

Daniel Boone | Lesson Plan

How did Daniel Boone contribute to westward expansion, and why is his legacy important to understanding American history?

Students will understand Daniel Boone's role in westward expansion, including his contributions to early settlement in Kentucky, and explore how his actions influenced American history and values.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and explain the who, what, where, when, and why of Daniel Boone's life and actions.
- Analyze the challenges and opportunities Boone faced and how they reflect the broader story of westward expansion.
- Summarize key ideas and details from the text about Boone's life.
- Reflect on why learning about Daniel Boone's contributions is relevant today.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Frontier:** Untamed wilderness beyond settled land.
- **Cumberland Gap:** A natural pass in the Cumberland Mountains, within the Appalachian Mountain range. It's near the intersection of the borders of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia.
- **Proclamation Line of 1763:** A British-produced boundary, marked in the Appalachian Mountains, that prohibited Anglo-American colonists from settling on lands westward.
- **Wilderness Road:** A path Daniel Boone helped create, which allowed people to travel through the Appalachian Mountains to reach Kentucky.
- **Fort Boonesborough:** One of the earliest colonial settlements in Kentucky. It was founded by and named for Daniel Boone.
- **Survey:** To map or measure out the land for the purpose of selling it to private owners from the state or crown.
- **Siege:** A military attack method in which an armed force tries to take over a fortified city or town. The main tactic of a siege is cutting off the supplies to the city or town in the hopes of forcing those inside to surrender.

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, Westward Expansion

What You'll Need

- PragerU Kids Book *Trailblazers of America: Daniel Boone* (Download [Here](#))
- Worksheets: *Trailblazers of America: Daniel Boone* (Click [Here](#))
- Optional: Purchase the book from Amazon (Click [Here](#))
- One index card per student for Exit Ticket



Pre-Lesson Preparation: Reading the Book

For Teachers:

1. Teachers should assign the entire *Trailblazers: Daniel Boone* book as a pre-reading activity.
 - Depending on the schedule and grade level, this can be done as an in-class activity or as a take-home assignment.
 - Use this pre-reading time to introduce students to the themes of exploration, perseverance, and Boone's pivotal role in American history. An Introduction for Pre-Reading is included below.
2. Optional Pre-Reading Activities:
 - Vocabulary Preview: Introduce the key vocabulary terms (e.g., Cumberland Gap, Wilderness Road, Proclamation Line of 1763) using visual aids or an interactive activity like matching terms to their definitions. Discuss how these terms set the stage for understanding Boone's story.
 - Anticipation Guide: Provide students with a list of thought-provoking statements to agree/disagree with before reading, such as:
 - Daniel Boone was a myth, not a real person.
 - Crossing the Appalachian Mountains was nearly impossible in Boone's time.
 - Creating the Wilderness Road was essential for westward expansion.After reading, revisit these statements and see if their perspectives have changed.

For Students:

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

Introduction for Pre-Reading (10 minutes)

1. Introduce Daniel Boone:
 - Share the following key points about Boone:
 - Daniel Boone was a real person who became an American icon, celebrated for his courage and role in opening new territories for settlement.
 - He lived from November 2, 1734, to September 26, 1820.
 - His life spanned significant periods in American history, including:
 - The French and Indian War
 - The Revolutionary War
 - The early days of westward expansion
 - Ask students the following questions:

- Have you ever heard of Daniel Boone? If so, what do you already know about him?
 - What kind of person do you think it takes to survive and explore the wilderness in the 1700s?
 - Do you know what the frontier is and what life might look like there?
2. Explore the Geography of Boone's Time:
- Display a map of the 13 colonies and the **Appalachian Mountains** (pages 14–15 in the book).
 - Highlight the **Cumberland Gap** as a key passage Boone explored, explaining its importance as a gateway to the West.
 - Trace Boone's journey westward and discuss the challenges settlers faced, including:
 - Rugged terrain
 - Wildlife
 - Interactions with Native American tribes
 - Ask students:
 - What do you think motivated Boone to venture into unknown territory?
 - What risks do you think he faced?
 - Brainstorm as a class:
 - List possible motivations for exploring the frontier on the board (e.g., adventure, land opportunities, helping others).
3. Conclude with Context of Boone's life during Westward Expansion:
- Explain:
 - The **Proclamation Line of 1763** limited colonial settlement beyond the Appalachian Mountains.
 - Boone's exploration challenged this restriction and paved the way for westward expansion.
 - Reading Focus:
 - Encourage students to think about this question as they read: What qualities do you think Boone needed to succeed in such a harsh and untamed environment?

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

Warm-Up: (10 minutes)

1. Re-engage students with the subject matter and transition into the post-reading analysis with a Rapid Recall and Connect Activity:
 - Prompt: Ask students to write down or share aloud:
 - One thing they remember about Daniel Boone.
 - One challenge he faced.
 - One reason why he is remembered in American history.
2. Interactive Brainstorm:
 - Write students' responses on the board under three headings: Key Events, Challenges, Legacy.
 - Encourage students to build on each other's ideas.
3. Transition:

- Explain that the day's lesson will dig deeper into Boone's life by organizing key information using two graphic organizers.

5 Ws Chart: (15-20 minutes)

1. Hand out the 5 Ws graphic organizer to each student. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to analyze the key elements of Daniel Boone's life and accomplishments by answering the five key questions.
2. 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. Add additional information that describes his various roles in history.
 - Examples: *Daniel Boone, explorer, pioneer, trailblazer, leader, hunter, defender.*
 - **What:** Describe what Boone accomplished during his life.
 - Examples: *Cleared the Wilderness Road, founded Boonesborough, defended settlers during the Siege of Boonesborough.*
 - **Where:** Identify the places where Boone lived, traveled, or fought.
 - Examples: *Appalachian Mountains, Cumberland Gap, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio Valley.*
 - **When:** Record the time periods and important events in Boone's life.
 - Examples: *1734–1820 (lifespan), 1755 (French and Indian War), 1775 (Wilderness Road), 1778 (Siege of Boonesborough).*
 - **Why:** Explore Boone's motivations and reasoning behind his actions.
 - Examples: *Love of exploring, desire to help settlers, care for his family and community, resilience in overcoming challenges.*
3. Model Expectations:
 - Choose one or two sections to model for students. For instance:
 - Who: Write "Daniel Boone - Explorer, Pioneer, Leader." Ask students to come up with other roles he had in the book.
 - What: Write "Cleared the Wilderness Road." Ask students to come up with other accomplishments he made from the book.
4. 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, answer questions, and offer prompts.
5. 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.

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 Daniel Boone's contributions to westward expansion and 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 personal qualities and values that enabled Daniel Boone to succeed as a pioneer and leader. Encourage them to consider what made him effective and how his character reflected the spirit of westward expansion.
 - Examples: Courage, determination, resourcefulness, leadership.
 - **Impact on History:** Students will describe Daniel Boone's contributions to American history, focusing on specific actions that supported westward expansion and influenced settlers' lives.
 - Examples: Blazing the Wilderness Road, founding Fort Boonesborough, opening the frontier for settlement, contributing to Kentucky's development.
 - **Lessons for Today:** Students will reflect on the relevance of Daniel Boone's story in the modern world. This section encourages students to consider what they can learn from his experiences and how his legacy continues to inspire.
 - Examples: Lessons in perseverance, bravery, hard work, and respect for nature.
3. **Model Expectations:**
 - Use one example for each category to demonstrate how to fill out the organizer effectively. For instance, under "Values & Traits," write "Courage – Boone faced unknown dangers to explore and settle new lands."
 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.
 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.

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 Daniel Boone is still remembered today?
 - What do Boone's actions teach us about facing challenges and achieving goals?
 - How might westward expansion have been different without pioneers like Boone?
 - What values from Boone's life 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 Daniel Boone's legacy that is most important for people to remember, and why?
 - How does learning about Daniel Boone help you better understand American history?
 - If you were a pioneer like Daniel Boone, what values or traits would you need to succeed? Why?
3. Conclude the discussion by connecting Daniel Boone's legacy to the larger themes of perseverance, exploration, and innovation. Highlight how these values shaped America's growth and remain relevant today.
 - **Example Closing Statement:** Daniel Boone's life reminds us that progress often requires courage and determination. As we've seen, his contributions to

westward expansion helped shape the American frontier and opened doors for future generations. His legacy encourages us to embrace challenges and explore new opportunities, just as pioneers of the past did.

Enrichment Activity Options

These activities are designed to extend learning by exploring the natural and technological aspects of Boone's time using the "Field Guide to Appalachian Animals and Plants" and "Field Guide to Appalachian Weaponry & Technology" sections of the book. Teachers can use these options to encourage creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on exploration of Boone's world.

1. A Field Guide to Appalachian Animals and Plants:

- Research and Illustrate:
 - Have students choose one animal or plant from the guide and create a detailed drawing.
 - Include labels for key features (e.g., paw prints for animals, leaf structure for plants).
 - Write a short paragraph describing the role of the animal or plant in the Appalachian ecosystem and how it might have impacted Boone and settlers.
- Ecosystem Web:
 - Create a class ecosystem web on the board.
 - Students connect animals and plants from the field guide or additional research to show how they interacted (e.g., black bears as predators, white-tailed deer as prey, tulip trees for shelter and food).
- Nature Walk Comparison:
 - Encourage students to compare Appalachian plants and animals with those found in their local area.

2. A Field Guide to Appalachian Weaponry & Technology:

- Explore:
 - 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 Daniel Boone's time to function effectively. (Some ideas could include: designing and testing a foam tomahawk to explore aerodynamics and weight distribution, 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.)
- Debate: Which Tool Was Most Important?
 - Divide students into groups to research and defend a specific piece of weaponry or technology (e.g., long rifle, tomahawk, traps).
 - Hold a class debate: *"Which tool or weapon was most essential for survival during Boone's time?"*
- Hands-On Exploration:
 - If possible, provide hands-on replicas or images of frontier tools.
 - Discuss their design, functionality, and how they were made using natural resources.

3. **Cross-Sectional Project: Life on the Appalachian Frontier.** Combine both field guides into a larger project:
- Survival Scenario:
 - Students create a survival plan, detailing how they would use animals, plants, and tools to thrive in Boone's era.
 - Students create a presentation or poster detailing their survival plan, supported by information from both field guides.
 - Appalachian Resource Timeline:
 - Develop a timeline showing how settlers utilized Appalachian resources for survival and settlement.