

Davy Crockett | Lesson Plan

How did Davy Crockett's life and legacy shape the American frontier and the fight for independence, and why are his contributions significant to U.S. history?

Students will understand how Davy Crockett's frontier skills, leadership, and heroism at the Battle of the Alamo symbolize the spirit of the American frontier and its role in shaping national identity.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and explain the who, what, where, when, and why of Davy Crockett's life and contributions to American history.
- Analyze the challenges Crockett faced as a frontiersman, soldier, and politician, and how they reflect broader themes of resilience and independence.
- Summarize key events from the book, including his involvement in the Creek War, his role as a congressman, and his heroic stand at the Alamo.
- Reflect on the importance of Crockett's legacy and how his values of courage, perseverance, and patriotism continue to inspire today.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Frontier:** The edge of settled land where pioneers lived and explored.
- **Pioneer:** A person who explores or settles new areas.
- **Creek War:** A regional conflict in the U.S. South from 1813-1814. The Creek tribe split over the issue of white settlers encroaching on their land and culture, leading them into civil war. This led to American involvement when a militant faction called the Red Sticks attacked a settler fort. A series of battles over the course of a year led to U.S. victory, and the Creeks had to give up 22 million acres of their land in Georgia and Alabama.
- **Fort Mims:** A fortified homestead in Alabama that was built around a plantation belonging to a man named Samuel Mims. Settlers, mixed Creeks, and black slaves took refuge in the fort before the attack on Fort Mims.
- **Indian Removal Act of 1830:** The act signed into law by President Andrew Jackson that allowed him to negotiate treaties to move the Indians in the southeastern U.S. to lands west of the Mississippi River. These treaties offered the Indians payment for transportation and getting started in the new territory. Those who wouldn't negotiate or move voluntarily were later forced to relocate by the U.S. military.
- **Trail of Tears:** The forced relocation, from 1830-1850, of the "Five Civilized Tribes" from their native lands in the Southeast to Indian territory west of the Mississippi. Thousands died on the way due to lack of supplies, disease, and harsh weather conditions.
- **Alamo:** A mission in San Antonio, Texas, where Crockett and other defenders made a heroic stand during the Texas Revolution.
- **Texas Revolution:** The conflict between Texas and Mexico during the 1830s, in which Texas rebelled against the centralization of Mexican authority over its territory. Texas won its independence after six months of fighting, forming the Republic of Texas until it later joined the United States.
- **Resilience:** The ability to recover quickly from difficulties.
- **Heroism:** Great bravery, often shown in dangerous situations.



Educational Standards: CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.2, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.R.10, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.4, CCRA.W.7, CCRA.W.8, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.SL.2, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.SL.5, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.L.6

Academic Subject Areas: Language Arts, History

What You'll Need

- PragerU Kids Book *Trailblazers of America: Davy Crockett* (Download [Here](#))
- Worksheets: *Trailblazers of America: Davy Crockett* (Click [Here](#))
- Optional: Purchase the book from Amazon (Click [Here](#))
- Highlighters, pencils, index cards

Pre-Lesson Preparation: Reading the Book

For Teachers:

1. Assign the Davy Crockett book as a pre-reading activity.
 - Depending on your schedule and grade level, this can be completed in class or as homework.
 - Use this pre-reading time to introduce students to the themes of resilience, bravery, and Crockett's pivotal role in American history.
2. Optional Pre-Reading Activities:
 - Vocabulary Preview: Introduce the key vocabulary terms (e.g., Alamo, Creek War, frontier, heroism) using visual aids or an interactive activity like matching terms to their definitions. Discuss how these terms set the stage for understanding Crockett's story.
 - Anticipation Guide: Provide students with a list of thought-provoking statements to agree/disagree with before reading, such as:
 - Davy Crockett's skills as a frontiersman were crucial to his success as a soldier and leader.
 - The Battle of the Alamo was a turning point in the fight for Texas independence.
 - Courage is the most important quality for a leader.
 - It is better to stand up for what is right, even if it means losing support or facing challenges, than to compromise your values for popularity.

For Students:

1. As they read the Davy Crockett book, encourage students to:
 - Highlight or underline key events, challenges, and achievements in Crockett's life.
 - Note surprising facts or write down any questions they have about Crockett's journey.
2. Optional Student Task:
 - Ask students to jot down a list of personal qualities they think a frontiersman or pioneer like Davy Crockett would need to succeed. This will help them connect Crockett's story to broader values like perseverance and resilience.

Introduction for Pre-Reading (15 minutes)

1. Introduce Davy Crockett:
 - Share the following key points about Davy Crockett:

- Born on August 17, 1786, in Tennessee, Crockett was a legendary frontiersman, soldier, and congressman who became known as the “King of the Wild Frontier.”
 - He participated in the Creek War (1813–1814) as a soldier and later represented Tennessee in Congress, where he stood up for the common man and opposed policies like the Indian Removal Act.
 - Crockett’s life ended heroically at the Battle of the Alamo in 1836 during the fight for Texas independence, solidifying his place as an American folk hero.
 - Ask students the following questions:
 - *What do you already know about Davy Crockett and the frontier era?*
 - *Why do you think people like Davy Crockett became symbols of bravery and independence in American history?*
 - *What kind of qualities or skills do you think it took to survive and lead on the frontier?*
2. Explore the Geography of Crockett’s Time:
- Display the map “America in the Time of Davy Crockett” (pages 12-13).
 - Highlight key locations in Crockett’s life:
 - His birthplace in Tennessee.
 - The Creek War battle sites in Alabama.
 - The Alamo in San Antonio, Texas, where he fought and died.
 - Use the map to discuss the challenges of life on the frontier, including:
 - Dense forests, rugged terrain, and dangerous wildlife.
 - Encounters with Native American tribes.
 - Long distances between settlements.
 - Ask students the following questions:
 - *Why might someone like Davy Crockett choose to live and lead on the frontier?*
 - *What challenges do you think Crockett and other pioneers faced in building a life in such an environment?*
 - Brainstorm as a class:
 - List possible motivations and challenges on the board. Examples may include:
 - Motivations: Adventure, independence, protecting others, love of country.
 - Challenges: Harsh weather, lack of supplies, conflict with Native Americans, and political pressures.
3. Conclude with Context:
- Explain that during Crockett’s lifetime, the United States was expanding westward, fueled by the desire for land and independence. Crockett’s resilience and bravery symbolize the spirit of this era.
 - Share: *“As you read about Davy Crockett, think about how his actions and values helped shape American identity and inspired future generations.”*

Post-Reading Lesson Plan (one 60-minute class period)

Warm-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Re-engage students by having them consider what it would be like to face the challenges Crockett encountered on the frontier.

- **Activity:** Present students with frontier-related scenarios inspired by Crockett's life. For example:
 - You're a frontiersman and need to find food for your family. Do you (a) hunt in dangerous terrain or (b) trade supplies with others?
 - You're a congressman, and a law is proposed that you feel is unjust but popular. Do you (a) vote against it and risk your popularity or (b) support it to maintain your reputation?
 - You're at the Alamo, facing overwhelming odds. Do you (a) stay and fight for independence or (b) retreat to fight another day?
 - Have students choose their responses individually or discuss in small groups, then briefly share their reasoning with the class.
2. Transition:
- Connect these scenarios to Crockett's life, explaining how he faced similar decisions and challenges.

5 Ws Chart: (15-20 minutes)

1. Hand out the 5 Ws graphic organizer to each student. Explain that this activity will help them analyze the key elements of Davy Crockett's life and accomplishments by answering five key questions.
2. This activity is designed to build a strong foundation of knowledge about Davy Crockett, which students will use later to analyze his contributions and legacy in more depth.
3. Go over each section of the 5 Ws Chart to ensure students understand what is expected. Provide examples to guide their thinking:
 - **Who:** Identify who the book is about, including key figures in Crockett's life and legacy.
 - Examples: *Davy Crockett (frontiersman, soldier, congressman), General Andrew Jackson (Creek War), Colonel William Travis (Battle of the Alamo).*
 - **What:** Describe Crockett's major accomplishments.
 - Examples: *Fought in the Creek War and defended settlers during frontier conflicts; Served as a congressman, standing up for the common man and opposing the Indian Removal Act; Heroically fought and died at the Battle of the Alamo.*
 - **Where:** Identify the locations tied to Crockett's life and work.
 - Examples: *Tennessee (his birthplace and home as a frontiersman), Alabama (Creek War battle sites), San Antonio, Texas (the Alamo).*
 - **When:** Record the time periods and key events in Crockett's life.
 - Examples: *1786 (Crockett's birth), 1813–1814 (Creek War), 1827–1831, 1833-1835 (Crockett's terms in Congress), 1836 (Battle of the Alamo).*
 - **Why:** Explore Crockett's motivations and the reasons behind his actions.
 - Examples: *His love for freedom and independence, his desire to protect settlers and fight for justice, his willingness to risk his life to defend Texas during its fight for independence.*
4. Model Expectations:
 - Choose one or two sections to model for students. For instance:
 - **Who:** Write "Davy Crockett – Frontiersman, Soldier, Leader." Ask students to identify other key figures, such as Andrew Jackson.
 - **What:** Write "Fought in the Creek War." Ask students to come up with other accomplishments, like his time in Congress or his role at the Alamo.
5. Guide Student Work:

- Encourage students to use evidence from the book, class discussions, and notes to complete their chart.
 - Allow students to work in small groups or pairs, brainstorming together before filling out their charts.
 - Circulate the room to answer questions and offer prompts.
6. Class Discussion and Sharing:
- After students complete their charts, facilitate a class discussion to share their findings.
 - Create a master chart on the board, asking students to contribute ideas for each section.
 - Reinforce connections between Crockett's actions and the broader themes of frontier survival, independence, and heroism.

Pioneer Legacy Profile: (15-20 minutes)

1. Hand out the Pioneer Legacy Profile graphic organizer to each student. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to understand Davy Crockett's contributions to the American frontier, Congress, and the Texas Revolution, as well as his relevance to American history.
2. Define and explain the three sections of the organizer to ensure students clearly understand what is expected. Provide examples to guide their thinking:
 - **Values & Traits:** Students should identify the personal qualities and values that enabled Crockett to succeed as a frontiersman, leader, and hero.
 - Examples: *Courage, leadership, resilience*
 - **Impact on History:** Students will evaluate the long-term significance of Crockett's contributions and how his actions shaped the American frontier and Texas independence.
 - Examples: *Symbol of frontier bravery and resilience.*
 - *His opposition to the Indian Removal Act highlighted the rights of Native Americans and the common man.*
 - *His death at the Alamo became a rallying cry for Texan independence.*
 - **Lessons for Today:** Students will reflect on the relevance of Crockett's story in the modern world.
 - Examples: *The importance of standing up for one's beliefs, even in the face of opposition.*
 - *The value of courage and perseverance in overcoming challenges.*
 - *How individuals can inspire others through their actions and sacrifices.*
3. Model Expectations:
 - Use one example for each category to demonstrate how to fill out the organizer effectively. For instance:
 - **Values & Traits:** Write "Courage" and explain how Crockett risked his life at the Alamo.
 - **Impact on History:** Write "Symbol of frontier resilience" and explain his influence on the fight for Texas independence.
 - **Lessons for Today:** Write "Standing up for what is right can inspire others," and connect it to Crockett's political and military actions.
4. Guide Student Work:
 - Encourage students to use evidence from their reading, class discussions, and notes. Allow them to brainstorm individually, in pairs, or in small groups before completing the organizer independently.

- Circulate the room to answer questions, provide prompts, and ensure students are drawing meaningful connections.
5. Class Discussion and Sharing:
- After students complete the organizer, facilitate a class discussion where they share their responses. Write key ideas on the board for each category to reinforce understanding and encourage collaboration. Highlight recurring themes like courage, perseverance, and fighting for freedom.

Wrap-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Begin wrapping up the lesson by posing the following reflective questions to the class. Encourage students to share their thoughts and connect their answers to what they wrote in their Pioneer Legacy Profile organizer:
 - *Why do you think Davy Crockett is still remembered today?*
 - *What do Crockett's actions teach us about courage and resilience?*
 - *How might Texas independence have been different without Crockett's heroism at the Alamo?*
 - *What values from Crockett's life—like patriotism, leadership, or sacrifice—do you think are still important in today's world?*
2. Exit Ticket: Distribute an index card or have students complete a short journal entry answering one of the following prompts:
 - *What is one thing about Davy Crockett's legacy that you think is most important for people to remember, and why?*
 - *How does learning about Davy Crockett's life help you better understand the challenges and opportunities of life on the frontier?*
 - *Davy Crockett stood up for what he believed was right, even when it was unpopular. Think about a time when you stood up for something you believed in. How does Crockett's story inspire you to act in your own life?*
 - *Imagine you were at the Alamo with Davy Crockett. What would you want to say to him about his bravery and sacrifice?*
 - *Crockett's life was full of resilience and determination. How can those qualities help you face challenges in your own life?*
3. Wrap up the discussion by connecting Davy Crockett's legacy to larger themes such as courage, resilience, and standing up for one's beliefs. Highlight how these values not only defined the American frontier but also continue to inspire bravery, determination, and leadership in today's world.
 - Example Closing Statement: Davy Crockett's life shows us that making a difference doesn't always mean following the easy or popular path—it requires courage, resilience, and staying true to your values. From his leadership as a frontiersman and congressman to his ultimate sacrifice at the Alamo, Crockett's actions helped shape the American spirit of independence and freedom. His legacy reminds us that even in the face of overwhelming challenges, standing up for what you believe is right can leave a lasting impact and inspire others to do the same.

Enrichment Activity Options

These activities are designed to extend learning by exploring the natural and technological aspects of Davy Crockett's time, as well as the cultural and historical significance of his

contributions to the frontier and Texas independence. Teachers can use these options to encourage creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on exploration of Crockett's world.

1. A Field Guide to Southeast and Texas Animals and Plants:

- **Animal Research and Presentation:**
 - Assign each student or group an animal from the field guide (e.g., Eastern Coral Snake, North American Raccoon, Wild Turkey).
 - Students create a visual presentation that includes:
 - The animal's habitat and diet.
 - Its role or significance in Crockett's time (e.g., as a food source or a threat).
 - How settlers like Crockett might have interacted with it.
 - Encourage students to sketch the animal and explain its importance for frontier life.
- **Plant Identification and Usage:**
 - Assign each student a plant from the field guide (e.g., Cotton Plant, Southern Magnolia, Indian Pink). Students will draw the plant, label its key features, and explain:
 - Its potential uses for settlers (e.g., cotton for clothing, magnolia for wood, or Indian Pink for medicinal purposes).
 - Optionally, if available locally, bring in real-life examples of similar plants for students to examine.

2. A Field Guide to Southeast & Texas Weaponry & Technology

- **Hands-On Exploration:**
 - After reading about the weaponry and tools in the book, guide students to investigate the technological innovations and design principles that enabled the weapons of Crockett's time to function effectively. (Some ideas could include: building a catapult to investigate projectile motion and mechanics, or conducting a ballistics experiment with ramps to analyze the impact of launch angles on trajectory and range.)
- **Discussion:**
 - *Why were tools like cannons, rifles, and medicines so critical for Crockett and other settlers?*
 - *How does designing tools help us better understand the challenges of frontier life?*
 - *What lessons from these tools' designs can we apply to modern technology or survival gear?*

3. Cross-Sectional Project

Combine field guides into a larger project:

- **Mapping Crockett's Journey:**
 - Provide a blank map of the Southeast and Texas regions. Have students label key locations from Crockett's life, such as:
 - Tennessee (his birthplace)
 - Alabama (Creek War battle sites)
 - Texas (the Alamo)
 - Include geographic features like rivers, forests, and plains, and discuss how these shaped Crockett's experiences.
- **Frontier Survival Packing List:**

- Ask students to create a packing list for a journey to the Alamo, considering the tools, weapons, and supplies Crockett might have needed.
 - Include items like a flintlock rifle, Bateman's Drops, hunting knife, and dried food.
 - Students must justify each choice based on the challenges of frontier life described in the text.

4. Historical Reflections:

- **Letter from the Alamo:** Students write a letter from the perspective of a fellow soldier at the Alamo. Include:
 - Descriptions of the conditions at the Alamo.
 - Admiration for Crockett's leadership and bravery.
 - Hopes for the future of Texas independence.
- **Hero or Legend? Analysis:** Compare the real Davy Crockett to the folklore surrounding him (e.g., his supposed raccoon cap as discussed in the text).
 - Have students create a two-column chart or Venn diagram comparing the facts from the book with popular myths.