

Subject Language Arts

Grade 4- 6

Summary
This reading comprehension activity directs students to other websites to research the Erie Canal. This 30-45 minute activity is referred to as a cyberquest or webquest. Students click on the specific links in each question.

Overall Expectations
Communicate ideas and information for a variety of purposes and to specific audiences

Specific Expectations
Make judgements and draw conclusions about ideas in written materials on the basis of evidence

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CyberQuest on the Erie Canal

Background

When we crossed Lake Ontario in September, we were making our way to an historic canal system in New York State. It is called the Erie Canal. This canal system changed the United States. It opened up the west to new settlers back in the 1800's.

The Erie Canal connected us to the Hudson River. On the Hudson River we sail into New York City, on the east coast of the United States. This is our connection to the Atlantic Ocean and this was the intention of the builders of the Erie Canal.

Activities

1. In New York State, from Buffalo to Albany, the Erie Canal is divided into a number of sections. Visit <http://www.canals.state.ny.us/maps/index.html> to find out how many sections there are from Buffalo to Albany, NY.



2. We've taken down the mast of Amanzi in Oswego, NY. The mast is the part of the sailboat that holds up the main sail. It is referred to by sailors as "the stick". We have to do this in order to get under the bridges on the canal system. How many locks does Amanzi go through on the Oswego Canal system to Oneida Lake? Visit www.canals.state.ny.us/maps/map4.html

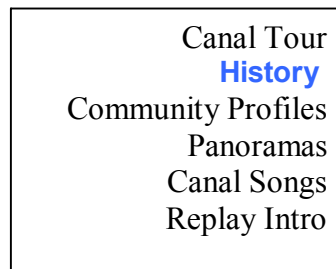
3. Going through the locks is a tricky process. It is referred to as "lock through". There is a procedure when you approach a lock. You must contact the lock operator. There are 2 ways to contact the lock operator. Visit www.canals.state.ny.us/exvac/boating/bclockthru.html
a) Find out the two ways to contact the lock operator as you approach.
b) Why should you **not** tie the lines of your boat to the lock.

4. For the next four questions, you will be working at one specific website. These answers will take a little searching. **Follow the directions closely.**

Visit <http://www.epodunk.com/routes/erie-canal/index.html> . Go to Launch Erie Canal Tour. Listen to the introduction (intro) to hear the story of the canal.

a) The Erie Canal was dug out by the hands of new immigrants. How long was the canal or “ditch”?

b) Why were settlers across New York State thrilled by the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825? To find the answers to this question and the next 2 you need to go to the History section. After the song and introduction, a side bar listing will appear:



Highlight “**History**” then select [Erie Canal History for Kids](#) to find the answers. If you click on “skip intro” the side bar will appear.

c) This was also a time before gasoline engines, so boats traveling the canal had to be pulled by horses or mules. Boys as young as 8 years old worked as "hoggees". Describe the work of the hoggees. What did women and daughters do?

d) One young Hoggee wrote his brother in Germany a letter. What was one piece of advice Karl wrote in his letter to Frederick that applies today?

5. When the Erie Canal was built it was referred to as Clinton’s ditch DeWitt Clinton was Governor of the New York State at that time.

It's October 26, 1825. It's the opening of the Erie Canal with celebrations all the way from Buffalo to New York City. Governor DeWitt Clinton is on board the vessel, *The Seneca Chief*, as part of the celebrations. *The Seneca Chief* is carrying some important cargo. Visit <http://www.nysarchives.org/projects/eriecanal/Erie1825.html> to determine what's the important cargo. Speculate why you think this was important cargo?