

An infectious disease caught by many emigrants on the Oregon Trail. It spread rapidly because of unsanitary water. There was no cure and most died within a day.

A person who is leaving one country to enter another. Pioneers in the early years of the Oregon Trail were called emigrants because most were leaving the United States to enter the unorganized "Oregon Country." Later, Oregon became a part of the U.S., but the word "emigrant" stuck.

An early settler in a new territory. All the people on the Oregon Trail were pioneers, but there were many other pioneers who did not go to Oregon.

Belief that the United States had an innate right to settle the entire West. Most Americans believed the British, the Mexicans and the Indians should be driven out because the United States had the real 'right' to expand to the west.

To cross a river on foot or horseback. Often the pioneers forded streams or small rivers. However, many rivers were too deep to ford, so they floated their wagons across or hired a ferry. On rare occasions a toll bridge was available.

Worker who shapes heated iron by pounding it with a hammer. Blacksmiths were common on the Oregon Trail because the iron rims of the wagon wheels were often in need of repair.

Term used to describe the part of the United States that lies beyond the Mississippi River.

A gap in a mountain range. Most passes are narrow gorges, but South Pass on the Oregon Trail was a large 'saddle' in the mountains--many miles wide.

Refers to a large territory that was originally not a part of any other nation. Oregon Country encompassed all of what is now Oregon, Washington, and Idaho; much of British Columbia; and small parts of Wyoming and Montana. Later, Oregon Country was jointly held by Britain and the U.S.; eventually it became a part of the United States.