

Cobblestone™

GREAT AMERICAN ROAD TRIP

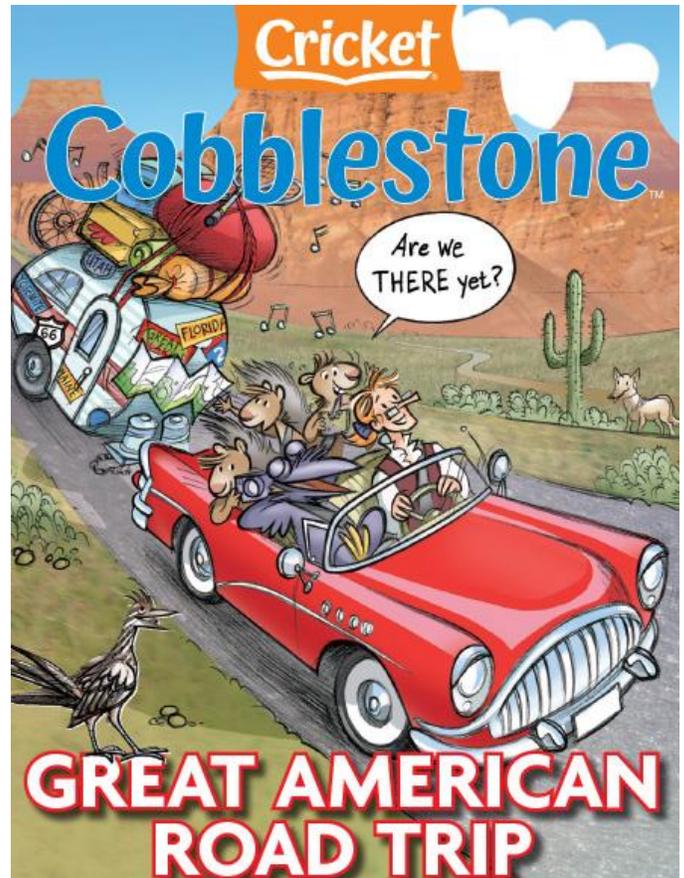
Use the articles, lessons, and activities in this Teacher Guide to help students understand the history and development of America's roads.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

Why were roads so important to the development of the United States?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the Good Roads Movement that began in the 1800s.
- Students will examine the economic decisions that affect the well-being of individuals, businesses, and society.
- Students will write a letter.
- Students will learn about Route 66 and why it became an American symbol.
- Students will compare and contrast landmarks over time.
- Students will create a presentation about Route 66.
- Students will learn about the construction of the U.S. highway system.
- Students will learn how communities improve their infrastructure over time.
- Students will use a mathematical process to calculate distance.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

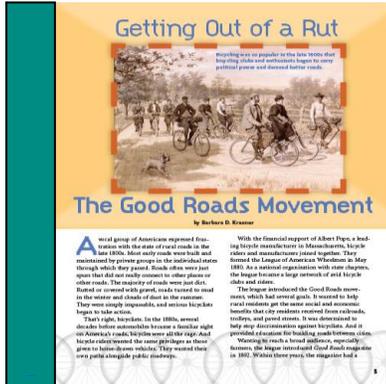
- **Getting Out of a Rut: The Good Roads Movement**
Expository Nonfiction
- **Route 66: America's Main Street**
Expository Nonfiction
- **Broad Ribbons of New Roads**
Expository Nonfiction

Cobblestone® Teacher Guide: May/June 2024

Getting Out of a Rut: The Good Roads Movement

pp. 5–7, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article to learn about the Good Roads Movement and how it helped develop U.S. roads.



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why were roads so important to the development of the United States?

Ask students if they can think of a place near them where there are no roads, or where the roads are in very bad shape. Explain that some students might live in a part of the country where there are roads that are no longer used. Others might know of roads that are so damaged and neglected that they are hard for people to drive over. Pose the questions: *Why is it harder for people to get where they need to go without roads, or without good roads? What challenges would travelers face hundreds of years ago when America had very few roads?*

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Define each word with students. Then arrange students in small groups and have them write a short paragraph using all three words. The words must be used correctly. Have groups read their paragraphs aloud. Finally, tell students to look for these words as they read the article.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the Good Roads Movement that began in the 1800s.
- Students will examine how economic decisions affect the well-being of individuals, businesses, and societies.
- Students will write a letter.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **rural** (p. 5) all people, housing, and areas not included within a city area
- **impassable** (p. 5) impossible to travel on or over
- **deplorable** (p. 6) of a very poor quality or condition

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article. Then use these questions for discussion:

1. What were the goals of the Good Roads Movement?
2. How did volunteers help the federal government plan for new roads and road improvements?
3. How did the rising popularity of the automobile impact the Good Roads Movement?
4. Why did Congress pass the Federal Aid Highway Acts?
5. How did they create the highway system we have today?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Economic Decisions

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that this article describes the Good Roads Movement, and how it was funded. Projects funded by taxpayer money can often cause disagreement among taxpayers. Have each student choose whether they would support or not support the use of tax money to build better roads. Then, have them write a letter where they try to persuade a government official to vote according to how the student feels about the issue, and why.

ASSESS: Have students read their letters to the rest of the class and discuss the arguments they use to support their viewpoints.

EXTEND

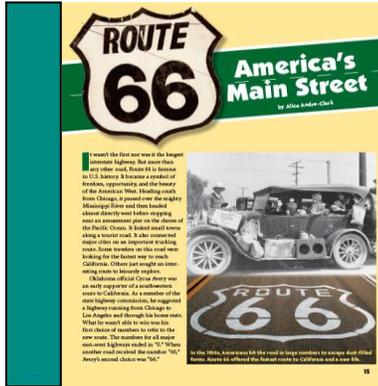
Social Studies: Invite students to use print and digital sources to research a major highway near them (it should be a numbered highway). Does it have historical significance? Why was it built? Students should write a paragraph about their findings.

Cobblestone® Teacher Guide: May/June 2024

Route 66: America's Main Street

pp. 15–17, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about Route 66 to learn about why it was such an important part of American history.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about Route 66 and why it became an American symbol.
- Students will compare and contrast landmarks.
- Students will create a presentation about Route 66.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **commission** (p. 15) a group of people directed to perform some duty
- **captivating** (p. 16) something that holds attention by being extremely interesting, exciting, pleasant, or attractive
- **fertile** (p. 17) producing or bearing many crops in great quantities

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why were roads so important to the development of the United States?

Ask students if they have heard of Route 66. Mention that if they have seen the Disney Pixar movie *Cars*, it takes place on Route 66. Explain that Route 66 linked Chicago, Illinois to the Pacific Coast of California. In addition to being a cross-country highway, it became an important route for truckers as well as people who wanted to see the country. It also helped the economies of small towns and cities along the route. It became such a part of American culture that its nickname was “America’s Main Street.”

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post the key terms and discuss the definitions. Instruct students that they will be creating a word search puzzle using those three words, in addition to another 17 theme-related words. Suggest that they highlight topical words as they read for use in the word search, and distribute grid paper. Share the puzzles with another class for use as a pre-reading exercise for this vocabulary-rich article.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article. Then use these questions for discussion:

1. Why was Route 66 important?
2. What did locals do to try to attract motorists to stop and spend money at their establishments?
3. What was the effect of the Great Depression on the highway?
4. Why did Route 66 also earn the name “Bloody 66”?
5. How did World War II lead to the destruction of the route?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Compare and Contrast

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that this article describes Route 66 as it was in the 1920s and 1930s. Divide the class into groups and have them use digital sources to find a Route 66 landmark. Have each group create a presentation (digital or on paper) showing what that landmark looked like when Route 66 was built, and what it looks like now. They will use details to explain what accounts for the changes.

ASSESS: Have students show their presentations to the class, and assess the representation based on accuracy, information, and comprehensiveness.

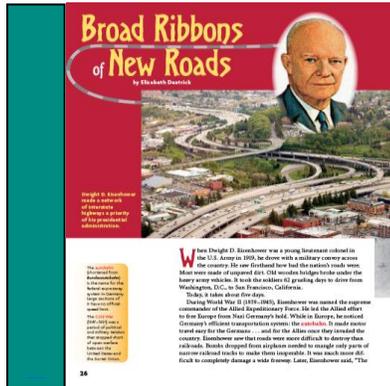
EXTEND

Art: Create an advertising campaign for a motel or roadside restaurant that uses billboards and a neon sign. Create a poster or drawing showing the billboard and a neon sign design.

Broad Ribbons of New Roads

pp. 26–29, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about citizenship to learn about the construction of the American highway system.



RESOURCES

Improve Infrastructure

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the construction of the U.S. highway system.
- Students will learn how communities improve their infrastructure over time.
- Students will use a mathematical process to calculate distance.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **Expeditionary Force** (p. 26) an armed force organized to accomplish a specific objective in a foreign country
- **mangle** (p. 26) to destroy something by twisting it with force or tearing it into pieces so that it is completely changed
- **congestion** (p. 27) a situation in which there is too much traffic and movement is difficult

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: Why were roads so important to the development of the United States?

Ask students if they have ever been on a long trip in a car. Did they travel on small roads, or on big highways? Or both? Discuss the differences between how people used to travel on smaller highways or local roads, how they traveled when the U.S. highway system was first built, and how they travel now on congested roads with too many vehicles.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Post and discuss the key vocabulary words and their definitions. Then arrange students in small groups and have each student create cloze sentences (fill-ins) using a blank for each word. Students will read their sentences aloud to the group, with the blank. The group must determine which word belongs in the sentence.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article. Then use these questions for discussion:

1. What was Eisenhower's experience with American roadways?
2. Why was defense important to Eisenhower's plan for new roads?
3. What steps did Eisenhower accomplish in his first two years of negotiating plans for the system?
4. Why is a road harder to destroy than a train track?
5. What disadvantages appeared as the project progressed?

CONCEPT/SKILL FOCUS: Improve Infrastructure

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that this article describes the construction of the U.S. highway system, and how it was an improvement in many ways. The engineers who planned the road had many ideas for improvements. Find examples of these in the article, then fill in the *Improve Infrastructure* graphic organizer using those specific examples from the article.

ASSESS: Have students compare their organizer with the rest of the class and discuss any differences, especially how each student classified the information.

EXTEND

Geography/Math: Invite students to use print and digital sources create a map of highways between where they live and somewhere in the U.S. where they would like to visit. Using the map's scale and an average highway speed of 65 mph, have them calculate approximately how long the trip will take.

Improve Infrastructure Changes in natural conditions, in communities, and in elected officials change things over time. After reading “Broad Ribbons of New Roads,” complete the chart below, which lists the features of older highways on the left and provides space on the right for listing the improvements.

Features of the Old Highways	Improvements Made
Width of highways and number of lanes	
Route numbers	
Signs	
Road surface	