

A Faster Way to Travel

1. Hundreds of years ago, travel in the United States was not easy. People had to travel hundreds of miles to reach the west. They traveled on foot, on horseback, or in covered wagons. Many people wanted to travel west in hopes of a new life, land, jobs, and riches. The trip took many months. It was a dangerous journey to the new frontiers in the west.



2. The invention of the steam engine train changed how people traveled. Towns in the United States were already building railroad tracks. These tracks were used by horse drawn cars. When the steam engine train was invented people stopped using the horse drawn carts. Instead, they used the train to travel.



3. Many people had ideas to build railroads to speed up travel. People wanted easier ways to go west. It would also be cheaper and easier to ship goods. The first railroad in the United States stretched from Baltimore to Ohio. It was called the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. It was called B & O for short. After the B & O Railroad was built, many more were built all over the United States.



4. In 1863 work began to build a railroad that crossed North America. It would be called the **Transcontinental** Railroad. The railroad would connect the west coast to railroads in the east. The railroad was finished six years later. About 2,000 miles of track was laid. When added to the railroads in the east, it stretched for 3,500 miles.

5. Building railroads was dangerous. Winter weather was **harsh**. Tunnels had to be built through mountains. Workers used explosives to make tunnels. Workers were only able to get through about one foot of the mountain per day. Workers faced hard conditions. They were not paid much money.
6. Once the transcontinental railroad was complete, many people traveled west. The journey took 6 days rather than 6 months. Now, people could move throughout the United States easily. Goods were shipped faster and **cheaper**. The railroad tracks changed the United States and the world.

Approximate Lexile Level: 790

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| <p>1. Which question is answered in paragraph 3?</p> <p>A. What was the name of the first railroad in the United States?</p> <p>B. In what year did work on transcontinental railroad begin?</p> <p>C. How long did it take people to travel west?</p> <p>D. Why was traveling west dangerous?</p> <p>2. The author wrote the article to –</p> <p>A. tell how trains changed throughout history</p> <p>B. explain how the railroad changed the United States</p> <p>C. share stories about building the railroad</p> <p>D. teach people how to build a tunnel</p> | <p>3. Which paragraph shows how building the transcontinental railroad changed travel in the United States?</p> <p>A. 1</p> <p>B. 2</p> <p>C. 5</p> <p>D. 6</p> <p>4. Based on the article, the reader can tell that building the railroad –</p> <p>A. was an easy job for workers</p> <p>B. changed how people lived in the United States</p> <p>C. made many people rich</p> <p>D. made people become farmers</p> <p>5. The author included the photograph at the top of the page most likely to –</p> <p>A. show how railroads were built</p> <p>B. to show what early towns looked like</p> <p>C. to show how long the tracks were</p> <p>D. to show how trains worked</p> |
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6. A student asked the following question after reading the article:

How many miles of track were laid during the construction of the transcontinental railroad?

In what paragraph can the answer to the question be found?

- A. 3
- B. 4
- C. 5
- D. 6

7. What is the passage, "A Faster Way to Travel" mostly about?

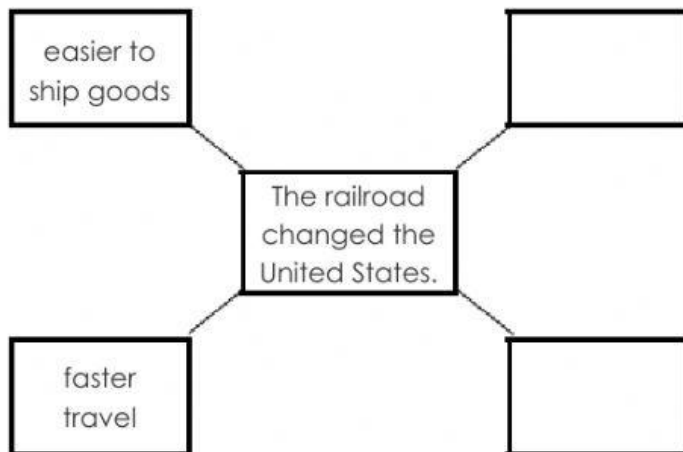
- A. People could travel faster after the railroad was built.
- B. Building railroads was hard work.
- C. Building railroads cost a lot of money.
- D. People wanted to travel west for a better life.

8. Complete these notes:

• harsh weather
• hard work
• using explosives

People traveled by horse and wagon.
The trip west took 6 months.
The railroad was 3,500 miles long.
Building railroads was dangerous work.
The transcontinental railroad was built in 6 years.

9. Complete this web.



workers had hard jobs	connected the east to the west
new towns were built	many trains were built

10. If the author wanted to add a heading to paragraph 5, which heading would be best?

- A. A New Idea
- B. An Easy Way to Travel
- C. The Hardships of Working on the Railroad
- D. A Faster and Easier Journey

11. What does the word **transcontinental** mean in paragraph 4?

- A. across the water
- B. across the continent
- C. across the mountains
- D. across the world

12. Which word is a synonym for the word **harsh** as it is used in paragraph 5?

- A. gentle
- B. rough
- C. difficult
- D. mild

13. In what word is **-er** used in the same way as it is in the word **cheaper** in paragraph 6?

- A. tower
- B. slower
- C. reread
- D. stern

14. How did the United States change as railroads were built in the west?

- A. more horses were used
- B. people lost their jobs
- C. the land was made flat
- D. new towns were built