The Oregon Trail was much more than a pathway to the state of Oregon; it was the only practical corridor to the entire western United States. The places we now know as Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho and Utah would probably not be a part of the United States today were it not for the Oregon Trail. That’s because the Trail was the feasible way for settlers to get across the mountains. Background info at http://www.america101.us/trail/Introduction.html

Assignment: US History 1301 – Web-Based Paper

Instructor: Betsy.Anderson@lonestar.edu

Step 1: Play Oregon Trail. (See directions in syllabus. Lab scheduled.)

Step 2: Research the Oregon Trail.
You must use at least 1, but no more than 2, additional sources in your paper.
Your sources must be scholarly sources, such as journal articles or non-fiction books written with the purpose of educating the public.
Wikipedia, and sites like it, CANNOT be used.

Step 3: Write Your Paper.
Answer the following questions in a 3-5 page paper:
Describe the conditions and experiences of the Oregon Trail, based on your experience playing the game. What motivated people to attempt this journey westward, and what were their experiences like? You must address five different obstacles you faced on your adventure west, but you cannot repeat them. How did these obstacles affect your journey? What were the consequences of choices you made along the trail? How accurate was your journey on the Oregon Trail in the game compared to the realities of the journey that the actual travelers faced that you researched?

Take a look at the Trail – clickable Map – good for background information.

Actual wagon ruts from the Oregon Trail still exist today in many parts of the American West.
### Scholarly is…

Scholarly sources are those that have been approved by a group with recognized expertise in the field under discussion. Books published by University Presses fall into this category, as do articles published in peer-reviewed journals — journals where the editors send pieces out to be read by experts in the field before deciding to publish them.

### Finding Books and eBooks

The resources at LSC-University Park Library is digital. Use the library catalog if you want to order books or resources from other libraries. Allow 3-5 days. [http://www.lonestar.edu/library/](http://www.lonestar.edu/library/) Or download or read online eBooks, found on the database subject page. From home, [Login using your ID barcode](http://www.lonestar.edu/library/). Find books appropriate for college reading.

**Search words:**
- Oregon Trail
- state histories (name states)
- explorers
- western frontier
- Frontier women
- Gold Rush

### About Databases

Databases contain articles, news, and multimedia on various topics. Databases are more likely to contain journal articles reviewed by peers that are scholarly, and are appropriate for college papers.

### Finding Critical Articles in Databases

#### Academic Search Complete

This index to journal articles includes full text and older articles you may not find elsewhere. Includes all subjects of journals; limit to Scholarly.

#### Bloom's Literary Reference Online

Essays and criticism examining the lives of great authors and their works throughout history. Use the advanced search and use the tabs your search provides. The 2-5 minute videos by Harold Bloom are worth watching.

#### History Study Center

(ProQuest) A collection of primary and secondary sources on global history from ancient times to the present day.

#### JSTOR

(JSTOR) Complete historical full text of all issues of journals in a wide range of humanities and social science fields. Articles are typically more than 5 years old.

#### NBC Learn Higher Ed

(NBC) Access video clips from current events to newsreels from celebrated NBC news programs. Reports from earlier times about frontiersmen.

### Using Video as a Source

Some videos can be considered scholarly, particularly those from reputable publishers, like PBS and Films for Humanity.

**Films on Demand** is a database of over 6000 full length films from reputable sources.

**NBC SAMPLE:** [The Oregon Trail 150 year anniversary](http://www.lonestar.edu/library/)
### Citing Sources

You must find reputable sites. Consider:

**ACCURACY:** Proof of solid research.

**SOURCE:** .gov, .edu, .org, .net

**AUTHORITY:** Check Author’s credentials

**COVERAGE:** Does it answer your questions?

**OBJECTIVITY:** Bias? Point of view? Present both sides.

**TIMELINESS:** When was it written? Is it meaningful today?

### Internet Sites for this Research

This assignment does not require a website, but for the curious, there are lots of websites that contain valuable information, especially journals and photographs.

- The National Parks Services website has information about the Oregon Trail and the Westward Migration: [http://www.nps.gov/oreg/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/oreg/index.htm)
- The American Memory Project of the Library of Congress – search The Oregon Trail or other words, i.e. American Frontier: [http://memory.loc.gov](http://memory.loc.gov)

### Getting Help with Your Paper

1. Use the MLA paper guide available in the library or online: [MLA Guide](http://example.com/MLAGuide).
2. Watch for the tutor in the library during research.
3. Use the Writing Lab.
4. About Student Success in Angel is a short course on study skills, research, using technology.

**Chat line** is open when the library is open. Contact us.

Reference Librarian: 281-401-5390.

Email at [UPLibrary-ref@lonestar.edu](mailto:UPLibrary-ref@lonestar.edu)

Enjoy the Oregon Trail game! [http://www.virtualapple.org/oregontraildisk.html](http://www.virtualapple.org/oregontraildisk.html)

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Page by Peggy Whitley, 11/12.