

Materials that will support children throughout these lessons:

Journal (somewhere to record all of their thinking)

Folder (storing artifacts, articles, photographs, etc.)

Note: All resources for each session can be found in the corresponding resource folders

Session Two:

Intention: Letitia travels to Oregon -- take a deep dive into her experience on the Oregon Trail

1). Pass out or project a large version of the maps of Letitia and David Carson's journey down the Oregon Trail and Soap Creek Valley to students

-Ask children to share out what they notice about the map

-This could be connected to place, terrain, distance, path, etc.

2). Share about the uniqueness of Letitia's story and also acknowledge the gaps in information that we have around her early life and, specifically, how she connected with David

-Majority of Black pioneers came to Oregon in different ways: single laborers (both free and enslaved), working for white families, men as wagon drivers and hostlers, women as nurses, midwives, and cooks.

-Be direct with students: you will hear and read in resources that Letitia and David were "married." It's important to understand that while they are referred to in this way, their relationship was not like the marriages we are familiar with today. We do not know how David and Letitia connected and came to travel the Oregon Trail together. However, we can make some assumptions based on what we know about enslaved Black women living in the south at this time. Tailor the exploration of these hard topics to the ages of the children you work with:

-It's possible that Letitia grew up in Kentucky before landing in Missouri where she met David but we don't know for sure how long she was there or if she was with her family members. She and/or her biological family may have been sold early on in her life meaning they were separated

-It's also possible that, as an enslaved woman, Letitia had more children that we know nothing about

-David may have purchased Letitia and she may have been enslaved by him in Missouri prior to leaving for Oregon

-We know Letitia was pregnant when they left for Oregon and it's presumed David was the father - we do not know that this was a consensual relationship for Letitia

-Historian Bob Zybach has described their relationship as one of mutual convenience - Letitia worked hard and, therefore, was an asset to David. Letitia also likely knew of the laws against slavery in Oregon." Therefore, traveling with him was a brave step towards claiming her own freedom.

-Stories about French-Canadian "Metis" and the general history of "Country Wives" might provide some additional context.

3). Watch: High Desert Museum clip (stop at 4:45 for today)
URL: <https://highdesertmuseum.org/oregon-trail-reflections/>

- As you listen, take notes in your journal. Note specific facts about Letitia's journey that seem important to remember
- Turn and talk with a partner about their notes -- add anything important that your partner shares to your notes as well

4). Facts/Questions/Feelings Protocol

Model this thinking protocol as a whole group and then put children into partnerships to continue this work. You might have them continue this table on a large piece of paper or in an electronic format

Draw this table on the whiteboard:

Facts: What is a fact that you learned about this story?	Questions: What questions does this fact raise for you?	Feelings: What feelings come up for you around learning this fact?

Ask students to share one of the facts they noted in their journals. Capture that in the left column. Then list 3-5 questions children generate in response to that specific fact. Afterwards capture 3-5 specific feelings words that describe how this fact makes the children feel. Using an emotion wheel like the one included in the resource folder might help generate stronger vocabulary.

Be explicit with children about the importance of engaging with emotions as they learn about history (teachers, you might research historical empathy prior to this). You might even ask them why they think it's important to pay attention to how they feel when discussing stories that involve injustices and situations that aren't fair?

5). Reflection

Come back together as a whole class and invite a few children to share what they included on their table. Record their thinking on chart paper. This table structure will be something we return to throughout the series of these lessons, keep this one in a safe place for later.