

ELA: Grade 7, Lesson 13, Historical Context for “The Railway Train”

**Lesson Focus:** This lesson focuses on reading an informational article about a brief history of the train and its impact in the United States in the 1800s.

**Practice Focus:** Students will summarize the article as they read and answer questions about key details.

**Objective:** Students will use an informational text to build knowledge about how the railroad affected American life in the 1800s.

**Academic Vocabulary:** Industrial Revolution, revolutionized, freight, interchangeable, manufactured, barges, perishable, investors, profitability

**TN Standards:** 7.RI.KID.1; 7.RI.KID.2; 7.RI.KID.3; 7.RI.CS.4; 7.RI.CS.6; 7.W.TP.2

**Teacher Materials:**

- The Teacher Packet for ELA, Grade 7, Lesson 13

**Student Materials:**

- Paper, pencil, and a surface to write on
- The Student Packet for ELA, Grade 7, Lesson 13 which can be found on [www.tn.gov/education](http://www.tn.gov/education)

Teacher Do	Students Do
<p><b>Opening</b> (1 min)</p> <p><b>Hello! Welcome to Tennessee’s At Home Learning Series for literacy! Today’s lesson is for all our 7th graders out there, though everyone is welcome to tune in. This lesson is the third in this week’s series.</b></p> <p><b>My name is ____ and I’m a ____ grade teacher in Tennessee schools. I’m so excited to be your teacher for this lesson! Welcome to my virtual classroom!</b></p> <p><b>If you didn’t see our previous lessons, you can find them at <a href="http://www.tn.gov/education">www.tn.gov/education</a>. You can still tune in to today’s lesson if you haven’t seen any of our others. But it might be more fun if you first go back and watch our other lessons, since today we’ll be talking about things we learned previously.</b></p> <p><b>Today we will be learning about historical context for the Emily Dickinson poem we have been studying! Specifically, we will learn about how the train came about and how it impacted society. Learning about this history will help us understand Emily Dickinson’s train poem on a whole other level. Before we get started, to participate fully in our lesson today, you will need:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paper, pencil, and a surface to write on</li><li>• The Student Packet for ELA, Grade 7, Lesson 13 which can be found on <a href="http://www.tn.gov/education">www.tn.gov/education</a></li></ul> <p><b>Ok, let’s begin!</b></p>	<p>Students gather materials for the lesson and prepare to engage with the lesson’s content.</p>

<p><b>Intro</b> (4 min)</p> <p><b>Last time, we reread this poem by Emily Dickinson.</b> [Show Slide 1.] <b>We focused on her use of figurative language throughout the poem to convey an image of a train. You wrote a response to this prompt: Why does the author compare the train to a horse rather than just describing it more literally?</b></p> <p><b>Find your paragraph and reread it to yourself.</b> [Pause for students read.]</p> <p><b>Here is an exemplary response</b> [Show Slide 2, which shows the full response for students. It's also part of the script below.]</p> <p><b>Throughout the poem, the author compares the railway train to a horse.</b></p> <p><b>Notice that the response begins with a topic sentence. Did you begin your response with a topic sentence?</b></p> <p><b>At first, it seems like the train is being compared to just any animal, when the narrator says she likes to see the object, "lap the miles" and, "lick the valleys up", almost like a cat would do.</b></p> <p><b>The response logically continues with ideas from the first stanza. Did you also include quotes and explain them?</b></p> <p><b>The phrase, "step around a pile of mountains" creates the image of a large animal, maybe a horse or a mountain goat, traveling over difficult terrain. The line, "chase itself down hill" is when the image of the horse as the animal the author is using becomes clearer.</b></p> <p><b>The response explains how the image of a horse becomes clearer with details from the second stanza. Did you include this development?</b></p> <p><b>It isn't until the last stanza that it is obvious the train is being compared to the horse. The poem says the horse "neighs" and stops, "At its own stable door."</b></p> <p><b>The response explains how the last stanza makes it obvious to the reader that the subject is a horse. In the next part of the response, the student describes the horse using quotes from the poem. Listen:</b></p>	<p>Students recall that they examined the figurative language Emily Dickinson used in her poem about the train.</p> <p>Students reread their response to refresh their memories.</p> <p>Students listen to the exemplary response and note the writing moves the teacher shares about it.</p>
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The horse that Dickinson uses in the poem seems curious as it “peers into shanties” and energetic as it “chase[s] itself down hill,” which reminds the reader that the train is a new and young technology for the country.

Notice the response connects the image of a horse to the train and how they are similar; the horse is full of energy like a young horse, and the train is a new technology, so it is young, too. Did you connect the horse imagery to a train? Maybe you even said that the sound of the poem kind of sounded like a horse running. Great job!

Listen to the close of this response:

The energy, speed, and impressive actions of the train in the poem make it seem more powerful than an actual horse, which is what most people used for transportation before the train.

This helps people understand the new technology of the train and how it is more powerful than what they are used to using.

Notice that the response now includes details that compare the train to the horse, describing how the train seems more powerful than the horse. Did you include other details comparing the horse and train? Maybe you said that it is obvious a train is much faster than a horse.

What makes this paragraph exemplary? First, the student uses complete sentences to respond to the question. Secondly, he includes quotes from the poem, “like the valleys up” and “chases itself down hill” to support his ideas about the horse as a metaphor, or comparison, for the train. Additionally, he uses multiple examples from all parts of the poem, not just one stanza. He explains how those quotes show the reader how Dickinson develops this metaphor of a horse throughout the poem. To summarize, exemplary responses: [Show Slide 3 to show guidelines.] 1) use complete sentences; 2) use quotes to support ideas; 3) explain the quotes; and 4) include multiple examples. If you haven’t already done so in a previous lesson, you can jot these guidelines down quickly so you can use them in future writing assignments. [Pause so students can copy.]

Today our goal is to understand how the train affected life in the United States in the 1800s when Emily Dickinson wrote this poem, by reading a short informational article. To do this, we will summarize key ideas as we read and answer

Students listen to the teacher’s review of what made the response exemplary and write the steps at the end, if they hadn’t already done so previously.

Students prepare to follow the gradual-release trajectory, understanding that they will be doing more listening at first and more “doing” toward the end of the lesson.

<p>some questions. We will begin with me showing you what that looks like, and then there will be time for you to practice on your own with my support. Finally, I will assign you independent work you can complete after the video ends.</p>	
<p><b>Teacher Model/Read-Aloud</b> (15 min)          [The slides include pictures that will visually help to tell the story as we read it.]</p> <p>[Show Slide 4 to show title of the text.] <b>The Effect of Railroads on American Life.</b></p> <p>[Show Slide 5.] <b>In the mid 1800s, the only thing stopping Americans from settling the West was the fact that only a long, perilous wagon journey could transport you there.</b></p> <p>[Show Slide 6.] <b>Then, in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, the first practical railroad was built. Over time, railroads changed the face of America. They first were used to transport freight, or cargo, but eventually revolutionized, or greatly changed, travel... and created jobs in the railroad industry. Many possibilities were seen in the railroads, and many lives were changed because of them.</b></p> <p><b>So, based on this introduction, the invention of the railroads and trains was a very significant event in American history. I can summarize this paragraph by saying the railroad revolutionized freight transport and travel. Remember what revolutionized means? [Pause.] Yes, it means greatly changed. Good job listening closely! As I continue reading, look for details in the text that explain how the railroad was revolutionary.</b></p> <p>[Show Slide 7 to show text being read.] <b>Around the mid 19th century, the Industrial Revolution started. This was a period of industrial growth. Gradually, machines took the place of hand tools. [Pause.] Aha! Now it explains what the Industrial Revolution was. It was the time period when people started inventing machines that could do the work of their hand tools. Hmm. I'm thinking these machines probably made work faster.</b></p> <p>[Show Slide 8.] <b>Steam engines and flowing water in water mills began to take the place of what used to be power provided by humans and horses. The factory system was also invented as well as interchangeable parts, two inventions that changed the way products were manufactured, or put together. Let's see. I know what a factory is, but let me think more about "interchangeable." It</b></p>	<p>Students follow along, comprehending the text. They use teacher think-alouds and tips (e.g., definitions of words) to support their comprehension, and they think or write as directed in response to prompts and questions.</p> <p>Students will begin to understand the history of railroads. Students will also define tier 2 words within the text.</p>

is describing parts of a machine, so I know it's an adjective. I see the prefix "inter," which means between and the suffix "able," which means able. Oh, and the base word is change. So interchangeable means able to be changed between. Between what? Well, it is talking about machines, so it must mean that the same parts could be used in different kinds of machines. I wonder if this means that different factories made different parts and the products were assembled at another location.

Horse-drawn wagons had delivered coal for steam-powered factory machines. With the increase of factory-made goods, a new transport system was needed to carry freight...

Before I summarize this paragraph, I want to look a little more closely at these images.

[Show Slide 9 to show pictures of descriptions below.] I can tell from image 1, 2, and 3, that the factories were fairly large and busy places. Look at all those people working to manufacture products! Can you see in image 2 all of those machines the workers are using? The women in image 3 are using machines, too, but theirs are a little smaller, but seem to be connected. Images 4 and 5 show the water wheel and steam engine that were mentioned in the paragraph. Image 6 shows both horses and a machine. The horses appear to be pulling goods, and the machine on the right is spraying the mound in the background with water. These pictures give me some ideas that I think will help me summarize when I go back to the text.

[Show Slide 10 to show whole paragraph.] Now here is the whole paragraph. Take a minute to read it to yourself while I read it again.

Around the mid 19th century, the Industrial Revolution started. This was a period of industrial growth. Gradually, machines took the place of hand tools. Steam engines and flowing water in water mills began to take the place of what used to be power provided by humans and horses. The factory system was also invented as well as interchangeable parts, two inventions that changed the way products were manufactured. Horse-drawn wagons had delivered coal for steam-powered factory machines. With the increase of factory-made goods, a new transport system was needed to carry freight...

When I summarize, I want to capture the key ideas, not everything in the paragraph. It should be short – a sentence or two. When I reread the paragraph, I will underline phrases that capture some important ideas. I am going to keep the phrases as short as possible, but still long enough to help me remember the key ideas. I do not want to underline full sentences because that would just be copying instead of thinking about what’s really important. [Show Slide 11 to show list of phrases.] I underlined these phrases:

- Industrial Revolution started
- machines
- Steam engines
- take the place of... humans and horses
- factory system
- changed the way products were manufactured
- increase of factory-made goods
- new transport system ...needed to carry freight...

These phrases I underlined do capture the key ideas, but I’ll have to be sure to keep my summary brief. Hmm. I definitely want to include “Industrial Revolution,” “machines,” “factories,” “change,” “transport system.”

[Show Slide 12 to show example paraphrase.] This paragraph explains that during the Industrial Revolution, machines and factories really changed how products were manufactured, so there were more factory-made goods. This meant they needed a new transport system to carry all of the freight because it would be too much for the horses used to carry the goods.

Did you see how I first read the paragraph and identified the key phrases that capture the central idea? Then I looked at the phrases again to narrow down the words to include in a 1-2 sentence summary.

Okay, let’s answer some questions.

Question 1: Why was there a need for a new transport system during the Industrial Revolution? [Pause.] That’s incredible, students! I can answer this question easily now that I already summarized the paragraph! There was a need for a new transport system during the Industrial Revolution because machines and factories made it possible for many more goods to be manufactured, far more than horses could handle.

<p><b>Guided Practice</b> (20 min)</p> <p><b>Now, it is your turn to help with summarizing the next few paragraphs as you also respond to a few questions.</b></p> <p>[Show Slide 13 to show text being read.] <b>There were many apparent advantages of railroads that improved American life and the economy and industry. Before railroads, goods shipped from England would be sent up rivers on barges.</b> [Pause.] <b>What's a barge?</b> [Pause.] <b>Yes, it's a type of boat, and we know this because the sentence says the goods were on rivers. You can see some old barges from the 1800s in the pictures here. Let's continue. Those barges would travel about five miles per hour, while railroads could easily travel at approximately thirty-five miles per hour.</b> [Pause.] <b>Let's do some quick math: How much faster was the railroad than the barge?</b> [Pause.] <b>Correct, the railroad could travel 7 times faster than the barge. How do we know that? Well, 35 divided by 5 is seven! No wonder Emily Dickinson described the train as fast in the poem we read!</b></p> <p><b>This would save a lot of time and money and could ship more perishable items longer distances.</b> [Pause.] <b>Well, that certainly makes sense since the train was so much faster. I am sure we can figure out the meaning of the word "perishable." Do you see any prefixes, suffixes, roots, or words in it?</b> [Pause.] <b>Yes, there is a suffix, -able. What does that mean?</b> [Pause.] <b>It means able to. You saw the word perish, which means to be destroyed. Let's put those two parts together What does "perishable" mean?</b> [Pause.] <b>Yes, perishable means that something is likely to decay, or to rot. What types of goods might be perishable if they take too long to be delivered?</b> [Pause.] <b>Exactly, things like fruit, vegetables, meats, and cheeses.</b></p> <p>[Show Slide 14 to show last part of paragraph.] <b>Also, trains could be built anywhere. They were not restricted to only waterways. These advantages made railroads popular among traders and merchants. I wonder if this is where Emily Dickinson got the idea to say the train "stepped" around mountains, since it says here the trains were built in many different kinds of places.</b></p> <p>[Show Slide 15.] <b>Now it's your turn to summarize the paragraph. Which words and phrases are important? Write some ideas on your paper. Don't worry. If you miss anything, you can write down the phrases you hadn't already included.</b> [Pause.] <b>Yes, we can include "advantages of railroads."</b> [Show Slide 16 to show first phrase.] <b>What else?</b></p>	<p>Students follow along and think and act as instructed, gradually gaining confidence and competence.</p> <p>Students will be able to find key ideas and represent them in small phrases that they will use to write a summary of each paragraph.</p>
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[Pause.] **That's a good idea to write "save a lot of time and money."** [Show Slide 17.] **What else?** [Pause.] **We can also add: "ship more perishable items longer distance."** [Show Slide 18.] **Other ideas?** [Pause.] **I agree. We should also include "could be built anywhere."** [Show Slide 19.to show third phrase] **Anything else?** [Pause.] **I believe you've got a good list of phrases there on your paper. Remember to write any phrases you are missing.**

[Show Slide 20 to show all phrases pulled from paragraph.] **Here are the phrases you thought were important in the paragraph. Look at your paper to be sure you have these phrases. Circle the ideas you definitely want to include in your summary sentence.** [Pause.] **Now, take a minute to write a 1 sentence summary of the paragraph that incorporates the words and ideas you circled.** [Pause.]

**Great job! Your sentence looks something like this: Trains saved time and money, shipped more perishable goods farther, and could be built in many places.**

[Show Slide 21 to show answer to question.] **Question 2: What was one major difference between shipping freight by barge and shipping freight by railroad?** [Pause.] **Did your summary sentence help you? It probably did. Maybe you wrote something like this:** [Show Slide 22.] **One major difference between shipping freight by barge and shipping by railroad was the time it took. Freight would travel 7 times faster on a train than on a barge. Good job!**

[Show Slide 23.] **Railroads were also popular among citizens. The earliest passenger train was the 136-mile long South Carolina railroad. Soon there was a rise in business travel because of the convenience of trains as well as travel for pleasure. Before the construction of railroads, traveling away from your home was uncommon.** [Pause for a think aloud.] **It doesn't exactly say this, but I wonder if traveling by train was also more comfortable than the wagons they used to take.** [Pause.] **Second homes, as well as summer and winter resorts, were created on the Atlantic coast and also farther west to encourage people to travel west.** [Pause for a think aloud.] **People had second homes? And people went to resorts? This certainly makes me think the people traveling on the train must have been wealthy.**

[Show Slide 24.] **From the late 1800s to mid 1900s, trains were the preferred form of transportation for long distance travel. Travelers could have their own bedroom**



compartment and could roam the halls of the cars. The dining car's food was similar to that of a fine restaurant...

Students, look at these images. The passengers are wearing elegant clothes in the picture on the right. And you can see the bed they get to sleep in. The picture on the bottom shows the dining car. The passengers here are dressed like they are going to an expensive restaurant, not just eating on the train! These details in the text about the bedroom compartment and fine restaurant reinforce my idea that only people who had a lot of money could really afford to take the train.

[Show Slide 25 to show whole paragraphs and first phrase.] Now, looking at the whole paragraph, what are the key ideas you want to write down on your paper to help you summarize? Write down one phrase. [Pause.] Good thinking! "Popular among citizens" is a short phrase that is important. [Show Slide 26 to show next phrase.] What do you want to add? [Pause.] That's a short phrase that is a key idea, too: "a rise in business travel." [Show Slide 27.] If you didn't include something, you can still add it your list. What else is important? [Pause.] Yes, "travel for pleasure" is a key idea, too. [Show Slide 28.] What other significant detail could we add? [Pause.] I think that works. Let's add "transportation for long distance travel." [Show Slide 29 to remind everyone which phrases were selected.] What else? [Pause.] You may be correct that those are all the key ideas.

[Show Slide 30 to show list of selected phrases.] Here are the phrases you identified. On your paper, circle the most important ones you want to include in a summary sentence. [Pause.] Now take a few moments to write your summary sentence. [Pause.] Great work, students! Your summary sentence likely looks like this: [Show Slide 31 to show sample sentence.] The train was also popular among citizens for business, leisure, and long-distance travel.

**Question 3:** What was it like to be a passenger on a passenger train in the late 1800's to the mid 1900's? Be sure to use examples from the text to support your answer.

[Show Slide 32.] Here is the paragraph again so you can cite evidence from the text. Go ahead and take 30 seconds to compose your answer. [Pause for students to write.] What did you write? Is your response similar to this one: [Show Slide 33 to show sample response.] Train passengers experienced comfort and convenience. For example, they could "have their own bedroom compartment" and eat

meals that were just as good as what is served at a “fine restaurant.” Notice how the response has a clear answer (train passengers experienced comfort and convenience) and incorporates the text evidence in quotation marks and as part of a sentence, not just by itself.

[Show Slide 34 to show text being read.] **Let’s read some more of the text.**

Soon, railroads became an important part of American life and the American economy and industry. Railroads were essential to the development of western agriculture and industry. Trains transported perishable produce to markets. They brought in raw material from far away and could ship goods throughout the country. Manufacturers could now be located anywhere, as railroads were now branched all around the country in many remote, or isolated, places.

[Pause.] Hmm. I’m thinking here that the railroad made it possible for even smaller, remote places to be part of the growing economy because it connected them to more populated areas.

[Show Slide 35.] Trains were also being placed inside cities; subways were developed above ground as well as underground. Railroads also created wealth for those who promoted and funded them. As railroads grew, investors were still hesitant about their profitability. [Pause.] Investors are people who put their own money into a project or company they believe will make them more money. Profitability means the ability to make a profit, or more money than you initially put in. [Pause before continuing to read.] As soon as railroads proved to be profitable, investors were eager to invest capital, or money, in the industry. [Pause.]

We have finished reading this text. Students, before you summarize, I have a couple of questions for you. Why did the author write this article? You don’t need to write this answer, just think in your head. [Pause for think time.] Yes, his purpose seems to be to explain how the invention of the railroad changed a lot about how the American economy worked and how people lived. What is the author’s particular point of view about the railroad’s role in our country’s history? In other words, what is his attitude about trains? Again, just think in your head. [Pause.] The author’s point of view is very positive about trains, almost like he’s cheering about how great the railroad was for our country.

<p><b>Independent Work</b> (2 min)</p> <p>[Show Slide 36 to show last paragraph and example.] <b>Here's the last paragraph. Take a minute to write down the key phrases you want to use to write a summary sentence.</b></p> <p><b>For example, I might choose a phrase like "No form of transportation had ever been able to send perishable goods so far away." [Pause.]</b></p> <p><b>I wrote that down because I know I'll definitely need to say something about that so my readers will understand the point of the last paragraph.</b></p> <p>[Show Slide 37.] <b>For independent practice today, please use your notes from today's lesson to write a summary paragraph about the entire text we read. You can use any of the phrases or the summary sentences you have already written to help you. Since you are summarizing the entire text, you will need several sentences to capture the central ideas.</b></p>	<p>Students will write a summary of the text read today using their notes taken during the lessons and the summary sentences they have already written.</p>
<p><b>Closing</b> (1 min)</p> <p><b>I enjoyed working on reading and summarizing this article about the effects of the railroad on America with you today! Thank you for inviting me into your home. I look forward to seeing you in our next lesson in Tennessee's At Home Learning Series! Bye!</b></p>	