



USING MATH ON THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL

Using Math on the California Trail

Weighing the costs

Help decide what emigrants would take and leave behind. Weight was the limiting factor for emigrants when packing their wagons. Emigrants needed to bring enough supplies to last the 4-6 month journey and also keep the weight down for the well-being of your animals

1. Your animals can carry 2,500 lbs. Your wagon weighs 1,200 lbs. How many pounds of supplies can you fit in your wagon?
2. If one ox can carry 600 pounds. How many oxen would it take to carry a 2400 pound wagon?

Distance

It was important for emigrants to know the distance they traveled each day to determine where to stop at night or how much water to bring with them to each destination. One way to determine distance traveled was to count the revolutions of their wagon wheel.

1. If the circumference of the wheel is X and it revolved 800 times, how far did it travel?
2. It takes a wagon wheel 360 revolutions to travel one mile. How many revolutions does it take to travel 12 miles?
3. The California Trail is 2000 miles long. The average emigrant walked 2 miles/hour. If the train did not stop at all, how many days would it take?