

HANNAH'S DIARY

A Tale Of The Pony Express



HANNAH'S DIARY A Tale Of The Pony Express

Chapter One – by Kay Hively

Hannah Evans watched as the big wheels of the wagon began to roll. With tears in her eyes, she waved good-bye to Betsy and Frank, who sat in the back of the wagon. Hannah even blew kisses to Betsy who was sitting with her brother on a big feather bed. Betsy Jenkins waved back with one hand and held her old mama doll with her other hand.

Hannah, who was eleven years old, knew she would not get to play dolls with Betsy any more. She was afraid she might never see Betsy and Frank again. They were going to California with their father and mother and their Uncle Joe.

People in St. Joseph were saying that California was a wonderful place. They said it was summer all the time there. Someone had even said there was never any snow in California, like there is in Missouri. And everyone said that if you went to California, you would become rich. They said there was gold just lying all around on top of the ground.

California sounded like a wonderful place, but Hannah didn't want to go. She didn't want to leave her friends, her school and her grandparents.

But when Mr. Jenkins heard the wonderful stories about California, he sold his little store and bought a big wagon. Then the Jenkins family packed all their clothes, their furniture and their dishes into the wagon and made ready for the journey to California.

Hannah's father had told her that California was far, far away. He said it would take many weeks for the wagon train to travel all the way from Missouri to California.

Classroom Extensions Things to Think About and Do –

- What do you think it was like to travel for many weeks in a covered wagon with Betsy? Where would you get food and water? What would happen if you got sick?
- What would you write in your diary if you had one? Make a diary out of a notebook and write something in it every day for a week. Hannah kept her diary in a big trunk. Where would you put your secret diary?

Next Week: Chapter Two – New neighbors
– and the boy next door.

As the big covered wagon turned a corner down the street and disappeared behind some trees, Hannah waved one last time to Betsy and Frank.

After supper that night Hannah went to the big trunk under the stairs and got out her diary. The diary had been a Christmas present from her mother. Each night, when the dishes had been washed and put away, Hannah wrote a full page in her diary.

"Dear Diary, I am sad today. Betsy is gone. She is going to California and I will never see her again. I will never know what games she is playing. I will not know where she is going to school. I will not be able to share any secrets with her again. I already miss her. I will never have another friend like Betsy."



Kay Hively of Neosho, Missouri, is a freelance author, songwriter and historian who writes for the *Neosho Daily News*. Artist Billie Goddard-Stewart, also of Neosho, has illustrated four book covers, two books and painted a courthouse mural. Produced in cooperation with this newspaper and The Missouri Press Foundation, www.mopress.com.

Story by Kay Hively

Teaching Activities created by
Jennifer J. Hawkins
Gifted Education Instructor
St. Clair RXIII School District
St. Clair, MO


Missouri Press
Foundation
Dedicated to Freedom for Tomorrow's World

Hannah’s Diary
Chapter 1

Name _____

1. Locate Missouri and California on the United States Map. Using the map scale, calculate the shortest distance from the Missouri border to the California border.

2. Approximately when do you think this story took place? Use details from the story to support your answer.

3. Betsy and her family will be traveling for several weeks in a covered wagon. How would her trip be different than traveling several weeks with your family today? Compare and contrast trips in the chart below.

Betsy’s Trip	Both	Your Trip

4. Pretend you are going on a trip across the country with your parents in your family vehicle. Because of the limited space, your parents are only allowing you to pack 10 items. In your local newspaper, locate pictures and words of items that you’d like to take on your trip. Cut and paste the words and pictures on a separate piece of paper and label each item “need” or “want.”
5. Hannah writes her thoughts in a diary. Create your own diary to use throughout this story. Use a brown paper lunch bag for the cover and staple notebook paper inside. Pretend you are Hannah and create your first entry in your diary. Continue to write a new diary with each chapter.

Hannah's Diary
Chapter 2

Name _____

1. Hannah was hanging her family's wet clothes on the clothes line. Today, many people use a clothes dryer. In the chart below, record the advantages and disadvantages of each.

	Advantage	Disadvantage
Clothes Line		
Clothes Dryer		

2. What is the Pony Express? How does it work? Use reference materials or safe search engines on the Internet to find your answer.

3. Where is Mrs. Cole's family from? _____
How far did they travel to get to St. Joseph? _____
Use a Missouri Map and map key to calculate your answer.

4. How did Hannah feel when she saw her new neighbors for the first time? Use details from the story to explain your answer.

5. The name "Hannah" is a palindrome. A palindrome is a word or phrase that reads the same way backwards as forwards. Search the newspaper for at least one other palindrome. Cut and paste it below.

Hannah's Diary
Chapter 3

Name _____

1. How did the Cole family describe the Pony Express?

2. If you mailed a letter to California today, how would it get there? Be specific.

3. Hannah said she was only able to visit the river bank once a week, on Saturday? What do you think is the reason?

4. The showboat was a form of entertainment for Hannah's community. Using your local newspaper, locate pictures and words of entertainment for your community. On a separate sheet of paper, cut and paste the words and pictures to create a collage of your community entertainment.

5. What types of items do you think may have been stored in Mr. Evans' warehouse? Why?

6. Riverboat is a compound word. Locate compound words from your local newspaper. Cut and paste them below.

Hannah's Diary
Chapter 4

Name _____

1. Compare and contrast your academic strengths to the strengths of Hannah and Betty.

2. The Pony Express was a way for friends and family to communicate over long distances. In your local newspaper, locate words and pictures of ways we communicate today. Cut and paste them into a Communication Collage.

3. How would your life be different if postal service was not available?

4. Besides riding a horse, what other skills will Robert need in order to work for the Pony Express?

5. Robert's dad did not want him to be a Pony Express rider. Why do you think he felt that way?

6. What career path would you like to pursue? Search the Help Wanted ads for a job you would like to have someday. Write about why you'd like to have that particular job and what skills you'd need to do that job.

Hannah's Diary
Chapter 5

Name _____

1. Use details from the story to explain what the following words mean.

shawl _____

wharf _____

cargo _____

2. Describe the best thing you have ever seen. How did it make you feel?

3. Locate St. Joseph on a Missouri map. Once the showboat leaves St. Joseph, where should it stop? Name five other cities that would be good stopping point for the showboat traveling down the Missouri River. Don't forget the time period.

4. On a separate sheet of paper, create a newspaper advertisement promoting a showboat coming to St. Joseph.

5. What adjectives were used to describe the boat in this chapter?

In your newspaper, locate adjectives that could describe some type of boat. Cut and paste the words below.

Hannah's Diary
Chapter 6

Name _____

1. How did Hannah clean the mattresses? What funny thing happened while she was cleaning them?

2. What did Hannah want for Christmas? Why?

3. Use your local newspaper to create your Christmas or wish list. Find at least five words or pictures of items you'd like to receive as gifts. Cut and paste them on a separate sheet of paper labeled, "My Gifts List." Describe why you would like to receive each item.

4. Contrast Hannah's life to yours. Complete the chart below. Use specific details.

	Hannah's Life	Your Life
Transportation		
Communication		
Entertainment		
Chores		

5. Pretend you are Hannah. On a separate sheet of paper, write a friendly letter to your friend Betsy.

6. How much does Hannah have to pay to mail her letter to Betsy?_____ How much does it cost to mail a letter today? _____ Calculate the difference. _____
In 1860, most things were less expensive than today. Why was it so much more to mail a letter?

Hannah's Diary
Chapter 7

Name _____

1. How did Hannah feel when she was unable to find the sack with the five dollar coin? Why?

2. Why do you think the mail route to California was important to the people of St. Joseph?

3. Joseph Fry rode from St. Joseph, Missouri to Seneca, Kansas. Use a map scale to calculate the distance from St. Joseph to Seneca. _____
If Joseph Fry covered an average speed 12.5 miles per hour, including all stops, how many hours would it take for him to get to Seneca?

4. Use reference materials or safe search engines on the Internet to learn more about Joseph Fry. What characteristics made him a well qualified Pony Express rider?

5. If Hannah sent Betsy one letter every month, how much would she spend in one year? _____

6. Using today's date, calculate how long it has been since the first letter was sent on the Pony Express. _____

7. Write a news story describing the historical event that Hannah and her family witnessed. Remember to include who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Hannah's Diary
Chapter 8

Name _____

1. When the Pony Express made its first journey on April 3, 1860, it only went through **TWO** states, Missouri and California. How could this be possible?

Hint: Look at a 1960 United States map.

2. On a separate sheet of paper, create a Help Wanted ad for Pony Express riders. Make sure to include a weekly wage, working hours and qualifications.
3. What is a relay station? Use details from the story to explain your answer.
4. Robert and Hannah could both be described as having perseverance. Use details from the story to support this statement.

5. The people cheered loudly as the Pony Express rider arrived. Use your local newspaper to find pictures or headlines of situations where people in your community might cheer loudly. Discuss them with your classmates.
6. In your local newspaper, look for an example of someone in your community who has followed a dream. Cut and paste it on a separate sheet of paper, then write an acrostic poem describing the picture or article. Use the word **DREAM** as the vertical word of your poem.

Pony Express Research Questions

Directions: Use reference materials or safe search engines on the Internet to answer the following questions about the Pony Express.

1. Who were the founders of the Pony Express?

2. How long did Pony Express last?

3. What caused the Pony Express service to end?

4. What was the average speed of a Pony Express horse?

5. About how long was the trail from St. Joseph to Sacramento?

6. How much were the riders paid monthly?

7. Approximately how many Pony Express stations were there?

8. Name five of the stations.

Hannah's Diary Scavenger Hunt

Directions: Locate the following pictures or words. Cut and paste them on a separate sheet of paper. Make sure you label each item.

- A horse
- Type of communication
- Someone with a big dream
- A hard worker
- Something that could be found in 1860
- Something that is delivered
- A type of boat
- An office
- A river
- Something flashy and colorful
- A flag
- Type of entertainment
- A coin
- Someone who you think would make a good friend
- A job you'd like to have someday
- Something used for chores
- Something with feathers
- A gift you'd like to have
- A store
- An example of history being made