



# ON THE ROAD AGAIN: MOVING PEOPLE, PRODUCTS, IDEAS

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**TOPIC AREA:** Trucking/Freight Systems  
**AGE LEVEL:** 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
**DURATION:** 2 hours  
**RESOURCES:**

- [About.com Cities and Transportation](#)
- [International Forum on Globalization](#)[National Geographic: MapMachine](#)
- [National Geographic: Xpeditions Activity—Lizzie's Morning](#)

**MATERIALS:**

- Blank [outline maps of the world](#)
- Marker, pencils rulers
- World atlases
- "On the Road Again" scenario sheets

**OBJECTIVE:** In this lesson students learn to identify modes of transportation and communication for moving people, products, and ideas from place to place. Students also learn the advantages and disadvantages of different modes of transportation. This lesson investigates ways in which global interdependence is altering traditional trade patterns, and encourages students to speculate on future world economic development.

**TASKS:** Begin the lesson by asking the class to explain how a certain product, such as an apple, gets to the lunchroom. What about other products in the lunchroom or classroom? Did they arrive by the same mode of transportation as the apple? What about the route(s) they traveled?

Discuss and list transportation methods used in the past and today. Post this list on the board, then have the class create symbols to represent four major methods of shipping goods—rail, ship, plane, and truck.

Discuss the cost of transporting goods, especially over great distances. Usually the faster the service, the more costly it is. Call any "overnight" courier service to get a sample of rates for a package delivered the next day to several distant locations as compared to a later delivery.

Divide students into Transport Teams of four. Assign each student in a team one of the tasks below to complete during the lesson:

- *Captain Geo*—reads the student scenario to the group and reports to the class
- *Spatial Cadet*—locates cities in the scenario and helps with decision-making
- *Measure Magician*—measures distances between cities and records information on a map
- *Super Symbolist*—draws symbols for necessary mode(s) of transportation and places them on the map.

Give each group a world map, a scenario, markers, a ruler, an atlas, and the following instructions: "Your group's task is to read the mission, then decide how to get your product to market. You must use the best method of transport, changing methods if there is a better way on certain legs of the journey. As you work through the scenario, measures distances and draw the necessary symbols for the modes of movement that you and your group find most efficient. (Use the symbols created by the class.) You must stop at all the cities included in your assignment, selecting the shortest route."



## "On the Road Again" Scenarios:

*Scenario 1:* São Paulo, Brazil, is a leading exporter of oranges. Suppose that the Queen of England loves fresh orange juice each morning. Deliveries must be made to London, England, but the shipment must stop in Miami, Florida, so that several tons can be processed at a plant in Lake Wales, Florida. The exporter also promised oranges to Monrovia, Liberia, and the city of Bamako, Mali. You have been hired to deliver the oranges. Plan the shortest route, using four means of transport. Begin in São Paulo and end in London, England.

*Scenario 2:* A new style of running shoe is being advertised to the public. The manufacturer in Bangkok, Thailand, needs to get the shoes to a mall in Chicago, Illinois, as quickly as possible. But first, stops must be made in San Francisco, California, and in New York City. There is a possibility that shoes will be needed in Cleveland, Ohio, as well. Plan a route from Bangkok to Chicago, including all stops mentioned.

*Scenario 3:* Bauxite is an ore used in the manufacture of aluminum. The ore is mined in open pits and then sent out for processing. A bauxite mine in Australia's interior is sending a large shipment of ore to the port in Sydney, Australia, where it will be loaded and shipped to several processing centers and eventually used in the manufacture of electronic goods. Processing plants in Seoul, Korea; Tokyo, Japan; and Gary, Indiana, have ordered a shipment of ore from the Australian mining company. Plan a route from Sydney, Australia, to Gary, Indiana.

*Scenario 4:* Icelandic fisheries catch cod, pollack, and other fish in the North Atlantic, freeze them, and export them to markets in the Western Hemisphere. The fisheries have negotiated a contract with a major seafood restaurant chain. Deliveries must be made to their distribution points in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Montreal, Quebec; Detroit, Michigan; Des Moines, Iowa; and St. Louis, Missouri. Plan the route to ensure deliveries from Reykjavik, Iceland, to St. Louis, Missouri.

*Scenario 5:* The city of Cairo, Georgia, is the site of a major manufacturer of precision ball bearings that are used in the construction of various automobiles. The machine that makes these ball bearings has broken down. The necessary part (manufactured in Berlin, Germany) has been ordered and will be shipped soon. Plan the route that the shipment will take from Berlin, Germany, to Cairo, Georgia. The company usually ships through Paris, France, to Baltimore, Maryland, then to Atlanta, Georgia, before sending ball bearings on to Cairo, Georgia. Plan the shortest route possible using four modes of transport.

*Scenario 6:* Suppose that marzipan, a candy made from almond paste and pressed into the shapes of little fruits, has been a favorite of Hillary Rodham Clinton since she first had some while in Rome, Italy. The mayor of Rome is sending her a five-pound (two-kilogram) box for her birthday. This particular type of marzipan is made by a woman in Naples, Italy. Plan the route that the candy will take if it is shipped from Naples to a shop in Rome, then mailed to Washington, D.C. Note that marzipan will keep for several weeks in a cool place.

After the groups complete the task, have them present their findings orally to the class.

Have the entire class list advantages and disadvantages of the four modes of movement. What routes were best for specific products?

**DISCUSSION:** Exchange world maps within the class and challenge groups to discover more efficient modes of transport for the same scenario.

**EXTENSION:** Have students go through the Xpeditions activity [Lizzie's Morning](#), reading the stories, looking at the photo galleries, and completing the activities.

**SOURCE:** Dany Ray of Washington Middle School in Cairo, [NationalGeographic.com](http://NationalGeographic.com)

