

## LANGUAGE DETECTIVE

### Talk About the Writer's Words

Work with a partner. Use the blue Vocabulary words in new sentences that tell about the photos. Write the sentences.

# Vocabulary in Context

1

## mishap

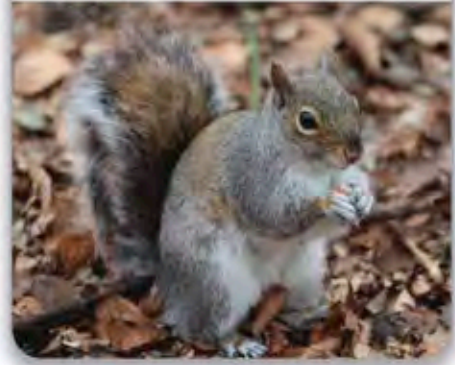
These hikers took a wrong turn by accident. They were lost due to the **mishap**.



2

## rustling

A **rustling** in nearby brush can worry you. Look for the sound's cause, and stay calm.



3

## lectured

This ranger **lectured**, or explained, about the importance of staying on the trail.



4

## beacon

A tall object in the distance can serve as a **beacon** to guide you to a familiar area.



- ▶ Study each **Context Card**.
- ▶ Use a dictionary or a glossary to help you pronounce each Vocabulary word.

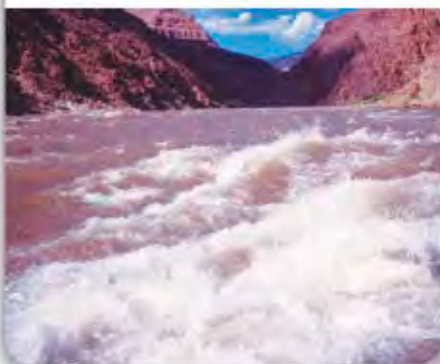
5 **torment**

This girl suffered **torment**, or distress, because she couldn't find her homework.



6 **surged**

After this river **surged**, or swelled, over its banks, hikers had to find a new trail.



7 **disadvantage**

Losing the trail was a **disadvantage**, or handicap, to finding camp before dark.



8 **balked**

This woman **balked**, or refused to move, after realizing she was lost.



9 **quaking**

You may start **quaking**, or trembling, when you're lost. Your body expresses fear that way.



10 **fared**

Once he was rescued, this boy slept and ate. He **fared**, or progressed, better after that.

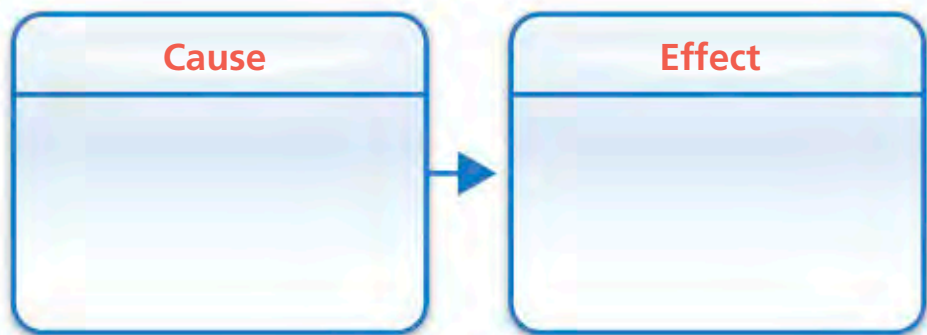




# Read and Comprehend

## ✓ TARGET SKILL

**Cause and Effect** As you read “Rachel’s Journal,” identify events that are related by **cause and effect**—one event leading to another. Causes might include natural events or the decisions that characters make. Look for more than one effect for each cause. Also look for how each cause and effect helps to build the plot and structure of the story. Use a graphic organizer like the one shown below to record these causes and effects.



## ✓ TARGET STRATEGY

**Analyze/Evaluate** As you read “Rachel’s Journal,” identify causes and their effects by **analyzing** the events in the story. Ask why they happen or how they influence other events. Then **evaluate** what you learn from understanding these relationships.

## PREVIEW THE TOPIC

### Pioneers

In American history, pioneers were people who settled in western parts of the country during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These pioneers traveled by wagon, moving their belongings and their livestock hundreds of miles over rugged terrain. When they finally arrived, they had to build their own homes and farms. Then they struggled to survive in a harsh environment. For many, however, achieving their dream of starting a new life was worth it.

In “Rachel’s Journal,” the narrator and her family are traveling a route known as the Oregon Trail in a wagon. Her journal tells of the many challenges that the group encounters.

#### Think Write Pair Share

Pioneers faced a difficult journey as they moved to their new home. What kinds of problems do you think you’d have if you had to move across the country as the pioneers did? Write a paragraph that answers this question. Share and discuss your paragraph with a partner.



# ANCHOR TEXT



## ✓ GENRE

**Historical fiction** is a story whose characters and events are set in a real period of history. As you read, look for:

- ▶ a setting that was a real time and place in the past
- ▶ details that show the story took place in the past
- ▶ realistic characters



### MEET THE AUTHOR

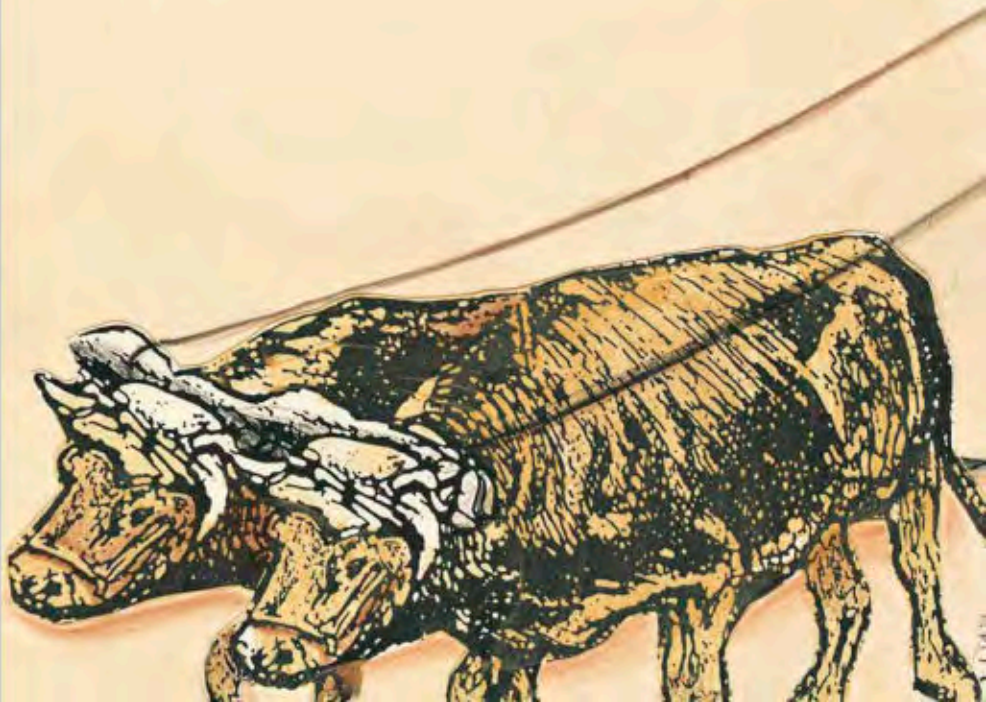
## Marissa Moss

Marissa Moss “always kept a notebook as a girl and loved to read those of others.” To try to make Rachel’s voice sound real, she relied on her own childhood memories and read “firsthand accounts written by pioneers at this time—mostly women and children.”

### MEET THE ILLUSTRATOR

## Megan Halsey

As a child, Megan Halsey took piano lessons, but rather than practice, she colored in the sheet music! To this day, she loves to color and cannot play the piano. As an adult, she took a children’s book illustration class. She knew right away that she wanted to be a children’s book illustrator. Since then, she has illustrated more than forty children’s books.

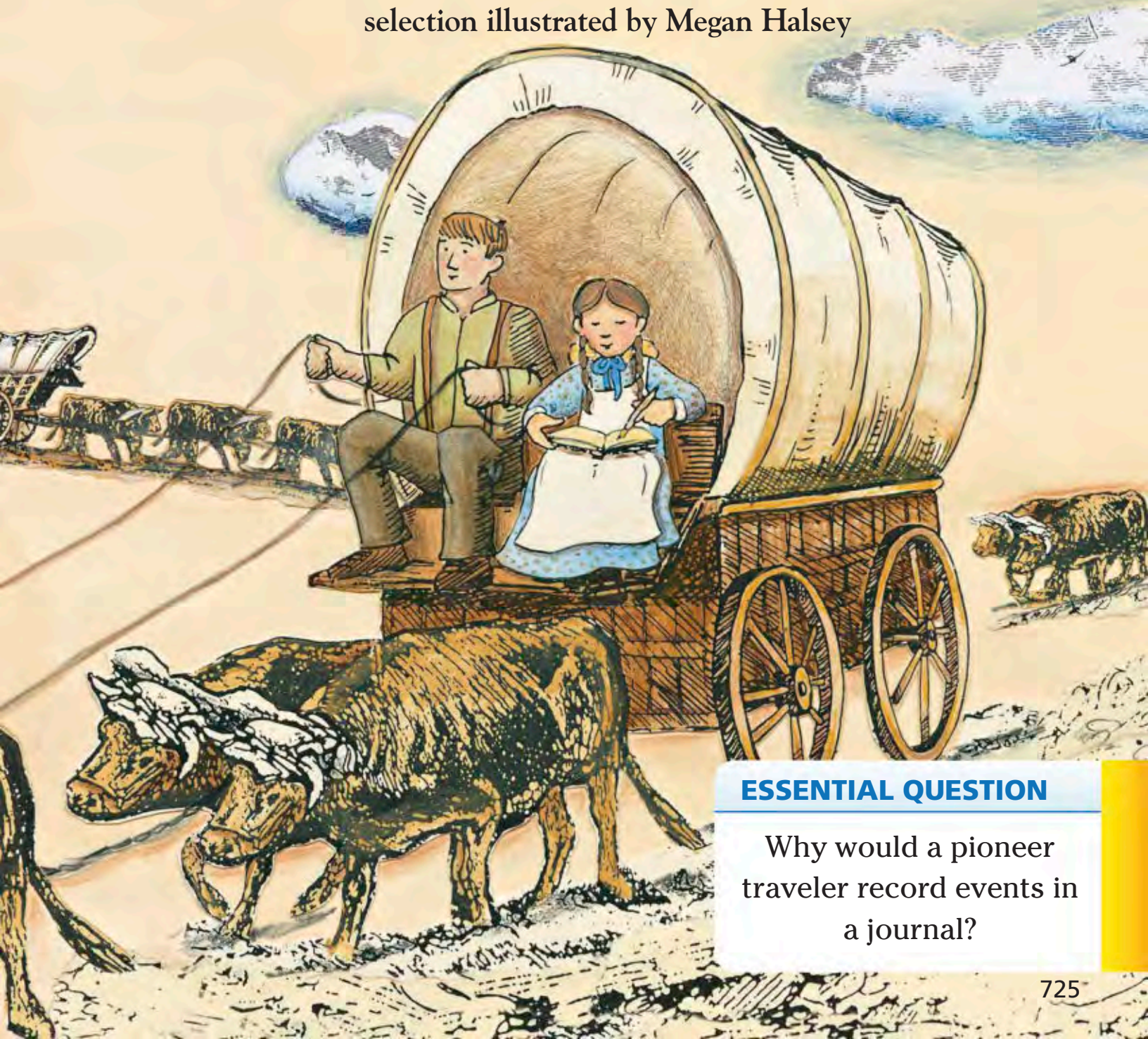


# Rachel's Journal

## THE STORY OF A PIONEER GIRL

by Marissa Moss

selection illustrated by Megan Halsey



### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Why would a pioneer traveler record events in a journal?

It has been two months since Rachel's family left Illinois in a wagon train bound for good farmland in California. During the long ride, Rachel spends time with her brothers Ben and Will, as well as Frank and Prudence, children from other families in the wagon train. She writes about their adventures in her journal.

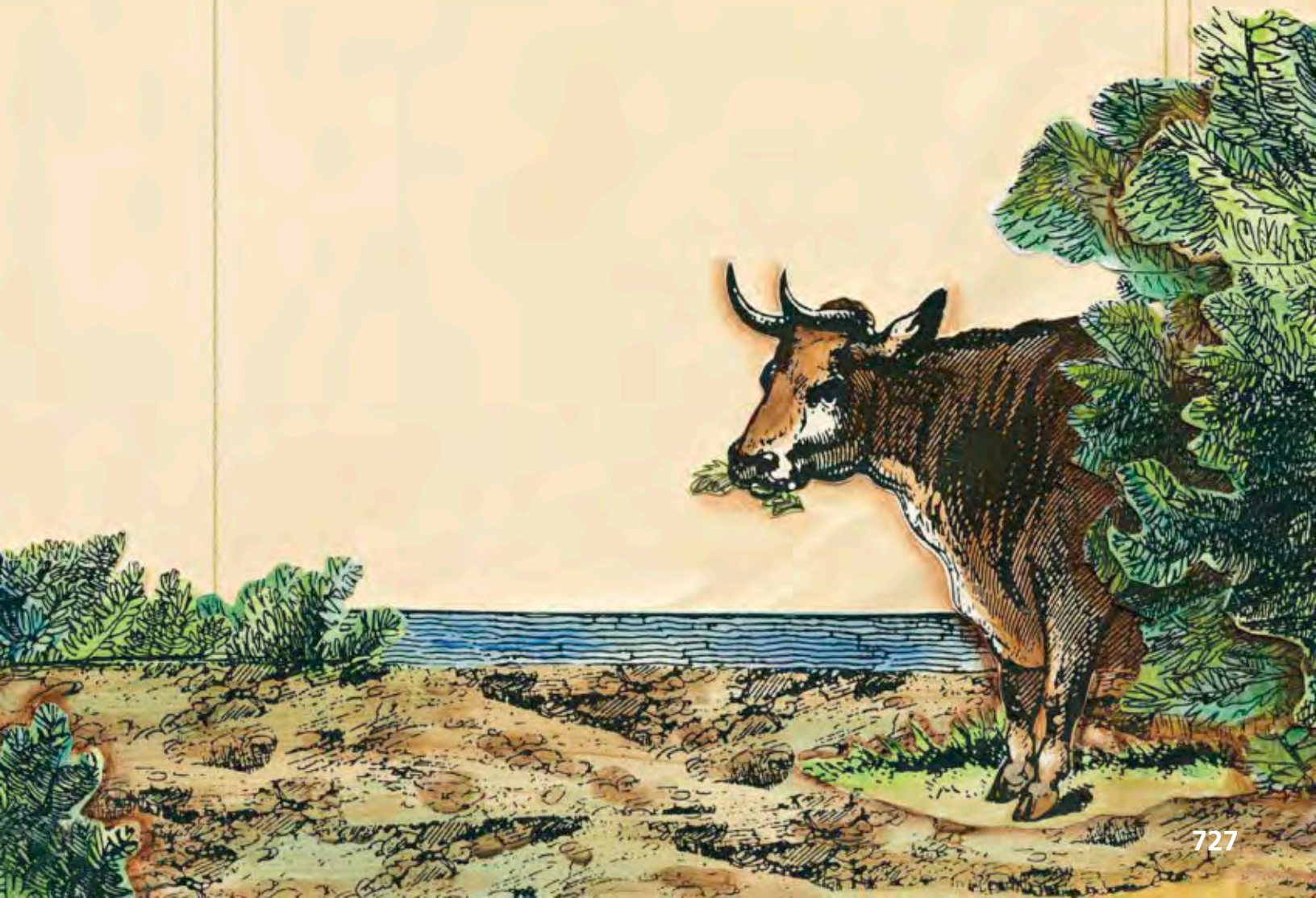
May 10, 1850

Pa says we are taking the Oregon Trail until it splits and we veer south for California. Now we are following the Platte River. The sight of the broad river and the bluffs is restful, but the dust kicked up by all the stock is not. Especially when our wagons are in the rear—then it is so thick, I can barely see past our own teams. But I found a way to escape the heat and dirt of the main road. All along the trail there are narrow cut-off paths. Pa says they were made and used by Indians and hunters. These cut-offs run diagonally to the road and are often by shady creeks, so they are pleasant to walk along. Since they always lead back to the trail, there is no need to fret about getting lost. The boys have to drive the stock, so they have no choice but to eat dust, but I take the younger children with me, and we have great fun, picking berries and wildflowers and wading in the creeks.



May 16, 1850

Today I had my first adventure. We had been walking on the cut-off for 2–3 hours, traveling upstream into a deep canyon. The trail was not only out of sight, but out of earshot as well. I liked feeling alone, but Emma fretted that we were lost and the twins were tired, whining that a jouncing wagon ride would be better than tramping on. I tried to cheer everyone by singing “Turkey in the Straw” when we heard a **rustling** in the bushes. Something much larger than a turkey—Indians! Frank pulled out his little knife, all fierceness, but I hushed him and went to look for myself. (All **quaking** inside, I admit, but I could not let them see that!) And what should I see when I parted the bushes with trembling hand? The moist snout of a very content ox, chomping on leaves. Somebody must have lost him. If it had been an Indian, Frank declared, he would have protected us. I hope we have no such need.





That was just the beginning of our adventure. When the cut-off reached the trail, there was no sign of our train, either ahead or behind. There was nothing for it but to continue on the cut-off in the hopes of coming out ahead of our wagons soon. On and on we walked. Frank and Emma never complained, nor did little Caroline, but those twins whined worse than the mosquitoes. Still we found no wagons. The sun set, the buffalo wolves started in to howl, and it was too dark to see the trail before us. I would have sat down in the darkness and cried, but I had to take care of the others. Then I recalled what Ben had said about looking for a high view point if you get lost, so I urged everyone up a hill before us. It was not very high, but we were rewarded with the sight of 3 campfires. Since our train is not large, we headed for the smallest one, going straight across country. We barged through brambles and slogged through creeks, but we always kept that light in view, like the **beacon** of a lighthouse.

At last I was greeted with the welcome sight of Prudence nibbling bacon. I could not help but embrace her, though she did not appreciate my smudged arms and dress. In fact, she was so startled by our abrupt appearance, she screamed as if we were ghosts or Indians.

Mrs. Arabella Sunshine, Mrs. Elias, and Mother were first joyous, then mad. In between hugging me and scrubbing my face, Mother scolded. Now I cannot take cut-offs after the noon break. That means swallowing dust in the hottest part of the day. At least we still have the mornings.



The bacon and coffee smelled wonderful!

May 23, 1850

Now we are not permitted ever to walk along the cut-offs! Not that we got lost today—something much more exciting happened. Once again we were out of sight of the train, singing as we strolled, when an Indian brave came riding straight at us. I was so amazed to see a true Indian, I forgot to be frightened. We all stood staring at him (though Frank once again reached for his knife—I hissed at him to leave it be, no sense asking for trouble). The twins hid behind my skirt, and the others huddled around me when the brave rode up to us and leapt off his pony.

You could have heard a pin drop! He stepped toward me and said something, then held his hand straight out. I did not know what else to do, but shake it, so I did. And that was exactly what he wanted! He offered his hand to each child. Even Frank shook it, grinning so broadly his mouth looked like he had swallowed an ear of corn whole.

The brave knew some English, and he clearly thought we were lost. He asked if I knew where our wagon was. I nodded yes. Satisfied that we were not in trouble, he got back on his pony, waved good-bye, and rode off. It was all over in two shakes of a lamb's tail. After all the horrible stories we had heard about Indians, we had a story of our own to tell and a pretty funny one at that. Only somehow when the adults heard of our meeting, they were not amused. Instead they **lectured** us on all the awful things that might have happened. And so the cut-offs are forbidden from now on.



#### ANALYZE THE TEXT

**Figurative Language** Authors sometimes use **hyperbole**, or exaggeration, to make a point or to describe something. For example, Rachel says, "You could have heard a pin drop." What does this tell you about how quiet it was when the brave approached the children?

My shoes are so caked with mud, they are more mud pie than footwear.



It's hard keeping this journal dry—I do my best..

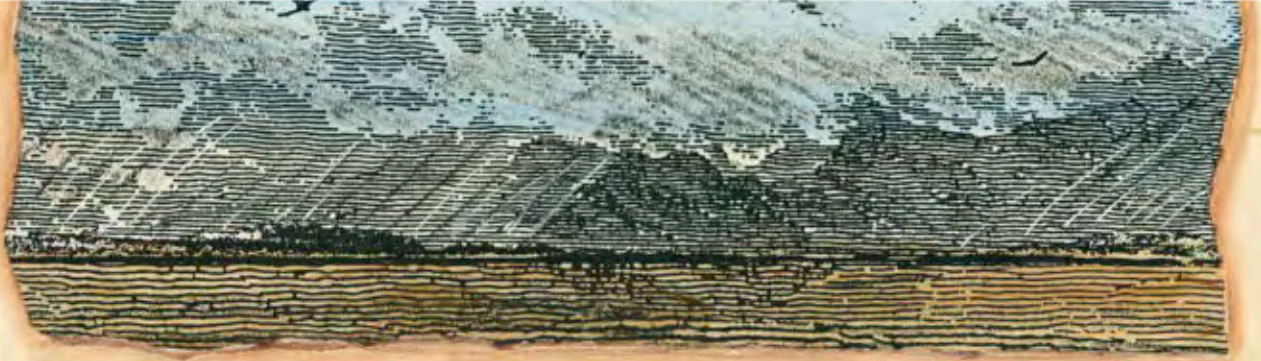
May 30, 1850

It has rained for days, which has the benefit of keeping down the dust but the disadvantage of turning the trail into an enormous puddle. Despite our cover claiming to be watertight, everything is soaked through. The Platte is swollen and wild. I am relieved we do not have to ford it. Pa says we will reach the government ferry tomorrow.



Sunbonnets are definitely not meant for rain, unless you find a sopping curtain before your face desirable—I do not!





The prairie is so low and the sky so close that in a storm you feel the clouds pressing down on you.

June 7, 1850

Yesterday was the first time I truly felt scared. Getting lost, howling wolves, Indians—nothing compares to the fury of this river! We arrived at the ferry only to discover that it had broken loose of its moorings when the rains started. Some men finally retrieved it, but it took so long that an enormous line of wagons waited ahead of us to take the ferry. The man said it would be 3 weeks before our turn came. Mr. Elias warned that we were already behind schedule and such a long delay would surely mean crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains in the snow. No one wants to suffer the fate of the Donner Party, frozen and starving in the mountains. Mr. Elias determined that we should take the wagons off their wheel beds and raft them over the river. The current was swift and the banks like quicksand, but there was no other way. Both Sunshine families **balked** at the danger and refused to go first. Mr. Elias offered to cross, but he has young children, so Pa suggested we go. Mother's face was drawn tight, but she nodded. Ben and Will stayed behind to drive the stock over, so Pa, Mother, and I each took a pole to make our way across. The waves were high and it was hard to keep from tipping. Twice I almost fell in. The second time I lost my pole and clung on to the wagon hoops, not much help to anyone after that. Somehow we landed. My knuckles were white from holding so tightly to the hoops, but Mother's face was even paler. What a relief to be on land again!

The worst part was trying to avoid the sandy islands in the middle of the broad river. I could not steer worth a bean.

#### ANALYZE THE TEXT

**Point of View** The author uses first-person point of view to tell this story. How does it affect the way the crossing of the river is described?



The others followed with no **mishap**. (And Frank declared that he was not scared, not a bit. I do not credit that!) Only the stock still had to be driven over. Ben and Will, along with Samuel, John, Daniel, and Jesse, rounded up all 115 head of cattle and drove them to the river, but they refused to go in. They had no idea of the dangers of the Sierras, but they could plainly see the dangers of the Platte. Three times the boys gathered the cattle together only to have them split and stampede at the water's edge. It was getting dark, and it looked like we would have to camp on opposite shores when Will decided he had stood enough, he would make those cattle cross. He rode next to Bo, the lead herd ox, and just as the stubborn animal reached the banks, Will leapt from his horse onto Bo's back, clung to his horns, and, kicking and screaming, drove that ox into the river. And it worked! Bo started swimming across and all the stock followed. Safe on the other side, Will jumped off Bo and looked back to see his own horse foundering in the water. His foreleg had gotten tangled up in the loose reins. Will rushed into the water to free his horse just as a clap of thunder split the sky open. Lightning flashed with an eerie brightness followed by pitch black and the deafening roll of thunder.

In the dark we could not see Will, but his horse clambered safely onto shore. When the next lightning flashed, Pa cried out that Will had made it to a sandbar in the river. Whether he was dead or alive, no one could say, and while the storm raged, no one dared swim out to rescue him.

#### ANALYZE THE TEXT

**Cause and Effect** There are several factors that cause Will to become stuck on the sandbar in the river. What are they?



That was a miserable and awful night! It was total confusion—thunder booming, oxen bellowing, children crying, men shouting, as light as day one minute, as dark as a cave the next. Add to that the **torment** of not knowing how poor Will **fared** and feeling utterly helpless to do anything for him. All we could do was huddle together, a pile of drenched human rags, as the men worked blindly to control the stock.

At dawn the storm quieted, and Pa rushed into the churning river and brought back Will's limp body. He was so pale and still, I thought sure he was dead. Pa started rubbing him down. When at last he opened his eyes, the whole company cheered. He was alive! I have never been so proud—nor so scared.



I never thought I would be so happy to see the sun rise.

June 15, 1850


We took some days' rest to wash everything and dry it out, to put the wagons back together and repair them, to coddle Will and return him to his usual good health. We are fortunate no one drowned in that crossing. There are several new graves of men who died that way, and we heard that in a wagon train near ours, a woman was killed by lightning. Will has always claimed to live a charmed life, and now I believe him.

June 20, 1850

A different kind of storm passed by us today—a herd of buffalo. It was as if the river had leapt out of its banks and taken solid form to chase us down. A thick cloud of dust **surg**ed toward us, then there was a tremendous noise, an earthly thunder. We could see their shaggy backs rising and falling like a great wave. Nothing could turn back such a force, so we hastily pulled the wagons close together while the boys drove the stock away—for once a cow or an ox is caught up in a buffalo stampede, it is gone for good, part of a new wild herd.

The buffalo hooves raised such a cloud of dust that though I tried to hold in my breath, my throat and tongue were coated with grit. I could taste them pounding past! The cloud was so big, it blotted out the sun like a buffalo eclipse.



The illustration depicts a bison running from left to right across a landscape. The bison is rendered in dark brown and black tones, with a thick, shaggy coat. Behind it, a massive, swirling cloud of dust or sand fills the sky, creating a sense of a violent storm. The dust is depicted with white and light blue horizontal and circular strokes, giving it a dynamic, whirling appearance. In the upper left, there are two smaller, more defined clouds of dust, one above the other, with a small black bird flying between them. The background is a plain, light beige color, suggesting a vast, open plain. The overall style is that of a classic children's book illustration, with a focus on texture and movement.

We cowered in the wagons and watched them come closer and closer. Mother tried to keep me back, but I wanted to see them as best I could. After all, if they plowed into us I would not be any safer in the middle of the wagon than in the front. So I poked my head out into the whirling dust storm. I could see their rolling eyes and flaring nostrils, but Will must have brought us some of his charmed luck, and the massive beasts thundered by and not through us. I have seen cattle stampede, but this was different—buffalo are so big and so wild. I wished I could run after them.





# Dig Deeper

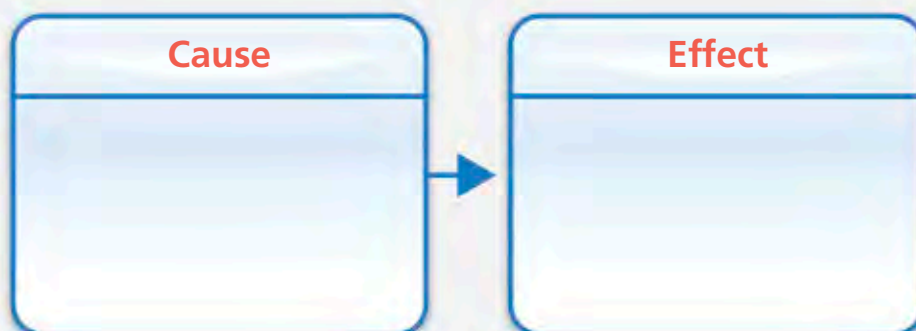
## Use Clues to Analyze the Text

Use these pages to learn about Cause and Effect, Figurative Language, and Point of View. Then read “Rachel’s Journal” again to apply what you learned.

### Cause and Effect

“Rachel’s Journal” describes how Rachel’s actions lead to adventure on the Oregon Trail. In historical fiction, as in real life, events are often related as causes and effects. A **cause** is an event that makes something else happen. An **effect** is something that happens because of an earlier event. Some causes lead to more than one effect. Some effects have more than one cause.

Recognizing causes and their effects can help readers see connections between events, better understand characters and themes, and even predict what might happen next. Look back at the scene on page 726. The dust from the trail causes Rachel to travel on the cut-off path. This effect—traveling on the cut-off—then causes other events to happen, shaping the story’s structure.



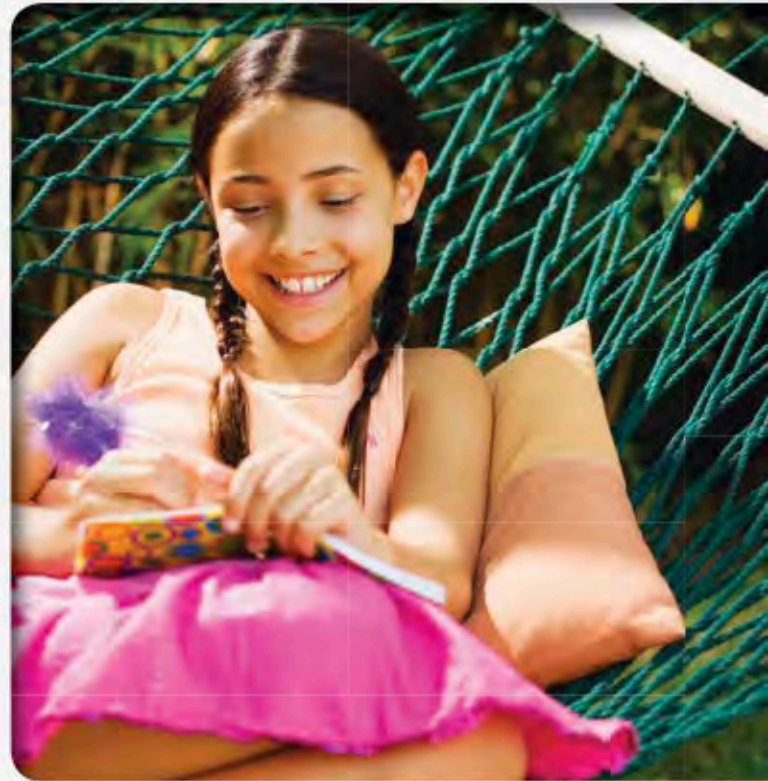
## Figurative Language

The author of “Rachel’s Journal” uses **figurative language**—words and phrases that go beyond their literal meanings—to create vivid descriptions. **Hyperbole**, an exaggeration used for dramatic effect, is one kind of figurative language. Another kind is **simile**, a comparison between two unlike things that uses *like* or *as*: “Her laughter was as shrill as a siren.” A third is **metaphor**, a comparison that says one thing is another: “His smile was a ray of sunshine.”



## Point of View

The **point of view** of this story is first-person. Pronouns such as *I*, *me*, *my*, and *we* signal this point of view. Rachel is telling the story through her journal, in which she records what happens to her as well as her thoughts and feelings. This point of view means that readers see the action and other characters through Rachel’s eyes.



# Your Turn

## RETURN TO THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION

### Turn and Talk

Review the selection to prepare to discuss this question: *Why would a pioneer traveler record events in a journal? As you discuss this question in a small group, build on each other's responses and then summarize your group's key points.*



### Classroom Conversation

Continue your discussion of “Rachel’s Journal” by explaining your answers to these questions:

- 1 What text evidence supports the idea that Rachel is a good narrator for this story?
- 2 What events would you write about if you kept a journal?
- 3 How does the setting of the story affect what happens and how characters react to events?

## TALK ABOUT ILLUSTRATIONS

**Analyze Drawings** With a partner, look closely at the illustrations in “Rachel’s Journal.” Then discuss these questions: *How do the illustrations help you better understand the story’s setting and events? What tone, or attitude toward the characters and events, do the pictures convey? What do you learn about Rachel through the illustrations?*



## Performance Task

### WRITE ABOUT READING



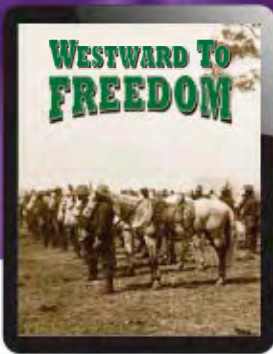
**Response** Rachel’s fictional journey takes place more than a hundred years in the past. Her experiences and surroundings were quite different from our modern ones, and yet her journal entries are easy to relate to. What might modern readers have in common with Rachel? Write a paragraph about whether Rachel is similar to modern girls her age. Use details and other evidence from the text to support your opinion.



### Writing Tip

Before writing your paragraph, identify your reasons and find examples to support each one. Use transitions to show how the reasons and their supporting details are connected.

# INFORMATIONAL TEXT



## ✓ GENRE

**Informational text**, such as this social studies text, gives facts and details about a topic or time period in history.

## ✓ TEXT FOCUS

A **timeline** identifies the sequence of important events in a period of history or other span of time.

# WESTWARD to FREEDOM

by Tracy Moncure

To many African Americans in the 1800s, the West meant freedom, independence, adventure, and the good life. For those who wanted to leave behind memories of slavery, the West offered a chance to start a new life. The trip west was not easy. Travelers risked danger and mishap. Every rustling of the brush might signal a threat. After the torment of slavery, however, African American pioneers were up to the challenge.

## MILESTONES IN THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

### 1835

**1848** Southwest and California are acquired.

### 1850

**1849-1852** Up to 4,000 African Americans join the California Gold Rush.



## From Mountain Men to Settlers

African Americans were part of United States westward expansion from the start. York, William Clark's "manservant," was a valued member of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1803. Mountain men such as James Beckwourth (1798–1866) were early settlers of the Wild West. Some historians believe that as many as one in four cowboys was African American.

Other African Americans built homes, started cities, or upheld the law. In 1889, the Indian Territory opened to settlers. African Americans surged over the tall grasses of the Oklahoma plains. They built more all-black towns in Oklahoma than in all the rest of the country. Bass Reeves (1838–1910) was a U.S. Marshal in the Indian Territory. People thought of him as being tough but fair. Outlaws must have started quaking in their boots when they heard his name.



**1863** Emancipation Proclamation frees slaves in the Confederacy.

**1877–1879** Benjamin "Pap" Singleton helps African Americans settle in Kansas.

**1889** African Americans join the Indian Territory land rush.

**1865**

**1861–1865** Civil War

**1880**

**1868** Fourteenth Amendment grants citizenship to African Americans.

**1895**



## Helping Others on the Path to Freedom

Many African American pioneers became successful in business. They often used their wealth to help others find better lives.

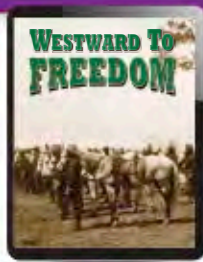
**Biddy Mason** (1818–1891) traveled with her owner to California in 1847. Her owner balked at giving her freedom. So a judge lectured him, saying that California was a free territory. Later, she owned land in Los Angeles. She became the city's richest citizen. She used her wealth to help those in need.



**Clara Brown** (1800–1885) also began her life enslaved. After some time, she overcame this disadvantage and fared well. She gained freedom and became the first African American woman to settle in the Colorado gold fields. She started a laundry business. She invested in mines, too. A beacon of hope to freed slaves, she helped many people move to the West.



A regiment of African American cavalry, known as "Buffalo Soldiers," stand next to their horses.



# Compare Texts

## TEXT TO TEXT

**Compare Texts About Pioneers** Many people traveled west in the 1800s. Their reasons for going and their experiences were alike in some ways and different in others. With a partner, complete a Venn diagram comparing the characters in “Rachel’s Journal” with the African American pioneers in “Westward to Freedom.” Examine why they went west, what happened to them, and what personal qualities helped them survive.



## TEXT TO SELF

**Evaluate Figurative Language** The author of “Rachel’s Journal” uses hyperbole, or exaggeration, to help describe the children’s encounter with an Indian brave. With a partner, discuss how this and other uses of figurative language in the text help you better understand Rachel’s experiences or feelings. Make a list of the figurative language you find, and interpret the meaning of each.

## TEXT TO WORLD

**Compare Texts About African American History** Review “Westward to Freedom” and “Pea Island’s Forgotten Heroes” (Lesson 9). Look for several main ideas in each selection and the details that support each idea. Then, in a small group, compare and contrast the two selections. Focus on the view of African Americans in history that each selection conveys. As you discuss, provide quotes and other evidence from both texts as support.

