

# Railroad Personalities Lesson Plan

## Essential Curriculum Objectives:

- Grade 2 (LA): Biographies, Feedback, and Conclusions
- Grade 4 (SS): Trails/Immigrants, National Persons  
(LA): Investigation, Sharing Observations
- Grade 8 (SS): Identify people & events to explain Historical Significance
- Grade 10 (SS): Social Changes
- All (LA): Compare & Contrast

## Goal:

- To use primary sources to investigate historical figures

## Teachers Instruction:

- Introduce the Transcontinental Railroad to the students by reading the Overview.
  - small groups or whole class session
- Have the students **view the photos** on the website. (Note: the cursor will only hold the individual's name for 7 seconds and then must be moved over the photo again to reactivate.)
  - Journal their observations of each photo. Have them imagine the role of the individual in the photo.
    - Who do they think is in charge? Who financed the railroad? Who oversaw the construction? Etc.
  - Allow time for the students to interact with the website and discover if their observations on roles were correct or not.
- Then each student should pick two personalities to **compare**: One from the UP and one from the CP. The personalities should have similar jobs. Assign the following:
  - Compare the two photos of the men. What is similar and what is different? Did your original predictions about the men hold true? What in the photo led you to make your original prediction? Is there something in the photo/or about the photo that may lead you to discover the person's real job?
  - Have students do a bit of research on the two people and answer the following statement:  
*I believe\_(person)\_\_\_ working for the \_\_\_(UP/CP)\_\_\_ was more successful at his job because:\_\_\_\_\_.*  
**(Students should use at least three pieces of evidence to support their statement.)**
- Further comparisons may be made with a writing assignment.