

Common Core Standards Addressed:

W.3.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Arkansas Social Studies Frameworks Addressed:

H.12.3.3 Compare specific regions of Arkansas in the past with those regions today noting changes over time.

H.12.3.4 Analyze individuals, groups, and events to understand why their contributions are important to historical change and/or continuity.

Learning Goals:

Students will...

Understand that the way we communicate changes rapidly through time.	
Know The Pony Express was a mail delivery system by horses in 1860.	Do Create a brochure advertising the Pony Express.

Materials Needed:

- TrueFlix, a database found on BPL’s student portal page
 - <http://www.bentonvillelibrary.org/student-portal/grades-k-4/>
- *Off Like the Wind! The First Ride of the Pony Express* by Michael Spradlin
- *They’re Off! The Story of the Pony Express* by Cheryl Harness

Procedures:

- Introduce the topic with a short video on the California Gold Rush, found at TrueFlix.
 - On this website, students can also find an e-book, project ideas, links for further research, as well as short quizzes.
- Discuss what life was like for people living during this time. What kind of luxuries do we have that they didn’t?
- These men who went to California to find gold wanted to contact their families, but their families might have lived hundreds of miles away. How do you think they stayed in contact? Do you think they had phones and emails back then?
 - They had to write letters, and these letters were delivered by something called the Pony Express.
 - The Pony Express was a mail delivery system from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California. It operated from April 1860 to October 1861.
- Read *Off Like the Wind! The First Ride of the Pony Express* by Michael Spradlin.
- Discuss:
 - How were letters delivered before the Pony Express?
 - How did the Pony Express work?
 - What problems did the riders face along the way?
 - Why do you think people were excited by the Pony Express?
- The Pony Express was replaced by the railroad, as well as the telegram.
 - Why do you think this was?

- Can you imagine a time when you had to wait weeks or months to receive news or letters?
- What do we use to communicate today?
- Do you think this too will look different in ten years?
- The way that we communicate with each other changes rapidly with changes in technology.
- Students will create brochures advertising the Pony Express. They should include information that explains what it is, how it works, why it was revolutionary, and why people should use the service.
 - Students can use *Off Like the Wind!* as a resource, as well as *They're Off! The Story of the Pony Express* by Cheryl Harness.

Learn about Michael Spradlin at <http://www.bentonvillelibrary.org/assets/YLF/pdfs/spradlin-bio.pdf>.