

Erie Canal History Cloze Activity

Please read the directions carefully.

1. Read the question carefully.
2. Read the answer to the question.
3. Fill in the blanks with the correct word or words used in the description.
4. Check your work with the answer sheet provided at the end of the packet.

SAMPLE:

Fill in the blanks with a word found in the directions above.

1. Read the _____ carefully.
2. Read the _____ to the question.
3. Fill in the _____ with the correct words used in the description.
4. Check your work with the _____ provided at the end of the packet.

Now begin the packet.

When and why was the Erie Canal built?

_____ In the early 1800's, Americans were moving westward in large numbers by wagons and boats. Families were taking all their household possessions and the merchants were taking as much in goods as they possibly could to set up stores. It was a hard trip for most of them. In 1817, New York's Governor Clinton got permission to build a canal across New York State from east to west. The canal would provide a cheaper and easier way to travel back and forth across the state.

Fill in the blanks.

1. Americans were moving westward by _____ and _____.
2. The canal was planned to offer a _____ and _____ way to travel.
3. The canal was started by _____ _____ in _____.

Where was the Erie Canal built?

The Erie Canal was built across the central part of New York State from east to west. This was to take advantage of the terrain that was mostly flat and to follow the Mohawk River wherever possible. The Canal was started in Rome in 1817 because it was the most level place to start the digging. There were some people in the state capitol, Albany, that were against building the canal because they believed a ditch could not be built across the state. They called it "Clinton's Ditch." The Canal was finished in 1825. It connected Albany and the Hudson River on the east with Buffalo at Lake Erie on the west. Travel was then cheaper and easier by boat on the Canal.

Fill in the blanks.

1. The Erie Canal was built across the central part of _____.
2. "Clinton's Ditch" was built to connect the Hudson River with Lake _____.

3. The cities at each end of the Canal were Albany and _____.

4. The Erie Canal was started in 1817 and completed in _____.

What was one of the problems in building the Canal?

One of the problems in constructing the Canal was the difference in the water level at certain places along the route. In surveying the length of the Erie Canal, the surveyors found that Lake Erie was 568 feet higher than the Hudson River. They also discovered that there was a 60 foot cliff just east of Buffalo. The canal planners decided to use locks to overcome the drop in the water level. They decided to build aqueducts over any ravines, rivers or rapid streams that crossed the path of the Canal.

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Fill in the blanks.

1. Lake Erie was 568 feet _____ than the Hudson River.
2. A 60 foot cliff was found east of _____.
3. Engineers decided to use _____ to deal with the difference in water level.
4. They decided to build _____ over any water that crossed the path of the Canal.

Why were locks and aqueducts used?

_____ Eighty-three (83) locks were completed by the time the Canal was finished in 1825. A lock was small, measuring 90 feet long by 15 feet wide and 8 feet deep. In order to travel up and down the Canal, it was necessary to use the locks to raise or lower the water for the boats to continue their journey. As time went on, it became necessary to build

bigger locks to handle bigger boats. In some cases, the locks were double their original size. Aqueducts were water bridges for the boats to travel along the Canal. They were built over ravines, rivers, and deep, fast moving streams.

Fill in the blanks.

1. By 1825, there were _____ canal locks.
2. Some locks had to be made _____ so all boats could travel on the Canal.
3. Locks _____ or _____ the water so boats can travel the Canal.
4. Ravines and rivers were crossed by _____.

What are the four steps necessary to pass through a lock?

_____ There are four main steps in moving a boat through a lock. First, the upper or entry gate is opened and the boat moves into the lock chamber. Next, the gate is closed. Then, the water is let out of the chamber through the sluice gate to lower the boat. Last, the lower or exit gate is opened and the boat starts moving forward out of the lock. The whole process is slow and frustrating. Sometimes, there would be a line of boats and only one boat could go through at a time. Each time there would more delay because the chamber again would have to be filled with water.

1. There are _____ main steps in moving a boat through a lock.
2. The boat is _____ the lock and the _____ is closed behind it.

3. The water was then _____ or _____.
4. Then the water flowed through a small _____ gate.
5. The lower gate is opened and the boat _____ out of the lock.
6. The process of passing through a lock was _____.