

The Granite Railway

1826 | Grade 4 · Explain with evidence

Words to know

transport — move people or goods from one place to another

material — something used to make things

route — a path from one place to another

Look closely



Modern topic illustration created for Massachusetts History Explorers. It is not a historical artifact.

Read the story

A railway opened in Quincy to move heavy granite. Stone traveled toward the Bunker Hill Monument project. Rails made moving loads easier. This was an early commercial railroad in the United States.

The railway used horses before the familiar era of steam passenger trains. Calling every early railroad a modern train system erases important differences in power, purpose, and design.

Think, talk, and show evidence

1. State the main idea. Support it with two details from the reading.
2. Explain a change or challenge described in the text. Which words support your answer?
3. Use one vocabulary word in a new sentence about this event.
4. What can the image and caption help explain? What can they not tell you?

Follow-up reading: Lowell becomes a town

1826

Lowell was incorporated as a town. Mills grew beside waterways. Many young women worked in textile factories. Workers created communities and organized for better conditions. The city's story includes many immigrant families.

Waterpower, investment, and labor made the mills possible. The Lowell mill girls were not a single uniform group. Their letters and publications reveal aspirations, criticism, and changing work experiences.

Compare the two readings. Explain one similarity or difference using a detail from each. Their order does not prove that one caused the other.

Teacher guide & source trail

Original classroom adaptation. Suggested reading levels are instructional choices, not standardized readability certifications. Use professional judgment and learner feedback.

ELA practice: RI.4.1: refer to details; RI.4.2: main idea and summary; RI.4.3: explain events; RI.4.7: interpret visual information; W.4.2 and SL.4.1: explain and discuss.

These tasks support selected skills in the [Massachusetts 2017 ELA framework](#); they do not establish mastery of an entire standard.

Answer guidance

Factual anchor: A railway opened in Quincy to move heavy granite. Stone traveled toward the Bunker Hill Monument project. Rails made moving loads easier. This was an early commercial railroad in the United States. The railway used horses before the familiar era of steam passenger trains. Calling every early railroad a modern train system erases important differences in power, purpose, and design.

Accept accurate main ideas and explanations supported by the text. Vocabulary meanings are in the opening word bank. For picture questions, use the caption and credit below; distinguish what is visible from what is inferred. For comparison, accept a specific connection supported by both readings. Do not require personal accounts of trauma.

Continue the inquiry

[Research source for this event ↗](#)

[Research source for follow-up ↗](#)

[Event page, accessible HTML reading, and vocabulary game ↗](#)

Image: Original site illustration.

[Image source and rights record ↗](#)

The PDF contains selectable English text and embedded fonts. For adjustable text and browser reading tools, use the event's [HTML page](#). External sources may need adult guidance.