Trail Through History

Race from Jamestown to the railroad of 1869. Every event square shows a money idea from U.S. history.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Before you play, color the board. Match the small picture in the corner of each event square to the key at the bottom, and use that idea's color. The rules and events are on page 2.

1 Start 1612	2	3 Tobacco sells	4	5 1807 Steamboat	6
12	11 Wagon too full	10	9 Ship to Britain	8	7 1823 Cloth mill
13 River too high	14 Stay or go west?	15 Pick your job	16 Gold Rush pie sale	17	18 $2.50 letter
24 Finish 1869	23 1862 Homestead	22 1861 Telegraph	21	20 1860 Pony Express	19 Rice price up

Key: pick a color for each idea and fill in its circle.

- ◯ Opportunity cost
- ◯ Price incentive
- ◯ Specialization
- ◯ Voluntary exchange
- ◯ Trade
- ◯ Productivity

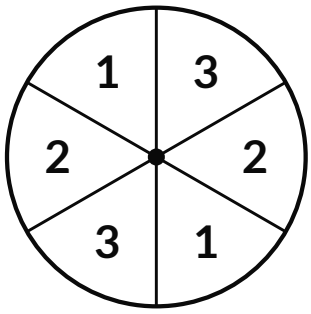
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How to play

For 2 to 4 players. You need a pencil, a paper clip, and a small marker for each player, like a coin or an eraser.

1. Put every marker on Start.
2. Take turns. Spin the spinner, then move that many squares along the trail.
3. Land on an event square? Read its event below out loud and do what it says.
4. If an event moves you to another event square, stop there. Do not do that event too.
5. The first player to reach Finish wins. You do not need an exact spin.



Spinner: hold a paper clip at the center dot with your pencil point, then flick the clip.

Event squares

3. Price incentive. Tobacco is so valuable that English buyers want more, so colonists plant lots of it. Move ahead 2.

5. Productivity. 1807: a steamboat goes 150 miles up the Hudson River in about 32 hours, against the current. Move ahead 2.

7. Specialization. 1823: a cloth mill opens in Lowell, Massachusetts. Name a factory product. Move ahead 1.

9. Trade. Ships carry American cotton to mills in Great Britain. Move ahead 2.

11. Opportunity cost. Your wagon is too heavy. Name one thing you leave behind. Move back 1.

13. Bad luck. The river is too high to cross. Lose your next turn.

14. Opportunity cost. Go west? Say one thing you give up if you go. Move ahead 1.

15. Specialization. In a gold town, you bake bread instead of digging for gold. Move ahead 1.

16. Voluntary exchange. Gold Rush: a miner pays $1.25 for your pie. You both wanted the trade. Move ahead 2.

18. Voluntary exchange. Would you pay a merchant $2.50 to carry your letter? Say why. Move ahead 1.

19. Price incentive. The price of rice goes up, so you plant more rice. Move ahead 1.

20. Productivity. 1860: the Pony Express carries mail more than 1,800 miles in 10 days. Move ahead 1.

22. Productivity. 1861: the telegraph links San Francisco and New York. Move ahead 2.

23. Opportunity cost. 1862: the Homestead Act offers 160 acres if you farm it for five years. Say one cost. Move ahead 1.

24. Finish. 1869: the railroads meet. A trip across the country now takes days, not months. You win.

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For grown-ups

What this sheet practices

SS4E1, all six elements: opportunity cost (a), price incentives (b), specialization (c), voluntary exchange (d), trade (e), and productivity from new technology (f). Each event square is a real moment from U.S. history or a short what-if.

How to use it in 5 to 10 minutes

1. Print both activity pages. Coloring the board by the key takes a few minutes and can be done ahead of time.
2. Play in pairs or small groups. A game takes about 5 to 10 minutes. Ask players to say the idea name each time they land on an event.
3. On squares 7, 11, 14, 18, and 23, the player says an answer out loud. Any reasonable answer counts.

Coloring key (what to look for)

Opportunity cost: squares 11, 14, and 23. Price incentive: 3 and 19. Specialization: 7 and 15. Voluntary exchange: 16 and 18. Trade: 9. Productivity: 5, 20, and 22. Squares 1, 13, and 24 have no idea marker.

Good answers name a real trade-off, for example: going west means leaving grandparents behind, or a pie is worth $1.25 to a hungry miner who has no oven.

Two things the game does not show

Southern cotton was grown by enslaved people, who were forced to work and never chose the trade. And homestead land was the homeland of Native American nations. The SS4E1 page on worthit.money covers both. They are worth talking about together.

One question to talk about

Which invention on the board would have helped a family business most in 1860, and why?