember to do a variety of levels)
  - b. A repeated action and sound that matches your picture
  - c. Back to your frozen picture
  - d. Transition movement and sound so the next group knows to begin

Practice: Give students time to plan, prepare, and practice. Have each group plan and prepare for the rest of the class, and then present the entire thing in a circle- in order- like a carousel.

Reflections: After students have presented, ask the questions so the children can reflect on the process. How did you use your body to communicate? How did you use your voice today? What did you learn about the Transcontinental Railroad? What did you notice a group do that really stood out to you?

Information for each group packet: Give each group one of the pictures below with a paper showing the following assignment for their group:

1. Create a Tableau (frozen picture) inspired by your pictures
2. Bring the pictures to life to “tell the story” of the Transcontinental Railroad.
3. The sequence you need to create:
  - a. Frozen picture (remember to do a variety of levels)
  - b. A repeated action and sound that matches your picture
  - c. Back to your frozen picture
  - d. Transition movement and sound so the next group knows to begin