

Taking a Ride on the Big Red Cars Lesson Plan

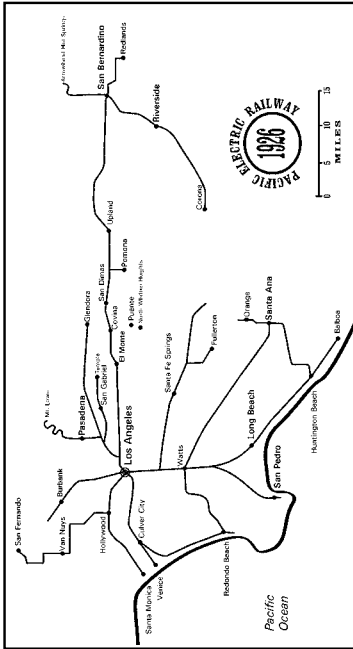
Taking a Ride on the Big Red Cars

Name _____

It is September 20, 1927 and the world famous aviator Charles Lindbergh and his airplane, the Spirit of St. Louis are coming to Los Angeles as part of a national tour celebrating his completion of the first non-stop, solo flight from New York to Paris. You and your friends are planning to ride the Red Cars to downtown Los Angeles to see the pilot. But, before you go, you want to find out how many miles your friends need to travel to Los Angeles. Using the map of the Red Car network, measure the distance they would travel from their cities listed below and Los Angeles by using the map scale.

Covina _____ San Dimas _____ Upland _____ Van Nuys _____
 Using the fare list to the right. How much will it cost each of your friends to take the Red Car to Los Angeles?

San Dimas _____ Upland _____ Van Nuys _____
 Covina _____ San Dimas _____ Upland _____ Van Nuys _____
 Which city on the fare list costs the most to travel from?
 Find the city you named above on the map and circle it. Why do you think it cost more to travel from here?



Background information: In 1901 Henry E. Huntington established the Pacific Electric Railway in Los Angeles which first ran from downtown Los Angeles to Pasadena. By 1914, rail lines had been extended from Los Angeles, to San Bernardino, Santa Ana, San Pedro, and the San Fernando Valley and soon Angelenos were speeding in these red colored cars to work, the theater, beaches, and the mountains. However, by 1961, the last Red Car line discontinued operation. The reason for the decline is that as the population of Los Angeles continued to grow (reaching more than one million people by the end of the 1920s), more people moved away from the city and into the suburbs. In the suburbs, there was not access to Red Car lines and more people began driving their own cars instead of riding on the Big Red Car.

Additional activities:

1. **Science:** The Red Cars used electricity to run, typically using a series circuit. Using an overhead wire and a trolley pole (defined as a pole used to transfer electricity from a "live" overhead wire to a trolley or streetcar). Have students research and explain how the series circuit would work to move the streetcar and create a model of a series circuit.

Links to standards

History/Social Studies: 4.1.5, 4.4.4

Language Arts: RI.4.1, RI.4.7

Science: PS-1a&g

Objective:

1. To learn how to measure distances on a map by using a map scale.
2. To examine a primary source and make inferences based on information given in a historical document.

Time: 30-40 minutes

Materials:

1. "Taking a Ride on the Big Red Cars" activity sheet
2. Blank strip of paper
3. Pencils

Directions:

1. **Distribute** the "Taking a Ride on the Big Red Cars" activity sheet and a blank strip of paper.
2. **Review** with students the background information about the Red Car line in Los Angeles.
3. Have students **find** the map on their worksheets. Explain that it shows the streetcar network used by people in the 1920s.
4. Have students **locate the map scale.** (Explain that a map scale is a straight line with distances marked on it. Each section on the scale represents a certain number of miles. On their map, each section stands for 5 miles.) **Demonstrate** how to measure distance using the scale. As an example, use the distance between Upland and San Dimas. Have students line up the edge of a blank strip of paper with the dots that show the locations of the two cities. Students make a pencil mark at the dot for Upland and another at the dot for San Dimas. Place the paper on the map scale. The first pencil mark is set on 0. The second dot should land on 10 miles.
5. Have students **locate** the reproduced image of a **primary source document** of the Red Car line fare list on the worksheet. Students will use this price list to answer questions about the fares charged by the company for a special trip to Los Angeles to see Charles Lindbergh during his one day appearance in the city as part of his three month national tour celebrating his solo, non-stop flight across the Atlantic. They will also use the document along with Red Car line map to infer why fares are set for certain amounts.
6. After students have finished the worksheet, **discuss the answers** to the problems (see Answer Key).

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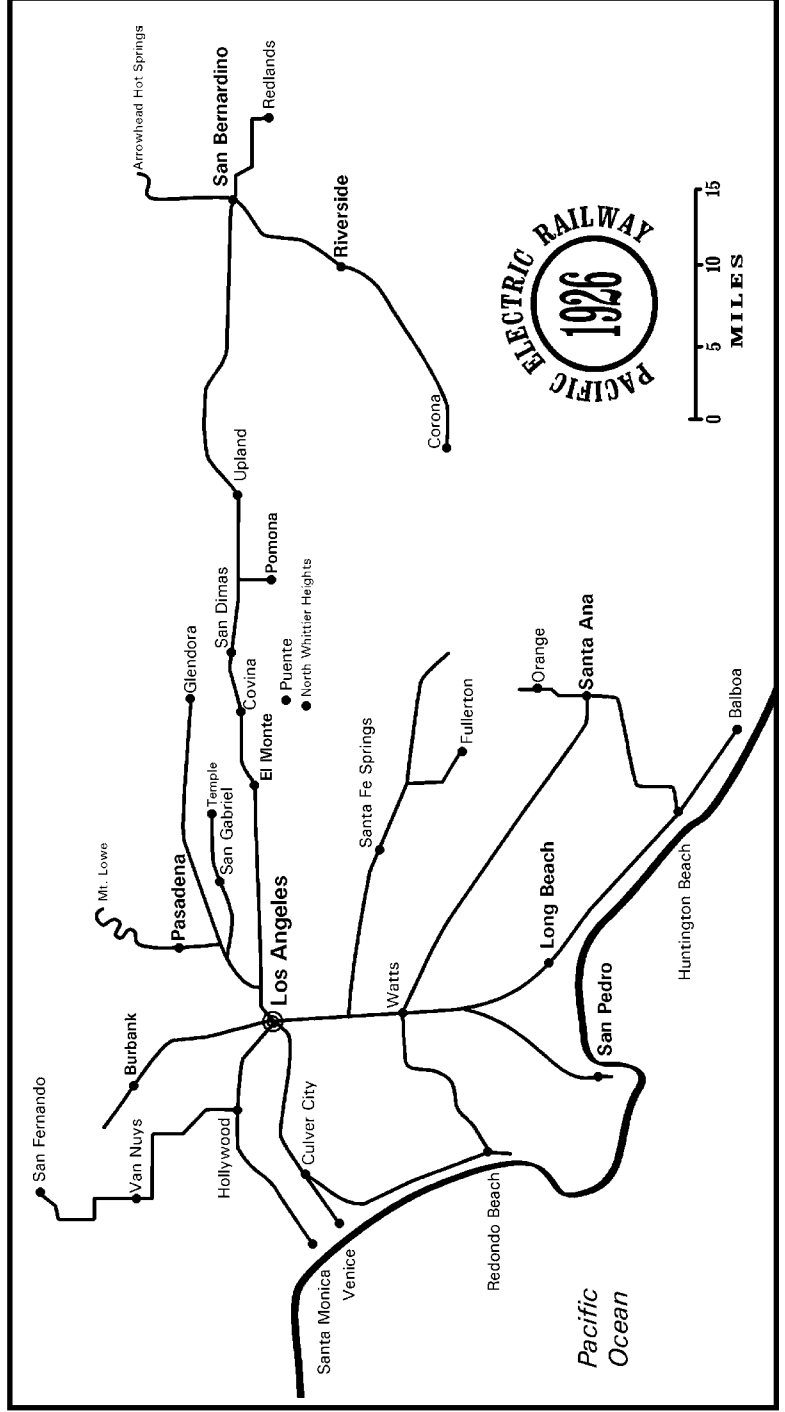
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Fontana	1.75	San Dimas	1.15
Garden Grove	1.00	Santa Ana	1.25
Glendora	.90	Upland	.65
LA Verne	.85	Van Nuys	.60
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