

# Teachers' Guide for Cobblestone

July/August 2013: Great American Road Trip

By Debbie Vilardi

*Debbie Vilardi is an author of poetry, lesson plans and works of fiction. She is seeking an agent and publisher for her historical fiction chapter book, Flood, set during Hurricane Katrina.*

Goal: To learn about the history of the appeal of the open road.

\*Always have a parent or trusted adult help with web research.

Before Beginning:

Discuss what a road trip is. Have you ever been on one? Where did you go?

"64 Days and \$8,000" by Christine J. Cook (Pages 2-4)

Comprehension:

1. Why did Dr. Jackson make the wager?
2. What had happened to previous attempts to drive across country?
3. Why do you think Dr. Jackson's wife took the train instead of joining his drive?
4. How and why did they modify the 1903 Winton?
5. What were conditions like in the car?
6. What obstacles did Dr. Jackson and his mechanic face on their route?
7. Why did the media tout a competition?
8. What impact did these first successful road trips have?

Math Activity:

On what dates did the Packard and Oldsmobile complete their expeditions?

Research Topics: Dr. Horatio Nelson Jackson, Sewall K. Crocker, Winton touring car, Packard, Oldsmobile

"Getting Out of a Rut: The Good Roads Movement" by Barbara D. Krasner (Pages 5-7)

Comprehension:

1. What were roads like in the late 1800s?
2. What did bicyclists demand?
3. What were the goals of the Good Roads movement?

4. What effect did the magazine have?
5. How did volunteers help the federal government plan for new roads and road improvements?
6. How did the rising popularity of the automobile impact the Good Roads movement?
7. Why did Congress pass the Federal Aid Highway Acts?
8. How did they create the highway system we have today?

Writing Activity: Select a numbered route in your area. Write whether it is a local, state or federal route. What areas does it connect? What is its historical significance in your region, if any? What prompted the establishment of this route?

Research: Albert Pope, League of American Wheelmen, *Good Roads* magazine, Office of Road Inquiry, General Roy Stone, Automobile Association of America, Carl G. Fischer, the Lincoln Highway, Dixie Highway, Federal-Aid Highway Acts, Horatio Earle

"Autocamping" by Autumn L. Fenton (Pages 8-11)

"The Four Vagabonds" (Page 11)

Comprehension:

1. How did the automobile impact vacation planning?
2. What was the appeal of this type of vacation?
3. What prompted the establishment of government run autocamps?
4. What was the atmosphere like at these camps?
5. What prompted the autocamp industry to develop?
6. Why did cabins and motels evolve from this industry?

Writing Activity: Compare and contrast the Four Vagabonds' road trips with those of the middle class.

Research: autocamping, Thomas A. Edison, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, John Burroughs

"Adventure Avenue" by Jeanie Mebane (Pages 12-14)

Comprehension:

1. Why was it difficult to navigate along early roads?
2. How were national routes named after 1925?
3. What are some of the industries mentioned in the article?

4. What are some of the important geographic and historical sites along the route?
5. How does the landscape change as the trip progresses?
6. What role did Native Americans play in the region?

Geography Activity: Trace the route on a map of the United States and Canada. What is the route called in Canada?

Discussion: How might this trip be different today?

Research: the Model T, US Route 2, geographic and historical sites along Route 2

“Route 66: America’s Main Street” by Alice Andre-Clark (Pages 15-18)

“Billboards and Neon Signs” by Alice Andre-Clark (Pages 18-19)

Vocabulary: Muffler Men, neon, azure

Comprehension:

1. Why was Route 66 important?
2. What led to the Southwest becoming a popular vacation spot?
3. What did locals do to try to attract motorists to stop and spend money at their establishments?
4. What was the effect of the Great Depression?
5. How many years passed from commissioning the route until it was fully paved?
6. How did World War II lead to the destruction of the route?
7. Why did the once “Mother Road” also earn the name “Bloody 66”?
8. What else led to its decline in popularity?
9. Why did businesses use billboards and Muffler Men?
10. Do you think the creative advertising mentioned in the article was effective?

Art Activity: Create an advertising campaign for a motel or roadside restaurant that uses billboards and a neon sign. Consider the clever names and ideas in this article and on page 11.

Music Activity: Listen to the song Route 66. What feelings does it evoke? Why?

Research: Route 66, Cyrus Avery, The Great Depression, Bobby Troup, Muffler Men, billboards, neon

“Still Getting Our Kicks” by Alice Andre-Clark (Pages 20-21)

Comprehension:

1. What happened to small towns bypassed by the new interstate highways?
2. What prompted Angel Delgadillo to try to preserve Route 66?
3. What were some early results in Arizona?
4. What steps has the federal government taken?
5. What are some of the businesses and attractions that have been preserved?

Film Activity: Watch the movie *Cars*. Relate the feelings and experiences presented to those mentioned in the articles so far.

Research: Interstate Highway System, Angel Delgadillo, Historic Route 66 Association, National Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, National Register of Historic Places

"Broad Ribbons of New Roads" by Elizabeth Deatrick (Pages 26-29)

Vocabulary: autobahn, Cold War

Comprehension:

1. What was Eisenhower's experience with American roadways?
2. How did the autobahn compare to what he had seen in the United States?
3. Why is a road harder to destroy than a train track?
4. Why was defense important to Eisenhower's plan for new roads?
5. What economic concerns played into his plan?
6. What steps did Eisenhower accomplish in his first two years of negotiating plans for the system?
7. What safety features were planned?
8. What disadvantages appeared as the project progressed?

Math Activities:

1. What is the percent difference between the number of days it took Eisenhower to travel across country and the number it takes today?
2. The government agreed to pay for 41,000 miles of paved road. How far is that in feet and inches?
3. How many more miles are in the National Highway System today?

Writing Activity: Do you agree that the advantages of the Interstate Highway System outweigh the disadvantages? Write a persuasive paragraph expressing and supporting your opinion.

Research: Dwight D. Eisenhower, autobahn, Korean War, Cold War

"Scenic Drives" by Ebenezer (Pages 30-33)

"Behind the Wheel... Around the Globe" by Marcia Amidon Lusted (Page 40-41)

Vocabulary: minarets

Geography: Locate these routes on maps of the correct region.

Research: Great Ocean Road; Silk Road; Stelvio Pass; California's Route 1; National Parks; historic, cultural, and geographic sites along each route; Blue Ridge Parkway; Overseas Highway, Henry Flagler

"Shifting Gears: Families on the Road" by Lynne Hasselman (Pages 34- 37)

Vocabulary: sewage

Comprehension: Answer the questions for each family, if possible.

1. What chores do the children have?
2. How do they get an education?
3. Do they have plans to be off the road for a time?

Writing Activity: Is life on the open road for you? Write a letter to a friend or family member back home describing life on the road? You can pretend to be in the past or write as an RV traveler in the present. Do you miss being home? Are you planning to return soon? Will you stay when you do?

Research: recreational vehicles

Activity for the Entire Issue: Write about your favorite road trip. Make sure to include the complications as well as the highlights and whether or not you recommend this journey to others.