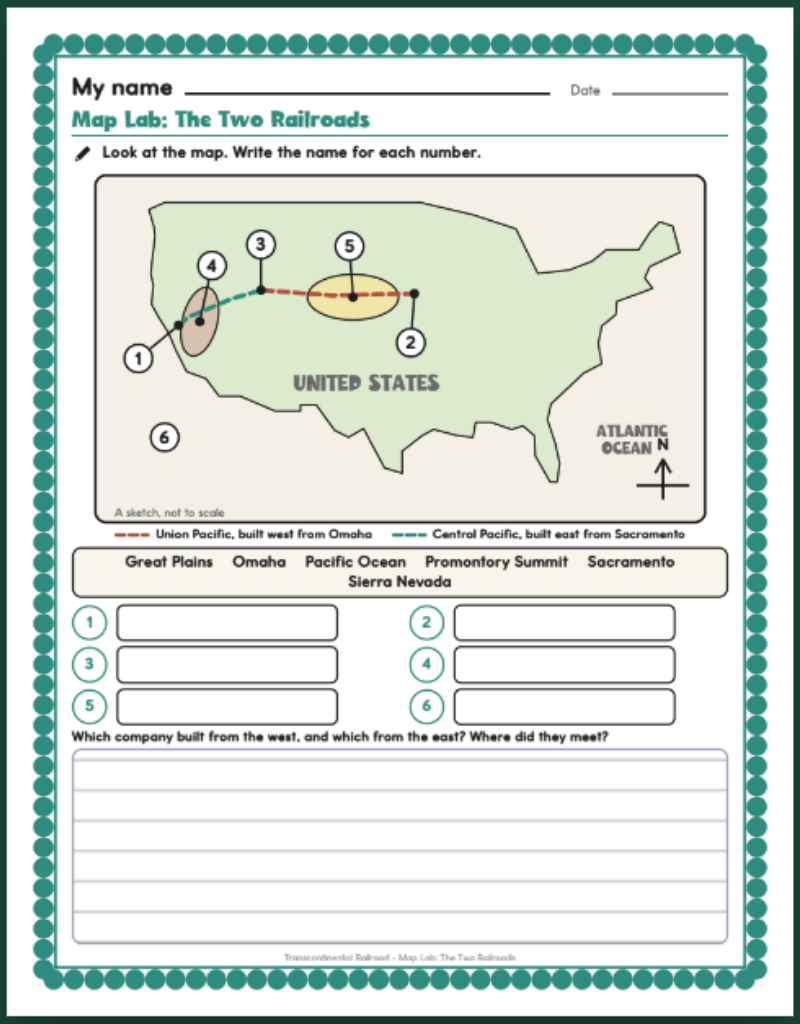
TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

READING, MAP AND TIMELINE WORKSHEETS
GRADES 5-8


My name _____ Date _____

Map Lab: The Two Railroads

Look at the map. Write the name for each number.

Union Pacific, built west from Omaha — Central Pacific, built east from Sacramento

Great Plains Omaha Pacific Ocean Promontory Summit Sacramento Sierra Nevada

1 _____ 2 _____
3 _____ 4 _____
5 _____ 6 _____

Which company built from the west, and which from the east? Where did they meet?

Transcontinental Railroad - Map Lab: The Two Railroads

27 STUDENT PAGES



Bright Path Sped

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One classroom license

- This file is for one classroom: one teacher, one group of students.
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This is a fillable PDF

- Open it in a PDF reader (Adobe Acrobat Reader, Preview, or your browser), click into a line or a box, type, and Save As.
- The name line, every answer box, every ruled work box and every check box on the student pages are type-in fields, and so are the tracker, class grid, team note and family page. You can also print any page and write by hand.
- It works offline. No account, no subscription, no internet connection needed after you download it.

Print at 100 percent

Turn off fit to page and shrink to fit so the ruled lines stay 0.34 inch apart. Every student page is black and white inside a colored border, so it still reads when copied in black and white.

Student work

A filled-in tracker, class grid or team note carries a real student's name. Keep it in the data folder, and use a first name only on any page that leaves your hands.

Need help?

If a field will not behave or a page will not print the way you expect, use Ask a Question on the product page. Every question is read, and a fix ships as a free update.

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PREVIEW

How To Read a Page

The parts of a student page, then the page types in the order they come.

The parts of a page

- **The answer box.** A bordered box for a letter, a year, a number or a name. Click it to type, or print and write in it.
- **The ruled work box.** Lines 0.34 inch apart. A short answer gets 4 lines; the cause and effect boxes get 3 and the paragraph page gets 18. It types and prints.
- **The check box.** True or false, yes or not yet: click or mark one.
- **The reading.** A short passage with the dates at the top, then a cause box, an effect box and two checks.
- **The cut line.** Six pieces in a 3 by 2 grid, each 2.4 by 1.25 inches, edge to edge: two cuts across and two down.

Page type	What it looks like	What the student does
Before You Read, True or False, Words to Know	3 pages, 14 items	Big picture; true or false with fix-it lines; match eight words.
6 Readings	12 checks	Read, write the cause and the effect, answer two checks with a letter.
Map Lab, Which Railroad?	2 pages, 12 items	Write the name for each of six numbers on the map; write A, B or C for each of six statements.
Timelines	2 pages, 12 items	Write each year; number six events 1 to 6.
Plain words, Before and After, Cause and Effect	3 pages	Say six hard sentences plainly; fill a before-and-after chart; write four effects and two causes.
Letter, Think It Through, CER	6 questions, 4 writing pages	A worker's letter home; 4 lines per question; a plan and an 18-line paragraph.
Quiz, Cut and Paste	12 items, 18 pieces	A quiz in two parts and three cut-and-paste mats (before or after, who said it, order).

Untimed, unscored on the page

No student page has a timer or a score on it. The keys and the tracker are for you. The answer keys are on pages 32 to 36.

A short account, not a full textbook

Each reading is a summary of one part of the story in plain words. It is not a complete history, and it is not tied to any particular standard. Add your own textbook or source for more depth. The map is a sketch, not to scale.

Printing and the type-in fields

Every page prints clean in black and white. Every box and line is a type-in field in any PDF reader: click, type, then save. This is a fillable PDF, not a slideshow or a word-processor file.

Open answers

The charts, the cause and effect chain, the letter, short answers and the paragraph are open. The keys give a sample and what to look for. Accept any answer that is true to the readings and explains its reason.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____



Before You Read

Read the big ideas. Then write what you know.

How does one big building job change a whole country? That is the question behind the transcontinental railroad. Here is where the story starts.

The problem	In the 1850s, crossing the country took months by wagon or by ship. Leaders wanted a railroad from coast to coast.
The plan	In 1862, Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act. Two companies, the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific, would build toward each other.
The meeting	The two lines met at Promontory Summit in Utah Territory on May 10, 1869. The railroad changed travel and time, and it changed life for the workers who built it and for Native nations on the Plains.
The road	You will read six short readings, label a map, sort the two railroads, put events in order, write a letter home as a worker and sort by hand.

What do you already know about trains and railroads?

What do you want to find out about the transcontinental railroad?

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

A Railroad From Coast to Coast



Read the story. Then fill in cause and effect.

1850s to 1862

In the middle of the 1800s, the United States stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean, but getting from one coast to the other was slow and hard. A trip in a wagon train across the plains and mountains could take about four to six months. A sea trip around the tip of South America took even longer. People and mail moved slowly, and goods cost a lot to ship. Many leaders wanted a railroad that would run all the way across the country. A railroad that crosses a whole continent is called a transcontinental railroad. Building one was a huge job. The land was wide, the mountains were tall, and the cost was great. In 1862, during the Civil War, Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act. The law picked two companies to do the work, the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific. The government gave the companies loans and large grants of land along the route to help pay for it.

Cause: Why did this happen?

Effect: What happened because of it?

Check what you read. Write the letter in the box.

1. About how long could a trip across the country by wagon take before the railroad? ☐
   - **A** A few days
   - **B** About four to six months
   - **C** One week

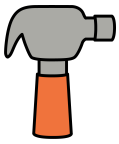
2. What did the Pacific Railway Act of 1862 do? ☐
   - **A** It picked two companies to build the railroad and gave them loans and land.
   - **B** It ended the Civil War.
   - **C** It set up the time zones.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

The People Who Built It



Read the story. Then fill in cause and effect.

1865 to 1869

Thousands of workers built the railroad by hand, with picks, shovels, hammers, black powder and horse-drawn carts. The Central Pacific could not find enough workers in California, so it hired Chinese immigrants, and soon thousands of Chinese workers made up most of its crews. They cut through the Sierra Nevada, worked in dangerous tunnels and kept working through deep winter snow. In 1867, many Chinese workers went on strike to ask for better pay and shorter hours in the tunnels. The Union Pacific hired many Irish immigrants, along with Civil War veterans and others, who graded the roadbed and laid the track as it moved west across the plains. Workers on both lines faced heat, cold, accidents and long days, and some died on the job. They were paid low wages, and Chinese workers were often paid less than other workers. Their hard work made the railroad possible, but for many years they were not given much credit.

Cause: Why did this happen?

Effect: What happened because of it?

Check what you read. Write the letter in the box.

1. Which group made up most of the Central Pacific's crews? ☐
   - **A** Chinese workers
   - **B** Civil War generals
   - **C** Sailors

2. What did many Chinese workers ask for when they went on strike in 1867? ☐
   - **A** A new railroad
   - **B** Better pay and shorter hours in the tunnels
   - **C** A longer winter break

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

Time Zones and Travel Time



Read the story. Then fill in cause and effect.

1869 to 1883

Before the railroad, a trip from the East Coast to California took months. After 1869, the same trip took about a week. Mail, news and goods moved faster, and farmers, ranchers and miners in the West could ship what they grew and dug to cities in the East. Towns grew up along the tracks, and many new settlers moved west by train. The railroad also changed how people told time. Before 1883, each town set its clocks by the sun, so noon came at a slightly different moment in each place. That was fine when travel was slow, but it made train schedules confusing. In 1883, the railroad companies agreed to divide the country into four standard time zones. Every town in a zone used the same time. In 1918, Congress made the time zones law. The railroad had helped to tie the country together, but it had also changed the lives of many people in ways that were not fair to everyone.

Cause: Why did this happen?

Effect: What happened because of it?

Check what you read. Write the letter in the box.

1. About how long did a trip across the country take after the railroad was finished? ☐
   - **A** About a week
   - **B** About six months
   - **C** One hour

2. Why did the railroad companies agree on four time zones in 1883? ☐
   - **A** Every town kept its own time, which made train schedules confusing.
   - **B** Congress told them to.
   - **C** Clocks had stopped working.

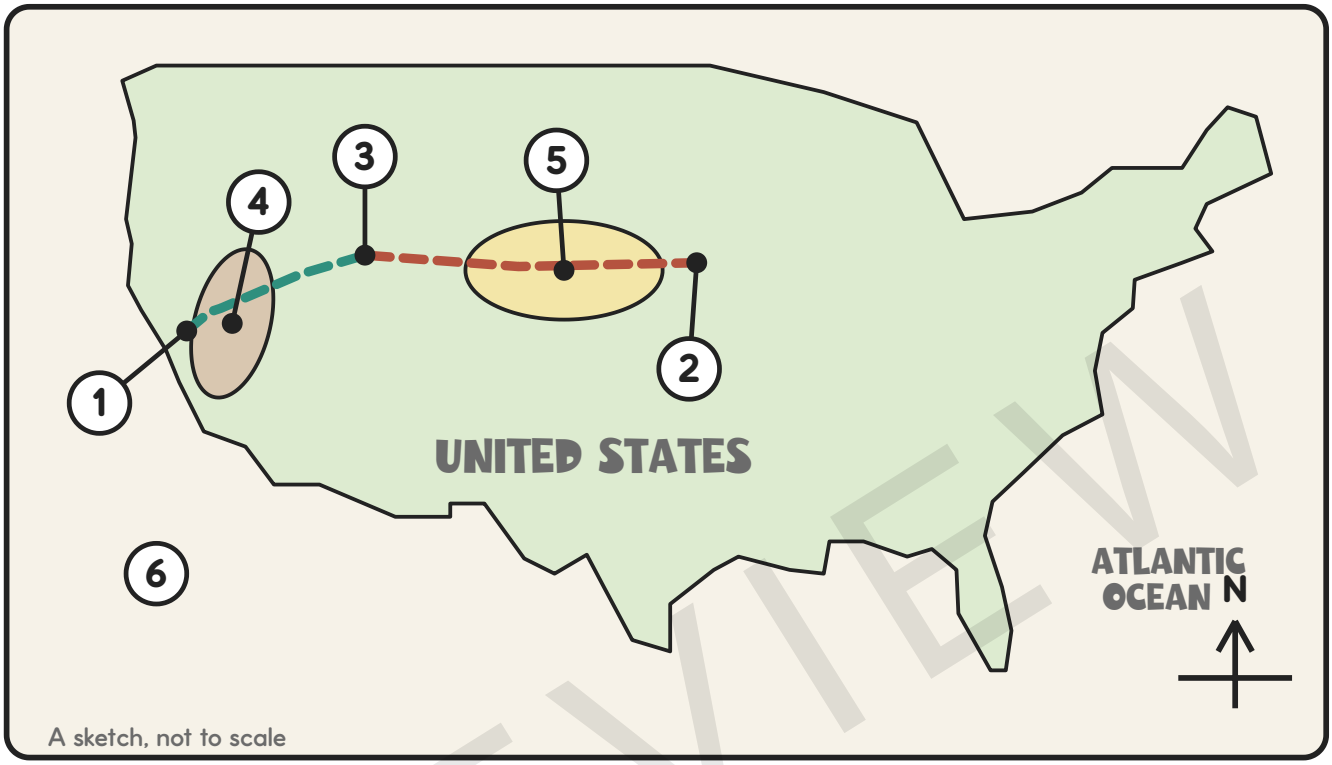
PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

Map Lab: The Two Railroads

Look at the map. Write the name for each number.



Union Pacific, built west from Omaha Central Pacific, built east from Sacramento

Great Plains Omaha Pacific Ocean Promontory Summit Sacramento
Sierra Nevada

1 _____ 2 _____

3 _____ 4 _____

5 _____ 6 _____

Which company built from the west, and which from the east? Where did they meet?

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Ezee Shop

My name _____ Date _____

Timeline: Years



Write the year for each event.

1862	1863	1865	1867	1869	1883

Pick each year from the bank. Use the readings to help you.

1. Congress passes the Pacific Railway Act _____
2. The two railroads meet at Promontory Summit _____
3. Union Pacific crews begin laying track _____
4. Chinese workers strike on the Central Pacific _____
5. Railroads set four standard time zones _____
6. The Central Pacific breaks ground at Sacramento _____

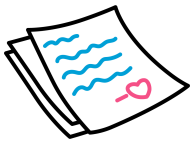
Which event on this page do you think changed the most lives? Tell why.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Ideas Shed

My name _____ Date _____

Say It in Plain Words



Say each hard sentence in plain words.

Some history books use hard words. Read each hard sentence. Then say the same thing in plain words of your own.

1. Congress authorized two corporations to construct a rail line spanning the continent.

2. The Central Pacific recruited thousands of immigrant laborers to excavate tunnels in the Sierra Nevada.

3. Compensation was lower for Chinese laborers than for their counterparts.

4. The completion of the railroad was commemorated with a ceremonial spike.

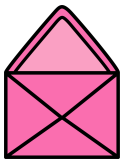
5. The expansion of the railroad precipitated the near extinction of the bison.

6. Standardized time replaced the local solar time kept by each community.

PREVIEW

My name _____ Date _____

A Worker's Letter Home



Write a letter home as a railroad worker.

It is the summer of 1868. You are a worker on the Central Pacific or the Union Pacific. Imagine your day. Write a letter home to your family.

What the readings say about the work

1. Crews dug, blasted, cut and laid rails by hand.
2. Workers faced deep snow, summer heat and dangerous tunnels.
3. The days were long, and the pay was low.
4. Some groups of workers were paid less than others.

I work ____. Every day we ____. The hardest part is ____. I hope ____.

Dear ____,

Your ____

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

Think It Through B

Answer each question in full sentences.

Use facts from the readings to answer.

4 How did the railroad change life for Native nations on the Plains?

5 How did the railroad change travel and time?

6 Why did the telegraph news from Promontory Summit matter?

PREVIEW

My name _____ Date _____

My Paragraph

Write your paragraph. Use your plan.

Check your plan first: ☐ **claim** ☐ **evidence** ☐ **reasoning**

Write one paragraph. Start with your claim. Add your evidence. Then explain it. End with a sentence that ties back to the question.

PREVIEW

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

Before or After the Railroad?

Cut out the six pieces. Paste each one in the right box.

Each piece is one thing about life before or after the railroad was finished in 1869. Paste it in the right box.

Before the railroad	After the railroad

PREVIEW

Cut on the dashed lines: six pieces, two straight cuts across and two down.

A trip across the country takes about a week.	A trip across the country takes months by wagon or ship.	Railroads set four standard time zones.
Each town keeps its own local time.	Hunters ship bison hides east by train.	Millions of bison roam the Plains.

Pick one piece. How do you know where it belongs?

Preview - Bright Path Sped

My name _____ Date _____

Timeline Cut and Paste

Cut out the six pieces. Paste them in order.

Paste the events in order, first to last. The timeline pages (16, 17) can help.

First	Second	Third

Fourth	Fifth	Sixth

Cut on the dashed lines: six pieces, two straight cuts across and two down.

Chinese workers on the Central Pacific strike in 1867.	Congress passes the Pacific Railway Act in 1862.	Railroads set four time zones in 1883.
The Union Pacific begins laying track in 1865.	The two lines meet at Promontory Summit in 1869.	The Central Pacific breaks ground in Sacramento in 1863.

Which event do you think mattered most? Why?

PREVIEW

Answer Key: Reading and Words

True or False, the 12 checks that follow the readings, and Words to Know.

Readings: the checks pages 7 to 12

#	Event	Answer
1	A Road Across the Land	B: About four to six months
2	A Road Across the Land	A: It picked two companies to build the ...
1	Two Companies	B: Sacramento, California
2	Two Companies	A: It was paid for every mile it ...
1	The Workers	A: Chinese workers
2	The Workers	B: Better pay and shorter hours in the ...
1	Promontory Summit	B: Promontory Summit
2	Promontory Summit	A: A ceremonial spike set in the last ...
1	Native Nations, Bison	A: They gave food, shelter, clothing and tools.
2	Native Nations, Bison	B: Fewer than a thousand
1	Time and Travel	A: About a week
2	Time and Travel	A: Every town kept its own time, which ...

True or False? Fix It page 6

#	Starts with	Answer
1	The Pacific Railway Act was passed ...	True
2	The Union Pacific began its work ...	False
3	The two railroads met at Promontory ...	True
4	Only Irish workers built the railroad.	False
5	The railroad let hunters ship bison ...	True
6	Before 1883, every town in the ...	False

Fix-it samples

#	A good fix says
2	The Union Pacific began near Omaha, Nebraska. The Central Pacific began at Sacramento.
4	Many groups built it, including thousands of Chinese workers on the Central Pacific and many Irish workers on the Union Pacific.
6	Before 1883, each town kept its own local time. In 1883 the railroads set four standard time zones.

Words to Know page 13

#	Word	Letter
1	telegraph	H
2	immigrant	E
3	reservation	B
4	transcontinental	C
5	time zone	F
6	locomotive	A
7	bison	D
8	railroad	G

How the checks were made

Every reading was written so each check has one best answer that is stated in the passage. If a student picks another letter, point to the sentence that settles it.

PREVIEW

Preview · Bright Path Sped

Answer Key: Cause, Effect, Plain Words

Samples for the cause and effect boxes on pages 7 to 12 and for the plain-words chart on page 18. Accept any wording that matches the reading.

Cause and effect boxes

Reading	A good cause box says	A good effect box says
A Road Across the Land	A trip across the country by wagon or ship was slow and hard, and leaders wanted a faster way.	Congress passed the Pacific Railway Act in 1862 and picked two companies to build a railroad.
Two Companies	Each company was paid for every mile of track it finished, so each wanted to build fast.	The Central Pacific built east and the Union Pacific built west, racing to lay the most track.
The Workers	The Central Pacific could not find enough workers in California.	It hired thousands of Chinese immigrants, who cut through the Sierra Nevada.
Promontory Summit	The Central Pacific and Union Pacific tracks finally reached each other in Utah Territory.	A ceremony on May 10, 1869 marked the meeting, and telegraph news sent celebrations across the country.
Native Nations, Bison	The railroad brought hunters, settlers and soldiers, and let hunters ship bison hides east.	The bison herds nearly disappeared, and many Plains nations lost food and land.
Time and Travel	Each town kept its own sun time, which made train schedules confusing.	In 1883, railroad companies set four standard time zones.

Say It in Plain Words page 18

#	Starts with	A good plain version says
1	Congress authorized two corporations to construct …	Congress picked two companies to build a railroad all the way across the country.
2	The Central Pacific recruited thousands of …	The Central Pacific hired thousands of immigrant workers to dig tunnels in the Sierra Nevada.
3	Compensation was lower for Chinese laborers …	Chinese workers were paid less than other workers.
4	The completion of the railroad was …	A special spike was set in the track to celebrate the end of the job.
5	The expansion of the railroad precipitated …	Because of the railroad, almost all of the bison were killed.
6	Standardized time replaced the local solar …	Four time zones replaced the separate clock times that each town kept.

Cause and Effect Chain page 20

Given	A good answer says
Cause: Wagon trips across the country took …	Leaders wanted a railroad to cross the country.
Cause: The Central Pacific could not find …	It hired thousands of Chinese immigrants.
Cause: The railroad let hunters ship bison …	Millions of bison were killed and the herds nearly vanished.
Cause: Each town kept its own clock …	Train schedules were confusing, so in 1883 the railroads set four time zones.
Effect: The two railroads met at Promontory …	Each company was paid by the mile and kept building toward the other until the tracks joined.
Effect: A trip across the country dropped …	The transcontinental railroad was finished in 1869.

PREVIEW

Transcontinental Railroad Unit Tracker

One student, every scored page. Filled example: page 41.

Student _____ Teacher _____ Month _____

Page	Page type and set	Items	Right	Date	Notes
6	True or False? Fix It	6			
7	A Railroad From Coast to Coast	2			
8	Two Companies Build Toward Each Other	2			
9	The People Who Built It	2			
10	Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869	2			
11	Native Nations and the Bison	2			
12	Time Zones and Travel Time	2			
13	Words to Know	8			
14	Map Lab: The Two Railroads	6			
15	Which Railroad?	6			
16	Timeline: Years	6			
17	Timeline: Order	6			
26	Quiz, Part A	6			
27	Quiz, Part B	6			
28	Before or After the Railroad?	6			
29	Who Would Say It?	6			
30	Timeline Cut and Paste	6			

How to fill this in

Write how many items the student got right with no prompt, and the date. A blank means not tried yet, never wrong. There are 80 items on the 17 scored pages. Answer keys: pages 32 to 36. Filled example: page 41.

This month we are working on (your own standard or wording)

PREVIEW

Team Note

Use this page between team meetings or when a student moves classes, to hand off what changed without writing a note from scratch. Everything below is observable, with a blank for the number or the wording your team already uses.

Student _____ Team member _____ Date _____

Page type	Covered since last note (Y/N)	Items right	Still blank
True or False			
Readings			
Words to Know			
Map Lab			
Which Railroad?			
Timelines			
Quiz			
Cut and paste			

What I saw (observable, not a conclusion)

- Named the cause and the effect of ___ of ___ readings without a prompt.
- Put the events in order on ___ of ___ (page 17).
- Found ___ of ___ places on the map (page 14).
- Used a fact from a reading in the claim, evidence and reasoning pages (24, 25): yes / no / with a reminder.

Next step

- Next page or set: ___, because ___ (what you saw).
- What to try in another class or at home: ___.
- What to keep doing because it is working: ___.
- Anything for the team meeting to decide: ___ (this page records what happened, never a label or a plan).

Summary, in one or two sentences, for whoever reads this next

A filled-in line, for reference

"Matched 6 of 8 words on Words to Know with no prompt on 10/3. Next step: reread the Promontory Summit reading and use the map to show where the two lines met." That is the level of detail this page is built for. It matches the filled example on page 41.

PREVIEW

Riley's Tracker (Invented Student)

Riley T. is invented; nothing on this page describes a real student. The blank tracker is on page 37.

Student: Riley T. (an invented student)

Teacher: Mr. Bell (invented)

Month: September to October

Page	Page type and set	Items	Right	Date	Notes
6	True or False? Fix It	6	5	9/22	Missed the one about only Irish workers
7	A Railroad From Coast to Coast	2	2	9/24	-
8	Two Companies Build Toward Each Other	2	2	9/25	-
9	The People Who Built It	2	1	9/29	Mixed up the two companies' workers
10	Promontory Summit, May 10, 1869	2	2	10/1	-
11	Native Nations and the Bison	2	-	-	-
12	Time Zones and Travel Time	2	-	-	-
13	Words to Know	8	6	10/3	Mixed up immigrant and reservation
14	Map Lab: The Two Railroads	6	-	-	-
15	Which Railroad?	6	4	10/6	Swapped Central Pacific and Union Pacific
16	Timeline: Years	6	5	10/8	Swapped 1862 and 1863
17	Timeline: Order	6	-	-	-
26	Quiz, Part A	6	-	-	-
27	Quiz, Part B	6	-	-	-
28	Before or After the Railroad?	6	-	-	-
29	Who Would Say It?	6	-	-	-
30	Timeline Cut and Paste	6	-	-	-

How to read it

Riley T. has done **8 of 17** scored pages and got **27 of 34** items right with no prompt. **3** pages were all right and **5** carry a note. Every number comes from the table.

What the table points to

The lowest page is The People Who Built It (1 of 2). That is where the next practice goes. The 9 pages left blank are not tried yet, never wrong.

PREVIEW