

ChatGPT Output: CLEAR Lesson Planning Companion for K-12 Teachers

ChatGPT: Hello! I'm your CLEAR Lesson Planning Coach. We'll use the CLEAR framework—**Context, Learning Goal, Expectations, Audience, Requirements**—so you can give AI the right info upfront and get a lesson that actually fits your classroom. After we capture CLEAR, we'll build your lesson in **four phases** (foundation → activity development → quick assessments → personalization) to keep quality high and make the final plan feel like *you*.

To start with **Context**:
What grade level do you teach?

You: 6th grade

Perfect — 6th grade it is. ✓

Next for **Context**, what **subject area** is this lesson for?

You: I teach social studies and the topic of this lesson plan is about the Gold rush and the movement westward

ChatGPT: Awesome — 6th grade social studies with a focus on the **Gold Rush and westward movement**.

Last piece for **Context**:
Can you briefly describe your **classroom setting** (public/private, resource-limited/well-equipped, co-taught, etc.)?

You: I teach in a public school

ChatGPT: Great — **6th grade, social studies, public school** gives us a solid **Context** to anchor the lesson. The CLEAR method starts by locking in grade/subject and setting so the lesson and activities fit your real classroom.

Now let's move to **Learning Goal**. We already have the topic (Gold Rush + westward movement). The next piece is the *skill/action* you want students to demonstrate by the end.

What specific **skill or action** should your students be able to do by the end of this lesson?

You: I want students to follow a family that was moving westward because they heard that there was gold to be found in the west. I want students to feel the experience that such a family went through and the dangers they encountered while trying to achieve their dream to find gold. This experience may include their preparation for the journey, what supply they take with them, the dangers they encountered on the way, how did they overcome the dangers or not, when they arrived, was the experience worth the effort, did they actually find gold.

ChatGPT: Love this direction — your learning goal sounds like an **immersive, empathy-building historical simulation** where students track a family tempted by Gold Rush promises, plan the

journey, confront risks, and judge whether the outcome matched the dream. That fits perfectly with the CLEAR “Learning Goal” focus on a specific topic and a clear student action.

Now we move into **Expectations**, starting with time. Expectations include the lesson length and a few key components you want included.

How much time do you have for this lesson (e.g., 45 minutes, 60 minutes, block period)?

You: Two 45 minute sessions twice a week for a month.

ChatGPT: Awesome — that gives us a strong **Expectations** timeline. I’m going to treat this as a **4-week mini-unit** with **two class meetings per week**, each made up of **two 45-minute sessions** (so you can run the experience in chunks). That fits the CLEAR focus on realistic timing for *your* class.

Next Expectations piece:

What **2–3 key components** do you want included in this mini-unit?

Examples: short primary-source read, family-journey simulation, map work, supply-budget activity, journals/letters, small-group decision points, exit tickets.

You: Everything you listed in your example

ChatGPT: Perfect — we’ve locked in your **Expectations** and you want **all** of those components woven into the month-long experience (primary sources, family-journey simulation, map work, supply-budget, journals/letters, group decision points, exit tickets). That fits the CLEAR structure for specifying key components clearly.

Now we move to **Audience**. The first thing I need is class size.

How many students are in this class?

You: 23 students

ChatGPT: Great — **23 students** noted.

Next for **Audience**: what are **2–3 of the most important characteristics** of your students as learners (e.g., need visual support, learn best through discussion, above grade level, need movement breaks)?

You: 15 students are fitting to the grade level, 3 students can be considered gifted and 5 students are below grade level.

ChatGPT: Great — that’s a clear **Audience** snapshot for your class of 23: **15 on grade level, 3 gifted, 5 below grade level**.

One last **Audience** detail to round this out:

Is there anything else about their **learning preferences or backgrounds** I should know?

You: No

ChatGPT: Great — we've got **Context, Learning Goal, Expectations, and Audience** covered. Now we're at the final CLEAR piece: **Requirements** — your materials and constraints.

What **materials and resources** do you have on hand for this mini-unit?
(Examples: textbooks, Chromebooks, printing access, chart paper/markers, maps/atlasses, library access, primary-source packets, etc.)

You: Every student has a Chromebook we can use. We have access to maps, library and I want my students to use primary sources for their research and of course our textbook about the subject.

ChatGPT: Perfect — Chromebooks for all, plus **maps, library access, primary sources, and the textbook** gives us a rich toolkit for this experience.

One last **Requirements** piece:

Are there any important **constraints** you want me to plan around (noise level, limited printing, strict pacing, testing windows, etc.)?

You: I forgot to mention that we have internet access. No constraints.

Your CLEAR details (locked in)

- **Context:** 6th grade social studies, public school.
- **Learning Goal:** Students follow a family heading west for gold, experiencing preparation, risks, decision-making, and outcomes.
- **Expectations:** Month-long experience with map work, primary sources, supply/budgeting, journals/letters, decision points, exit tickets.
- **Audience:** 23 students (15 on-level, 3 gifted, 5 below).
- **Requirements:** 1:1 Chromebooks + internet, textbook, maps, library, primary sources; no constraints.

Now we start: **ChatGPT:**

Phase 1: Foundation Building (draft)

This phase should give us the **basic structure**: opening, main instruction, practice/application, closing, plus **materials and timing**.

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I'm treating your month as **8 total 90-minute blocks** (each block = two 45-min sessions).

Core Unit Structure (8 blocks)

Block 1 — The Spark

- **Opening:** Gold discovery “newsflash” + Notice/Wonder
- **Main Instruction:** Gold Rush overview + push/pull of westward movement
- **Practice/Application:** Short primary source analysis in groups
- **Closing:** Exit ticket on motivation + risk

Block 2 — The Family Decision

- **Opening:** Quick recap + provocative question
- **Main Instruction:** Routes and reasons families chose them
- **Practice/Application:** Family meeting role-play + commit to “go/stay” with evidence
- **Closing:** Letter/journal from a family member

Block 3 — Supply & Budget Planning

- **Opening:** “What would you pack?” quick sort
- **Main Instruction:** Realistic constraints (cost, weight, survival needs)
- **Practice/Application:** Budget + supply selection
- **Closing:** Exit ticket on trade-offs

Block 4 — Route Mapping

- **Opening:** Map warm-up
- **Main Instruction:** Compare major route risks/benefits
- **Practice/Application:** Choose and justify route + finalize Journey Plan
- **Closing:** Short reflection

Block 5 — Trail Simulation I

- **Opening:** Event card hook
- **Main Instruction:** How hardship shaped migration experiences
- **Practice/Application:** Decision-point simulation + inventory/health updates
- **Closing:** Exit ticket on turning points

Block 6 — Trail Simulation II

- **Opening:** Share a dilemma
- **Main Instruction:** Myth vs. reality of “easy gold”
- **Practice/Application:** More complex decision points + map annotations
- **Closing:** In-the-moment journal entry

Block 7 — Arrival & Reality

- **Opening:** Expectation vs. reality T-chart
- **Main Instruction:** Mining life + social/environmental impacts
- **Practice/Application:** Outcome reveal + evidence gathering
- **Closing:** Exit ticket on surprise/insight

Block 8 — Culminating Argument

- **Opening:** Claim builder
- **Main Instruction:** How to argue with historical evidence
- **Practice/Application:** Final product (letter home OR diary set OR short presentation)
- **Closing:** Reflection on broader costs of westward movement

Materials List (Phase 1 level)

- Chromebooks + internet

- Textbook sections on westward expansion/Gold Rush
 - 6–10 коротких primary sources (digitized)
 - Route maps (print or digital)
 - Supply/budget worksheet
 - Family profile cards
 - Event/decision-point cards
 - Outcome cards
 - Journal/letter templates (Google Docs)
-

Timing Reality Check

Each block is designed to fit **90 minutes** with flexible pacing:

- Opening 5–10
 - Main instruction 15–20
 - Practice/simulation 45–50
 - Closing 5–10
-

Phase 1 Success Criteria

By the end of Phase 1 we should feel confident that the **bones** of the experience are right before we make it more interactive and differentiated. That's the intent of the phased process.

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Your turn to validate Phase 1

Does this foundation structure match what you want for the month, and is there anything you'd change about the 8-block flow before we move to **Phase 2: Activity Development**?

You: No, I like it as is.

ChatGPT: Perfect — Phase 1 is approved. ✓

Now we move to **Phase 2: Activity Development**, where we **enhance engagement**, add **differentiation/learning style variations**, include **early finisher options**, and make the experience more interactive.

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I'll layer activities onto your 8-block foundation without changing your structure.

Phase 2: Activity Development (draft)

Thread that ties the whole month together

"The Westward Journey Gameboard"

Each family group keeps a shared digital "Journey Dashboard" (Google Slides or Doc) with:

- Route map
 - Budget + supplies
 - Health/morale tracker
 - Timeline
 - Decision log
 - Primary source evidence bank
This becomes the backbone for journals, map tasks, and the final argument.
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Block-by-Block Upgrades

Block 1 — The Spark

Interactive hook upgrade

- Use a short **“Gold Rush rumor mill”** activity:
Students rotate through 3 short “news” blurbs (realistic, historically grounded tone).
They label each as: *fact / rumor / sales pitch*.

Primary source routine

- Add a **2-minute “Source Speed Date”**:
Pairs read 4–6 sentence excerpts and trade one takeaway.

Differentiation

- Below-level: pre-highlight key lines + vocab box.
- Gifted: add a quick prompt: *“Whose voice is missing here?”*

Early finisher

- Create a 3-line “poster slogan” that might lure families west.

Block 2 — The Family Decision

Role-play upgrade

- Assign simple family roles:
 - **Optimist, Skeptic, Logistics lead, Historian**
Each must contribute one reason grounded in evidence.

Writing upgrade

- Letter #1 becomes a structured choice:
 - **“Convince a cousin to join us”** OR
 - **“Beg a cousin to stay home.”**

Early finisher

- Students draft a 5-item **“must-pack list”** with a one-line justification each.

Block 3 — Supply & Budget Planning

Interactive upgrade

- Run this as a **“Frontier Market”**:
 - You provide a price list.
 - Half the class are “merchants” for 8 minutes who can upsell.
 - Then roles switch.
Students feel the pressure and persuasion.

Differentiation

- Below-level: simplified budget menu with fewer categories.
- Gifted: add a “hidden cost” twist (repairs, price spikes).

Early finisher

- Add a **risk insurance** decision: spend extra now to reduce later event penalties.
-

Block 4 — Route Mapping

Map upgrade

- “Route Pitch” mini-competition:
Each group gets **60 seconds** to pitch their route as the safest/smartest for *their family profile*.

Learning style inclusion

- Visual: annotated route map
- Verbal: mini pitch
- Logical: risk-reward chart

Early finisher



- Add 2 alternate contingency routes.
-

Block 5 — Trail Simulation I

Decision-point upgrade

- Use a **Choose-Your-Path** structure:
 - Event
 - 3 options
 - Consequences
 - Short reflection
 - Update dashboard

Collaborative structure

- Make quick **“family votes”** with a tie-breaker rule set by the “parent/guardian” role.

Differentiation

- Below-level: fewer choices, clearer outcomes.
- Gifted: add a moral dilemma choice (aid another traveler vs conserve).

Early finisher

- Write a “field note” explaining how the event reflects a bigger theme of westward expansion.
-

Block 6 — Trail Simulation II

Complexity upgrade

- Add **rumor cards** that may be true or false.
Students must decide whether to trust them using evidence.

Interactive reflection

- “Map scars”: mark where the family suffered loss, gained help, or made a risky choice.

Early finisher

- Create a short **“trail advice”** card to future travelers.
-

Block 7 — Arrival & Reality

Reality check upgrade

- Use a short **mining camp photo/artifact set** (if available digitally) with a “What this suggests about daily life...” protocol.

Perspective expansion

- Brief optional lens cards:
 - Indigenous peoples
 - Merchants
 - Women and families
 - Immigrant miners
This lets you gently widen the historical story without derailing the family simulation.

Early finisher

- A 4-sentence “myth vs reality” paragraph.
-

Block 8 — Culminating Argument

Product upgrade

- Keep your choice board, but add a shared requirement:
 - **Claim**

- **2 primary sources**
- **1 map-based reason**
- **1 budget/supply-based reason**

Engagement

- Gallery walk becomes **“Gold Rush Trial of the Dream”**
Students leave sticky-note comments on:
 - strongest evidence
 - most realistic hardship
 - most surprising outcome

Differentiation

- Below-level: sentence frames for the argument.
- Gifted: add a counterclaim paragraph.

Activity Pack You Now Have (Phase 2 level)

This is what your students will actually *do* repeatedly:

- Journey Dashboard
- Rumor Mill + Source Speed Date
- Family Decision Council with roles
- Frontier Market budget simulation
- Route Pitch
- Choose-Your-Path decision rounds
- Map Scars reflection
- Final “Trial of the Dream” gallery walk

All of this stays aligned with your required components and the Phase 2 goal of engagement + differentiation + early finisher options.

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Phase 2 Validation

Does this activity layer match your vision for making the month immersive and interactive — and do you want any tweaks to the **Journey Dashboard**, **Frontier Market**, or **decision-point format** before we move to **Phase 3: Basic Assessment Integration**?

You: I like it the way it is.

ChatGPT: Awesome — Phase 2 approved. 

Now we move to **Phase 3: Basic Assessment Integration**. This phase keeps assessment simple: **2–3 quick check-in questions**, a **simple exit ticket/closing**, and **one fast way to spot who needs help**, all designed to take **5 minutes or less** and directly reflect your learning goal.

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Here's a Phase 3 draft tailored to your **Gold Rush family-journey mini-unit**.

Phase 3: Assessment Integration (draft)

1) Quick check-in questions (use across the unit)

You can drop these mid-lesson during discussion, planning, or decision points:

Understanding motivations + myths

1. **What is one push factor and one pull factor influencing our family's choice?**
2. **What claim about gold seems believable, and what might be exaggerated? Why?**

Route + geography reasoning

3. **Which part of our route is most risky for *our family* and why?**

4. **How does geography shape the choices we're making today?**

Supply + budget thinking

5. **What did we choose to spend money on first, and what risk does that reduce?**
6. **What is one trade-off we accepted that could cause problems later?**

Decision-point reasoning

7. **Which option is safest vs. which option is fastest — and what are we prioritizing?**
8. **What evidence (textbook or primary source) supports our decision?**

Reality + evaluation

9. **What is one way the Gold Rush dream clashes with the reality we're seeing?**
 10. **If we could redo one decision, what would it be and why?**
-

2) Simple exit tickets (pick 1 per block)

Each takes 3–5 minutes.

Block 1–2 (spark + decision)

- **2-sentence exit:**
“Our family wants to go west because ____.
The biggest risk we might be underestimating is ____.”

Block 3 (budget)

- **Trade-off check:**
“We spent most of our budget on ____.
This helps us with ____, but puts us at risk of ____.”

Block 4 (route)

- **Route justification mini-claim:**

"Our chosen route is best for our family because ____.
One danger we still must prepare for is ____."

Block 5–6 (simulation)

- **Decision reflection:**

"Today's hardest choice was ____.
We chose ____ because ____.
The consequence we expect is ____."

Block 7 (arrival)

- **Myth vs. reality:**

"One myth about the Gold Rush was ____.
The reality seems to be ____ based on ____."

Block 8 (culmination)

- **Worth-it preview:**

"Right now, I think our family's journey was/was not worth it because ____."

3) One fast way to spot who needs extra help

Use a **3-column quick scan** during any work block:

Students place their names digitally (or on a sticky-note chart):

- **Green:** I can explain our decision with evidence.
- **Yellow:** I understand the decision but need help using evidence.
- **Red:** I'm confused about why we chose what we chose.

You then pull a **3-minute micro-huddle** with the red group while others continue updating the Journey Dashboard.

This aligns with the Phase 3 goal of quick, practical checks that directly measure the objective and help you decide next steps.

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Phase 3 Quality Check (quick self-audit)

As the prompt recommends, confirm these three things:

- **Directly measures** your learning goal.
 - **Fast** (≤ 5 minutes).
 - **Useful** for tomorrow's moves.
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Your Phase 3 validation

Do these check-ins, exit tickets, and the green/yellow/red scan give you the information you'd want during this unit — and are you ready to move to **Phase 4: Personalization and Polish**?

You: Ready to move on.

ChatGPT: Great — Phase 4 it is. 

Phase 4: Personalization and Polish is where we make this unit **authentically YOURS** by adding:

1. local/student-interest connections,
2. transitions that match your teaching style,
3. a few classroom management reminders, and
4. a simple prep checklist.

To start personalizing:

What **local area connection, current event tie-in, or specific student interest** could we connect to the Gold Rush/westward movement for *your* students?

You: We are in California, so we are planning a field trip to an area where gold was excavated.

ChatGPT: Fantastic — California + a Gold Rush excavation site field trip is an *ideal* Phase 4 personalization anchor.



Here's **Phase 4: Personalization and Polish** with your local connection baked in, plus transitions, management reminders, and a prep checklist — exactly matching the Phase 4 focus in your prompt.

Phase 4: Personalization and Polish (draft)

1) Local connection: California field trip integration

Use the trip to turn the unit from “simulation” into “living history.”

Before the field trip (integrate into Blocks 1–4)

“We’re going where they went” launch moment

- Show the site on a map and connect it to your route options.
- Ask:
“If our family ended up here, what would we expect to see? What might surprise us?”

Site anticipation task

- Students create a short **Field Trip Question Set** tied to their family:
 1. What evidence of mining might we see?
 2. What would daily life have been like here?
 3. Who benefited and who suffered?
 4. How does this place confirm or complicate the Gold Rush “dream”?

Primary-source pre-read

- 1–2 short excerpts referencing California mining life to prime observation.

During the field trip

“Historian’s Snapshot”

- Students collect:
 - 3 observations

- 2 emotions they imagine their family might feel
- 1 comparison to their simulation experience

After the field trip (integrate into Blocks 7–8)

Reality upgrade

- Students add a **“Field Evidence”** section to their Journey Dashboard:
 - *What the site suggests about labor, risk, and hope.*

Final argument booster

- Require one sentence in the final product that begins:
“After visiting ____, I now think...”
-

2) Transition phrases (mix-and-match)

Since you didn’t specify a teaching style, I’m giving you a **flexible set** you can choose from so it still sounds like *you*. This aligns with the Phase 4 goal of matching your voice.

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Between instruction → activity

- “Let’s put this into motion with our family’s choices.”
- “Now we’re moving from history facts to history *decisions*.”
- “Time to test what this would feel like in real life.”

Between planning → simulation

- “We’ve built the plan — now we find out if it survives reality.”
- “This is where the dream meets the trail.”

Between simulation → reflection

- “Pause and zoom out: what does this moment reveal about westward movement?”
- “Let’s capture what this choice cost us — and why that matters historically.”

Toward the field trip connection

- “We’re not just studying this — we’re about to stand where it happened.”
- “This week, our simulation gets a real-world mirror.”

3) Classroom management reminders (for lively moments)

These match the Phase 4 emphasis on anticipating noisy/chaotic spots.

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1. **Frontier Market norms (Block 3):**
Post a 3-rule visible anchor:
one voice per group, respectful bargaining, time warnings at 2 minutes and 30 seconds.
2. **Decision-point debates (Blocks 5–6):**
Use a quick structure:
30 seconds silent think → 60 seconds role statements → 30 seconds vote.
3. **Route Pitch (Block 4):**
Set a **strict 60-second timer** and assign one spokesperson to prevent pile-ons.

4) Simple prep checklist

Aligned with the Phase 4 “prep clear” goal.

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Unit setup

- Create/duplicate:
 - Family profile cards

- Supply/budget menu
- Decision-point event cards
- Outcome cards
- Journey Dashboard template (Google Slides/Doc)

Content

- Pull 6–10 short primary sources (digitized):
 - early Gold Rush reports
 - diary/letter excerpts
 - camp-life descriptions
- Identify textbook pages for quick reference.

Maps

- Print or link:
 - U.S. westward routes map
 - California mining-region map
- Prepare a class shared map for annotations.

Field trip integration

- Confirm site map/photo permissions if needed.
 - Create:
 - “Historian’s Snapshot” handout/Google Form
 - Field Trip Question Set template
 - Plan a 10-minute post-trip debrief protocol.
-

Final Polish Check (quick)

Use this to confirm we hit the intent of Phase 4.

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- Does the California field trip make the unit feel uniquely yours?
 - Do the transitions sound like language you'd actually say?
 - Are your likely high-energy moments proactively managed?
 - Is prep crystal clear?
-

Phase 4 validation

Does this feel like a lesson **you** designed — with your California field trip meaningfully woven into the experience?

You: I want students to work in teams of 3 or 4 students. Please add the project management factors that this change reflects

ChatGPT: Absolutely — teams of **3–4** is a great fit for this simulation, and it *does* change the project management layer in meaningful ways.

I'll add the project-management factors this team structure reflects, aligned with Phase 4's goal of polishing logistics and management so it feels like *your* lesson.

Project management factors to add (because of teams of 3–4)

1) Clear team roles (lightweight, rotating)

With 3–4 students, roles reduce chaos and keep everyone essential.

- **Navigator/Cartographer:** route map + “map scars”
- **Quartermaster:** budget + supply inventory
- **Historian:** primary source evidence bank

- **Recorder/Presenter (optional 4th):** decision log + final product
Rotate at least once mid-unit.

2) A shared “Team Journey Dashboard”

Instead of individual tracking, each team maintains one living document:

- route choice + justification
- budget + supply list
- health/morale tracker
- decision log
- primary source notes
This becomes your built-in accountability artifact.

3) Mini team agreement (5 minutes, early Week 1)

Because small teams amplify both strengths and conflicts:

- how we decide (vote/consensus)
- how we handle disagreement
- what “prepared” looks like
- what happens if someone is absent

4) Task distribution by product type

Teams of 3–4 can split deliverables cleanly:

- **Research** (primary sources + textbook)
- **Planning** (supplies/budget)
- **Geography** (route + map annotations)
- **Narrative voice** (journals/letters)

5) Structured decision-point routine

Small groups benefit from predictable protocols:

- **30 sec silent think**
- **60 sec role statements**
- **30 sec vote**
- **Update dashboard**
This keeps the simulation fast and fair.

6) Built-in checkpoints that double as management

Use quick “team status” checks:

- **Green:** we can justify our decision with evidence
- **Yellow:** we’re unsure about evidence
- **Red:** we’re stuck
This keeps you from chasing confusion later.

7) Short team reflection moments

At the end of Blocks 3, 6, and 8:

- “What did we do well as a team?”
- “What do we need to fix next block?”
This strengthens collaboration without adding workload.

Where these additions plug into your unit

Block 1–2

- Assign roles + create team agreement
- Start the **Team Journey Dashboard**

Block 3–4

- Quartermaster leads **Frontier Market**
- Navigator leads **Route Pitch**

Block 5–6

- Historian must cite a source during at least one major decision

Block 7–8

- Recorder ensures the final claim includes:
 - 2 primary sources
 - 1 map-based reason
 - 1 budget/supply reason

Updated classroom management reminders (team-aware)

These fit Phase 4's "anticipate loud/chaotic activities" focus.

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1. **Role voices rule:** only the role-holder speaks first during debates.
2. **Dashboard proof:** no decision is "final" until logged.
3. **60-second reset:** if a team stalls, they must write two options before asking you.

Why this improves learning

Teams of 3–4:

- increase student talk and perspective-taking
 - distribute cognitive load across planning, geography, evidence, and narrative
- 

- mirror real historical decision-making as collective family/community risk-taking
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If you want, I can convert this into a **1-page student-facing “Team Journey Guide”** with roles, norms, and a simple dashboard template that you can drop into Google Classroom.

You: Yes, please

ChatGPT: Absolutely — here’s a **1-page, student-facing Team Journey Guide** you can copy into Google Classroom or print.

Chasing Gold: Team Journey Guide (6th Grade)

Your Mission

You and your team will follow a family moving west after hearing about gold. You will plan the journey, choose a route, face real dangers, and decide if the dream was worth it.

You are not just learning facts — you are making **historical decisions**.

Team Size

3–4 students

Team Roles (Choose now)

Each role is important. You may rotate roles halfway through the unit.

1. **Navigator/Cartographer**
 - Leads route choice
 - Adds map notes and “map scars”

- Explains how geography affects safety and time

2. **Quartermaster**

- Manages the budget
- Chooses supplies
- Updates the inventory after events

3. **Historian**

- Finds evidence in primary sources and the textbook
- Records key quotes/ideas
- Helps the team justify decisions with evidence

4. **Recorder/Presenter** (if your team has 4)

- Keeps the decision log organized
- Helps shape journals/letters
- Leads final product planning

Team Agreement (2 minutes)

Decide as a team:

- **How will we make big decisions?**
☐ Vote ☐ Consensus ☐ Other: _____
- **What does “prepared” look like?**

- **If we disagree, we will...**

Decision-Making Routine

Use this every time you face a challenge.



1. **Silent Think (30 seconds)**
2. **Role Statements (60 seconds)**
3. **Team Choice (Vote/Consensus)**
4. **Log It** in your dashboard

A decision is not final until it is written down.

Team Journey Dashboard (Copy into your doc)

Family Name/Label: _____

Team Members: _____

A) Our Route

- Route chosen: _____
- Why this route fits our family (2 reasons):
 1. _____
 2. _____
- Biggest risk we expect: _____

B) Our Budget & Supplies

- Starting budget: _____
- Top 5 supplies we chose:
 1. _____
 - 2) _____
 - 3) _____
 - 4) _____
 - 5) _____
- What we could not afford (and why it matters):

C) Inventory & Condition Tracker

- Food: ☐ Strong ☐ OK ☐ Low
- Water: ☐ Strong ☐ OK ☐ Low

- Health: ☐ Strong ☐ OK ☐ Poor
- Morale: ☐ High ☐ OK ☐ Low

D) Decision Log

Event/Challenge	Options We Considered	Our Choice	Why (Evidence or Reason)	Result
1				
2				
3				

E) Evidence Bank

Add at least **2 primary sources** and **1 textbook reference**.

- Primary Source #1:
Title/Type: _____
What it shows: _____
- Primary Source #2:
Title/Type: _____
What it shows: _____
- Textbook note:

F) Field Trip Connection (California)

After our visit:

- One detail that confirmed our simulation:

- One detail that changed our thinking:

Final Success Checklist

Your final product must include:

- A clear claim: **Worth it / Not worth it**
- **2 primary sources**
- **1 map-based reason**
- **1 budget/supply-based reason**
- A short reflection on what the journey cost

You: Can you now put the entire lesson plan together by arranging separately the teachers parts and the students parts.

Yes — here's the **complete, put-together lesson plan** with **Teacher Parts** and **Student Parts** clearly separated, using everything we built: 4-week arc, team-of-3–4 project management, primary sources, map work, supply/budget, journals/letters, decision points, exit tickets, and the California field trip integration.

6th Grade Social Studies Mini-Unit

Chasing Gold: A Family's Westward Journey

Unit Focus

Gold Rush + westward movement through an immersive family-journey simulation.

Unit Length

4 weeks

Two class meetings per week, each meeting made of **two 45-minute sessions**
≈ **8 total 90-minute blocks**

Class Profile

23 students

- 15 on grade level

- 3 gifted
- 5 below grade level

Materials

- 1:1 Chromebooks + internet
 - Textbook
 - Library access
 - Maps/atlasses (paper or digital)
 - Curated primary sources (short excerpts)
 - Family profile cards
 - Supply/budget menu + worksheet
 - Event/decision-point cards
 - Outcome cards
 - Journey Dashboard template (Google Doc/Slides)
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TEACHER PARTS

Unit Learning Goals

Students will:

1. Explain causes of westward movement and the Gold Rush.
2. Analyze risks, motivations, and outcomes using evidence.
3. Plan a historically plausible journey with limited resources.
4. Simulate decision-making under constraint.
5. Judge whether the journey was “worth it” using evidence.

Teacher Setup (Before Week 1)

1. **Create/collect**

- 6–10 short primary sources (newspaper reports, diaries/letters, mining camp accounts)
- Family profile cards (varied budgets/needs)
- Supply/budget menu
- Route maps
- 8–10 decision-point cards
- Outcome cards

2. **Create the Team Journey Dashboard template** with:

- Route choice + justification
- Supply/budget plan
- Inventory + health/morale tracker
- Decision log
- Evidence bank
- Field trip connection section

3. **Plan role system** for teams of 3–4:

- Navigator/Cartographer
- Quartermaster
- Historian
- Recorder/Presenter (optional)

Project Management Structure (Teams of 3–4)



Why it matters:

This unit is as much a historical inquiry as it is a project-management experience.

Required components

- **Team roles** assigned by Block 2
- **Team agreement** (quick, 5 minutes)
- **Shared Journey Dashboard** as the accountability spine
- **Decision-making routine**
 - 30 sec silent think
 - 60 sec role statements
 - 30 sec vote/consensus
 - Log it

Recommended rotation

Rotate roles after Block 4.

Differentiation (Teacher Moves)

Below grade level (5 students)

- Provide shortened/annotated primary sources
- Vocab supports + sentence frames
- Reduce choices during some decision points
- Check in during the green/yellow/red scan

Gifted (3 students)

- Add optional perspective lens cards:
 - Indigenous communities

- merchants
 - immigrant miners
 - women/families
 - Require a counterclaim for the final argument
 - Ask: “Whose voice is missing?”
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Assessment Plan (Low-Lift)

Quick check-in questions (sprinkle daily)

- What push and pull factors influenced today’s choice?
- Which risk is most serious for *this* family and why?
- What evidence supports our decision?

Exit tickets (3–5 min)

Use a rotating set tied to:

- motivation + risk
- budget trade-offs
- route justification
- decision reflection
- myth vs reality
- worth-it claim preview

Fast intervention tool

Green/Yellow/Red team status

- Green: can justify decision with evidence

- Yellow: partial evidence
 - Red: stuck/confused
Pull quick micro-huddles.
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Field Trip Integration (California)

Before the trip

- Students create a **Field Trip Question Set** tied to their family.
- Assign a short source that references California mining life.

During the trip

- “Historian’s Snapshot”:
 - 3 observations
 - 2 emotions their family might feel
 - 1 comparison to simulation

After the trip

- Require one “field evidence” sentence in final claim:
 - “After visiting ___, I now think...”
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Teacher Pacing Guide (8 Blocks)

Block 1 — The Spark

- Hook: Gold discovery “news”
- Mini-lesson: Gold Rush + push/pull factors

- Primary source lab
- Exit ticket: motivation + risk

Block 2 — The Family Decision

- Introduce family profiles
- Assign team roles + team agreement
- Route overview
- Letter/Journal #1

Block 3 — Supplies & Budget (Frontier Market)

- Run as interactive market
- Teams commit to top priorities
- Inventory sheet begins
- Exit ticket: trade-offs

Block 4 — Route Mapping + Journey Plan

- Route Pitch (60 seconds per team)
- Finalize Journey Plan artifact
- Optional role rotation after this block

Block 5 — Trail Simulation I

- Decision-point round (health/supply/weather, etc.)
- Update dashboards
- Exit ticket: turning point

Block 6 — Trail Simulation II

- Add rumor cards (trust vs verify)
- Map scars
- Journal #2 or #3

Block 7 — Arrival + Reality

- Outcomes revealed
- Camp life sources
- Begin final argument prep

Block 8 — Culminating Product

- Student choice product
- Gallery walk
- Final reflection

Culminating Products (Teacher Choice Board)

Students choose one:

1. **Final Letter Home**
2. **Diary Compilation** (revised entries + reflection)
3. **Short Team Presentation**

Non-negotiables

- Clear claim: worth it / not worth it
- 2 primary sources
- 1 map-based reason
- 1 budget/supply-based reason

- 1 field trip connection line (if trip occurs during unit)
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STUDENT PARTS

Your Mission

You and your team will follow a family moving west after hearing about gold.
You will plan, decide, survive challenges, and judge whether the dream was worth it.

Teams

You will work in **teams of 3–4**.

Roles

1. **Navigator/Cartographer**
 - Leads route choice
 - Updates maps + “map scars”
2. **Quartermaster**
 - Manages budget
 - Chooses and tracks supplies
3. **Historian**
 - Finds evidence in primary sources + textbook
 - Adds key notes to the evidence bank
4. **Recorder/Presenter** (if you have 4)
 - Keeps the decision log
 - Helps organize the final product

Team Agreement (Quick)

Decide:

- How will we make major decisions?
 - What does “prepared” mean?
 - How will we handle disagreement?
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Your Team Journey Dashboard (You update all unit)

Your shared document includes:

- Route choice + reasons
- Budget + supplies
- Inventory + health/morale
- Decision log
- Evidence bank
- Field trip connection

A decision isn't final until it's logged.

Decision-Making Routine

1. Silent think (30 sec)
 2. Role statements (60 sec)
 3. Vote/consensus
 4. Log the decision + update inventory
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What You Will Do Each Week

Week 1 — The Spark + The Choice

- Read short primary sources about early gold news
- Learn why people moved west
- Choose whether your family goes
- Write **Letter/Journal #1** about your decision

Week 2 — Planning to Survive

- Build a realistic budget
- Choose supplies
- Study route options
- Pitch your route
- Create your **Journey Plan**

Week 3 — The Trail

- Face real challenges and decision points
- Update your supply and health trackers
- Mark “map scars”
- Write hardship journals

Week 4 — Arrival + Reality

- Discover your outcome
 - Compare myth vs reality
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- Use evidence to answer:
Was the journey worth it?
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Field Trip Connection (California)

Before the trip:

- Create questions tied to your family.

During the trip:

- Record:
 - 3 observations
 - 2 emotions your family might feel
 - 1 comparison to your simulation

After the trip:

- Add a “field evidence” note to your final claim.
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Exit Tickets (Quick Ref)

Be ready to answer:

- Why did our family go?
 - What did we sacrifice to survive?
 - Why is our route best for *our* family?
 - Which decision changed our fate most?
 - What's the biggest myth we uncovered?
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Final Product Checklist

Your final letter/diary/presentation must include:

- A claim: **worth it / not worth it**
- 2 primary sources
- 1 map-based reason
- 1 budget/supply-based reason
- A brief field trip connection (if applicable)