



JA America Works®

Through hands-on classroom activities, *JA America Works* provides students with examples of how business and entrepreneurship affected the economic development of the United States during the 19th century.

Following participation in the program, students will be able to:

- Describe the significance of business and entrepreneurship in the economic development of the United States.
- Explain how new and improved technologies advanced the production of goods and services.
- Apply their knowledge of business and economic concepts in analyzing contemporary events, as well as business opportunities and challenges.

Session Titles and Summaries

Session One: Who Am I?

Students learn about the contributions made by immigrants in the economic growth of the United States. They explore how “push and pull factors” affected immigration in the 1800s and still do today.

Session Two: Roughing It

Students recognize the significant role agriculture played in U.S. economic development. Working in groups, students role-play scenarios related to the Homestead Act to understand how homesteaders helped make public lands productive.

Session Three: Strike-It-Rich

Students learn about the importance of natural resources to businesses through the example of the California Gold Rush. They explore the development of boomtowns and their frequent transformation into ghost towns.

Session Four: In Pursuit of Progress

Students identify various modes of transportation used during the 19th century and compare them to modern forms. They learn about productive resources: natural, human, and capital, and test their knowledge in a board game in which a train and a barge compete in a race to Eureka.

Session Five: Communication Transformation

Students explain how methods of communication developed in the 1800s expanded business opportunities across America. They learn how the telegraph, in particular, increased productivity in a variety of businesses. They use Morse Code to decode messages.

Session Six: Now What?

Students learn how entrepreneurs bring innovative and affordable products to market. Working in groups, they develop an innovation in one of three categories— photography, writing machines, and recorded music.

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