



Instructions: Complete the activities and answer the questions below using the resources available to you on the Atlas, the internet and your local library:

Part A. The Trail Boss

Pioneer settlers have hired you as their Trail Boss to lead them to the Oregon Country. You must select a route along the Oregon Trail and map how you will travel across Idaho. There are a number of routes available to you. Select the one route that you think will be the best to follow and show it on your base map. Obviously, the trail guides that actually led travelers along these routes did not have the same type of information as you do for making their decision. However, most of them were familiar enough with the area to make some of the same decisions that you can make with a map.

Questions that the settlers will ask:

1. How does topography and water supply to the trail routes influence your chosen route?

2. Assume you can travel around 20 miles a day:
 - a. How long will it take you to travel across the state via your route?
 - b. Is yours the fastest route? If no, which one is? Why would you choose to follow a route that wasn't the fastest?
 - c. For your route, select locations that might be best for camping overnight. What factors might you use to make that decision?
 - d. Were there any places along your route that you would encounter a trading post?

3. The year is 1840 and you must cross through Indian Territory. What Native American tribes could you possibly encounter? What kind of encounters/relationships occurred and how might these have affected the routes chosen? (such as massacres, any stops where pioneers traded with tribes etc. etc).

4. Where are you most likely to encounter major river crossings on your route?

5. What are some of the major landmarks that you should be looking for along your route?

Part B. Can You Make It?

You are one of the pioneer settlers that will be following the route described by the Trail Boss above. You will be facing a number of situations as you travel the Oregon Trail that you must overcome in order to survive the journey. Before you can decide if to follow the judgement of the Trail Boss you need to look at the route selected and determine how you would address the following issues:

Questions of to ask yourself:

1. Without water, you and your family cannot survive. Is water readily available along your route? How could you store water between locations? How would this water storage influence how difficult your trip is (hint: water requires space and weighs a lot).

2. You will be traveling through Idaho during June, July, and August. What would the temperature ranges be for the route you will be traveling? How will that affect your need for water for you and water and feed for your animals?

3. What animals might be available as a food source along your route?

4. What animals might you encounter that will want to eat you, your family, or any of your animals?

5. What types of habitat will you encounter along your route?