A Core Curriculum State Standards Annotated
Teacher’s Guide

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Farrar, Straus & Giroux
# Table of Contents

Story Summary .................................................................................................................. 2  
CCSS Annotated Thematic Connections for grades K-5................................................... 2  
How to Use this Packet ..................................................................................................... 2  
Pre-Reading Discussion .................................................................................................... 2  
  Worksheet: What do you know about the railroad?......................................................... 3  
Reading Together .............................................................................................................. 4  
Curriculum Connections  
  Listening/Speaking ....................................................................................................... 4  
  Writing ............................................................................................................................. 4  
  Worksheet: All Aboard! Word Search............................................................................. 5  
  Worksheet: Main Line Maze ......................................................................................... 6  
  Worksheet: Rail Talk ...................................................................................................... 7  
  Worksheet: Railroad Crossing crossword puzzle ......................................................... 8-10  
Reading Reference Lists  
  Train Books.................................................................................................................. 11  
  Train Poems and Songs ................................................................................................. 11  
  Social Studies ............................................................................................................... 12  
  Science ......................................................................................................................... 12  
  Math ................................................................................................................................ 13  
  Worksheet: Don’t Miss Your Train! ............................................................................. 14-15  
  Art/Music ...................................................................................................................... 16  
  Reference sheet: Gandy Dancer Song Sheet................................................................. 17  
  Health/P.E. .................................................................................................................... 18  
Core Curriculum State Standards Annotations:  
  Reading Literature ........................................................................................................ 19  
  Reading Information Text ............................................................................................. 20  
  Writing .......................................................................................................................... 21  
  Speaking and Listening.................................................................................................. 22  

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Story Summary: Step back in time to Ruby's rail-yard hash house and put on the nosebag with the boss hogger. He'll tell you he likes his eggs with headlights, but if you want scrambled, just order wreck on the main line. Follow him as he and his ashcat warm up engine #417 at the roundhouse, give her a drink at the water tower, and then hitch her up to a jigger. Jingle the brass and ride the point as the rods start flashing. Now you're railroading!

CCSS Annotated Thematic Connections for grades K-5

- Transportation
- Travel
- Trains
- Transcontinental Railroad
- Industrial Revolution
- Intergenerational communication

How to Use this Packet

- Before or after my author visit, use any or all of the curriculum connections with your students to complement your post-reading discussions.
- Activity worksheets immediately follow the instructions.

Pre-Reading Discussion

- Talk about different parts of a train—the engine or locomotive, the various cars that make up a train (grain, refrigerator, hopper, livestock, caboose). Talk about the people who work on the railroad—engineer, fireman, brakemen, track workers, conductor.
  - Use the What do you know about the railroad? activity sheet.
- Talk about two trains traveling in the opposite direction that share one track and what sidings are used for.
- Include a discussion of the slang your students use today—what words they use and possible explanations for how the slang developed.
What do you know about the railroad?

Draw a line from the train car to the type of freight it carries.

A. Hopper       a. carries cows, pig, sheep
B. Refrigerator car  b. a car that loads from the top and empties from the bottom; usually carries grain
C. Caboose      c. track signals
D. Engine        d. the car that drives the train
E. Oil can       e. keeps fruits and vegetables cold
F. Livestock car f. the office for the conductor on a freight train
G. Semaphore  g. a tank car for carrying liquid

Match the following railroad workers with their jobs.

A. Engineer     a. drives livestock on and off the train
B. Fireman      b. sets the brakes, throws track switches, and protects the rear end of the train from another train
C. Brakeman     c. keeps the fire burning in the engine at the correct temperature
D. Track worker c. drives the train
E. Conductor    d. lines track and repairs the ties and railroad spikes
F. Cowboy       e. does the paperwork for the cargo on a freight train; takes tickets on a passenger train
Reading Together
Read *Jingle the Brass* aloud to your students, allowing ample time to understand the new slang vocabulary. The pictures provide excellent clues to what the railroad jargon means. Discuss these clues with your students, then open to the glossary at the end of the book to check your answers.

Curriculum Connections
Listening/Speaking
- Retell the story of *Jingle the Brass* as a classroom play. Act out the journey. Students will enjoy becoming the locomotive, the train cars, the semaphore (track signal), and the tunnel, as well as the people in the story.
- Look at the illustrations and discuss how the little boy might be feeling during his journey.
- Talk about other professions that might use jargon. Consider ideas like sports, cowboys, the military, and journalists.
- Ask your students to interview their grandparents about train travel memories. If parents or grandparents worked on the railroad, ask them to come into the class to talk to your students about their experiences.

Writing
- Pick one railroad slang phrase from *Jingle the Brass* and draw a picture to illustrate it.
- Write a short story about your favorite trip. Illustrate it.
- Complete the *All Aboard! Word Search* worksheet
- Complete the *Main Line Maze* worksheet
- Write your own story using railroad slang. Use the *Rail Talk* worksheet.
- Rewrite *Jingle the Brass* from the little boy’s perspective.
- Complete the *Railroad Crossing* crossword puzzle.
- Write a letter to the author of *Jingle the Brass*. Ask students to tell her how they liked the story. Ask students to tell about their own train trips. Send her your students’ stories.
- Ask students to write a story about their grandparents’ memories of train travel (see Listening/Speaking above).
- Write several diary entries from the point of view of a Chinese laborer on the Transcontinental Railroad (see Social Studies below).
All Aboard! Word Search

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Main Line Maze

My flimsies tell me to hop on the main line to the next station. Help me find the right track.
Rail Talk

- Choose at least 6 words from column A and write a paragraph.
- Underline all the words that you used from column A.
- Now, write a second paragraph. Replace all the underlined words with the matching slang term from column B.
- Read your story aloud.

**Column A**
- coal
- cowboys
- head-on crash
- restaurant
- sunny-side up eggs
- engine
- ring the bell
- quit work and go home
- eat
- donuts
- scrambled eggs
- pocket watch
- milk
- police
- at a complete stop
- waiting off to the side
- hop aboard a moving train
- going VERY fast

**Column B**
- black diamonds
- clover pickers
- cornfield meet
- hash house
- eggs with headlights
- hog
- jingle the brass
- pull the pin
- put on the nosebag
- rolling stock
- wreck on the main line
- ticker
- whitewash
- bulls
- lying dead
- in the hole
- nail her on the fly
- the rods are flashing
Railroad Crossing! Crossword Puzzle
Railroad Crossing! Crossword Puzzle Clues

Across
2. a car loaded from the top and emptied from the bottom
4. orders typed on thin paper
5. track workers are called gandy __________
7. a railroad bridge
10. merry-go-round
12. clover pickers
15. a railroad worker's shift
16. restaurant
18. refrigerator cars
21. heaviest train allowed on the line
22. put on the __________
23. the dining car on a passenger train
24. hogger
25. rolling stock

Down
1. head-on train wreck
3. tank cars
6. a sleeping compartment on a passenger train
8. black diamonds
9. a track-side signal
11. railroad police are called __________
13. milk
14. a locomotive fireman
17. a fireman's shovel
19. a pocket watch
20. eggs with _______________
Railroad Crossing! Answer Key

Across

Down
Reading Reference Lists

Train Books
- Awdry, W. *Thomas the Tank Engine* series.
- Brady, Peter. *Freight Trains.*
- Crews, Donald. *Freight Train and Short Cut.*
- Johnson, Angela. *I Dream of Trains.*
- Johnston, Marianne. *Casey Jones.*
- Kay, Verla. *Iron Horses and Orphan Train.*
- Kuklin, Susan. *All aboard! : a true train story.*
- Lyon, George Ella and Stephen Gammell. *A Regular Rolling Noah.*
- McCaughrean, Geraldine. *Stop the train!*
- McPhail, David. *The Train.*
- Micklethwait., Lucy. *I spy a freight train : transportation in art.*
- Mott, Evelyn Clarke. *Steam train ride.*
- Murphy, Jim. *Across America on an emigrant train.*
- Ó Flatharata, Antoine. *The Prairie Train.*
- Oliver, Lynn. *The Torpedo Run.*
- Sandler, Martin. *Riding the rails in the USA : trains in American life.*
- Sattler, Helen Roney. *Train whistles : a language in code.*
- Siebert, Diane. *Train Song.*
- Weiss, Harvey. *How to run a railroad : everything you need to know about model trains.*
- Wetterer, Margaret. *Kate Shelley and the midnight express.*

Train Poems and Songs
From the *Random House Book of Poetry for Children:*
- Siebert, Diane. “Train Song.”
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. “From a Railway Carriage.” (sing to the tune of “Down in the Valley”)

McCord, David. “Song of the Train.”

From Lillian Morrison’s *Rhythm Road:*
- Roethke, Theodore. “Night Journey.”
- Bogan, Louise. “Train Tune.”
From Kathleen Krull’s *I Hear America Singing!*:  
- “Casey Jones.”  
- Goodman, Stephen. “City of New Orleans.”  
- “Freight Train.”  
- “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad.”  
- “John Henry.”  
- “Rock Island Line.”

From Norm Cohen’s *Long Steel Rail: The Railroad in American Folk Song*.  
- Grayson and Whitter. “Nine Pound Hammer.”  
- Hurt, Mississippi John. “Spike Driver Blues.”

**IDEA!**  
Ask the music teacher at your school to record some favorite train songs on a CD or tape.

**Social Studies**  
- Talk about why railroads are useful. What kinds of goods do they transport?  
- Using a U.S. map, chart an itinerary to visit several American landmarks by rail.  
  - Perhaps visit [www.amtrack.com](http://www.amtrack.com) for route maps.  
  - Determine four landmarks you’d like to see (monuments, national parks, museums, historic spots, etc.) and create a day-by-day itinerary  
  - If you can, determine the cost of rail tickets using the Amtrak website listed above.  
- During your units on the industrial revolution or the transcontinental railroad, discuss the following with your students:  
  - What was life like before the railroad?  
  - How did life in the U.S. change after the railroad?  
  - How did railroads influence the growth of industry?  
  - What were some of the dangers and problems railroad workers faced when building the transcontinental railroad?  
  - What unique problems did Chinese workers face? (The Central Pacific Historical website at [www.cpr.org/Museum/Chinese.html](http://www.cpr.org/Museum/Chinese.html) has an excellent article on Chinese labor with photographs. Several links are included at the end of the article.)  
  - How did the Transcontinental Railroad affect the Plains Indians? (See [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANexperience/features/interview/tcrr-interview/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amERICANexperience/features/interview/tcrr-interview/) for a ***PBS interview***).

**Science**  
- Heat a pot of water in a hot pot or on a hot plate. Discuss what happens to the water.  
- How does a steam locomotive work? What is the fuel for the locomotive in *Jingle the Brass*? What are other types of fuels for locomotives throughout history?
Discuss the parts of the steam locomotive and why steam makes the pistons pump. Check out the following website for an excellent explanation and animation. [http://travel.howstuffworks.com/steam1.htm](http://travel.howstuffworks.com/steam1.htm)

Discuss technological advances on the railroad—from the days when brakemen rode on top of the cars to today’s radio communications.

**Math**

- Read train departure times off a railroad timetable and ask students to set their clocks as part of a lesson on telling time. Act out having plenty of time before the train comes and rushing for the train. (The *Don’t Miss Your Train!* worksheet includes a timetable which you could use for this activity, but the questions on the worksheet are geared are for grades 3-6.)
- Take a field trip to a railroad depot. Count the cars on a long freight train.
- Teach your students to read the railroad timetable included with *Don’t Miss Your Train!* Ask students to complete the accompanying timetable worksheet in groups or independently.
- Using the itinerary students planned in the Social Studies section, ask them to calculate the amount of traveling time for the journey and the cost for their own family. Be sure to include meals (see railroad menu in the Health/P.E. section).
Don’t Miss Your Train!

Use the timetable on the following page to answer the questions.

1. There are two trains listed on this timetable—the #5 train and the #6 train.
   a. Does the #5 train travel west or east? _____________
   b. Does the #6 train travel west or east? _____________

2. What services could a passenger expect to find on these trains?
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________

3. Pretend you are a westbound passenger. Answer the following questions:
   a. What time does the train leave Chicago for Naperville? ___________
   b. How many miles is it between Chicago and Naperville? ___________
   c. What time does your train arrive in Omaha, Nebraska? ___________
   d. How many miles between Naperville and Omaha? ___________
   e. How long does the trip from Chicago to Omaha take? ___________

4. Now pretend you are an eastbound passenger. Answer the following questions:
   a. What train will you be riding—#5 or #6? ___________
   b. What time does the train leave Salt Lake City, Utah? ___________
      (Hint: Dp means depart and Ar means arrive)
   c. What time does your train arrive in Denver, Colorado? ___________
   d. EXTRA CREDIT: How many miles between Salt Lake City and Denver? ___________

Note: These exercises do not span time zones. Question 3 stays within Central time; question 4 stays within Mountain time. To extend this lesson further, cross time zones during your travel.
### Don’t Miss Your Train! Timetable

#### Services on the California Zephyr
- **Coaches**: Reservations required
- **Sleeping Cars**: First Class Superliner® Service
- **Dining Car**: Complete meals
- **See/Sleeper Lounge**: Sandwiches, snacks and beverages
- **Entertainment**: Feature movies

**Trails and Rail Program**: In a cooperative effort with the National Park Service, volunteer rangers provide a narrative between Grand Junction and Denver (Spring/Summer).

**On-Board Guide Program**: California State Railroad Museum narrators provide historical and sightseeing commentary between Reno and Sacramento.

**No Smoking**: Smoking is prohibited entirely on this train. Passengers may smoke on station platforms as announced by train crews, and must remain next to the train, ready to board immediately upon hearing the locomotive horn and verbal “All Aboard” calls.

#### Scenic Highlights
- One of the most popular scenic trains
- Rocky Mountains/Morant Tunnel
- Colorado’s Gores, Rivers and Glenwood Canyons
- California’s historic Donner Pass and High Sierra

#### Symbols and Reference Marks
- **A**: Time Symbol for A.M.
- **CT**: Central Time
- **D**: Stops only to discharge passengers.
- **MT**: Mountain Time
- **N**: Time Symbol for Noon
- **P**: Time Symbol for P.M.
- **PT**: Pacific Time
- **R**: Stops only to receive passengers.

**Checked Baggage Service available at stations indicated.**

**Thruway Motorcoach Connection**: Coordinated train/motorcoach service with connections at the Amtrak station in most cases, as well as through fares/ticketing. Passengers traveling on Thruway connections must be ticketed before boarding coaches in order to obtain through fares. Motorcoaches are normally not accessible to passengers who use wheelchairs, except for connections at Emeryville.

- **B**: Ticket office open for all train departures.
- **D**: Ticket office/check bagage open for all departures.
- **S**: Tickets cannot be purchased at this location.
- **A**: All station facilities are fully accessible to persons using wheelchairs.
- **B**: Barrier-free access between street and parking lot, station platforms and trains; however, not all facilities within the station are fully accessible.
- **A**: Amtrak Vacations package(s) available at this destination. Book your hotel and/or tour by calling 1-800-321-0708.
- **P**: Passenger cars carried locally between this station and Chicago except when connecting at Chicago for/from other Amtrak trains.
- **S**: Direct transfer between train and motorcoach at Amtrak station for connecting passengers only.

**Classic Lurquoise operates van service from Springfield, IL, for connections from Train 22 to Trains 3 and 5 at Galesburg, IL, and from Galesburg, IL to Trains 4 and 6 to Train 21 at Springfield, IL.**

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Art/Music

- Sing railroad songs with your class. Use the suggested *Train Poems & Songs* resource list in the Reading Reference List section.
- A “quill” is an engineer’s signature whistle call. According to one story, an engineer blew his quill as he pulled into the station. His wife heard it from their house and she had dinner on the table by the time he came home. Have your students make up their own quills with a railroad whistle or with their own voices. Are there specific “quills” their parents use to call them in for supper? To call the dog?
- Ask students to draw their own freight train and label all the cars with slang names.
- Every railroad line had its own logo. Ask your students to create their own railroad line and design a logo. Each railroad had different designs for the plates, silverware and glassware in the dining cars. Ask students to design their own china pattern for their railroad line. This website is a great place to see some of the patterns: [http://cabinclass.com/pages/railroad/diningcar_01.htm](http://cabinclass.com/pages/railroad/diningcar_01.htm)
- Analyze Michael Chesworth’s illustrations and note some of the techniques he uses to suggest speed. What are some of the funny touches he includes? Why do you suppose he chose the color palette he did?
- Track workers or gandy dancers used chants and songs to help them realign the heavy steel track in unison. Teach your class some of the track workers’ songs and see if they can pull and push an imaginary track as a team. Use the *Gandy Dancers’ Song Sheet* on the next page.
Gandy Dancers’ Songs

Track workers replaced worn out cross-ties, smoothed rough areas in the track, and straightened bends or kinks in the track. This was called lining the track.

A team of 16 or more strong men with 30 lb. steel bars stood on both sides of the track and dug small holes under the rail for leverage. In order to move the heavy rail, every man had to heave at the same time. The foreman signaled the direction to move the track and the caller sang a short song called a ditty to help the men get in synch with one another.

The following ditties are from the Buckingham Lining Bar Gang in Virginia:

Way down yonder on my knees
I thought I heard a chicken sneeze
Way down yonder
On my knees
Oh, yeah

~~~

Cap’n, Cap’n he’s so mean
Won’t give me time to eat my beans
Cap’n, Cap’n
He’s so mean
He won’t give me time to eat my beans

~~~

Hey, boys he’s alright
Cap’n, Cap’n can’t you see
Lining this track is killing me
Cap’n, Cap’n can’t you see
Lining this track is killing me
Health/P.E.

- Act out a scene in the dining car on a passenger train. Have students create menus from which the passengers may order. For older students, menus may include prices. Ask them to calculate the price of a balanced meal.
- Your students are the head chefs on their own railroad lines (see the Art activities above). Ask them to design and prepare a healthful menu. (Discussion of the major food groups and suggested servings may be necessary.) Then ask your students to prepare a grocery list (including quantities and prices) to determine the railroad’s cost for each meal. Decide on a profit margin and determine the prices for each meal on the menu.
### Core Curriculum State Standards Annotations: Reading Literature

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# Core Curriculum State Standards Annotations: Speaking & Listening

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