



Lesson: The Concord Coach

(To follow Amplify CKLA 2, Knowledge 7: Westward Expansion, Lesson 7: The Pony Express)

At a Glance

In this lesson, students rotate through stations to learn about the experience of traveling on the Concord coach, a 19th-century transportation innovation from New Hampshire.

Primary Focus Objectives

- Students will analyze and describe historic images.
- Students will use data about stagecoach fares to calculate how much to save for a trip west.
- Students will plan and perform skits about traveling on a Concord coach.

Formative Assessment

- "Caption Match"
- "Stagecoach Saving and Spending"
- Skit

Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.2

Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.2

Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text.

Materials

- Image Set: The Concord Coach
- Vocabulary Cards: stagecoach, thoroughbraces
- "Caption Match" worksheet
- Reading Response: Stagecoach Travel
- "Stagecoach Saving and Spending" game materials
- Yardsticks, tape measures, masking tape
- Skit planner

Time Needed

Two 30-40 minute class sessions

Learning Activity

1. **Analyze the images.** Project each item in the image set or provide copies of the image set to small groups. Give students time to share what they observe in each image and then read the caption material for each, then read the caption information. Share the Vocabulary Cards. Complete the "Caption Match" activity. *(15 minutes)*
2. **Complete reading response.** Before students do the reading response, read aloud the statements from stagecoach passengers. Support students as they read the selection and answer the questions. *(15 minutes)*
3. **Play the game.** Discuss buying tickets and trip planning as a whole group. Distribute the "Stagecoach Saving and Spending" game materials to students and support them as they play. *(15 minutes)*



4. **Plot the dimensions.** Where space in the classroom allows, guide students to use yardsticks or tape measures and masking tape to plot the dimensions of a Concord coach on the floor. *(10 minutes)*
5. **Write and perform skits.** Distribute the skit planner to groups of students and support them as they plan and practice short skits about a stagecoach journey. Give time for each group to perform their skit, using the outline of the Concord coach as a stage. *(30 minutes)*



Educator Rationale and Answer Guide

Connection to Amplify

In this lesson, students extend their growing knowledge of the period of western expansion by investigating the Concord coach, an innovative stagecoach developed in New Hampshire by wagonmakers Lewis Downing and J. Stephens Abbot. Students apply comprehension and writing skills, and develop a concept of saving and spending, through a series of activities: analyzing historic images, completing a reading response, and playing a math game. These activities can be set up as stations for students to rotate through. The lesson concludes with students applying what they have learned to the creation and performance of brief skits about a stagecoach journey.

Analyze the images

Prepare for this step by copying one "Caption Match" page for each student. Pre-cut or direct students to cut out each strip. This image set introduces students to what Concord coaches looked like, their popularity, and the design feature that made them such an important innovation. Begin by just looking at the images and encourage students to share what they observe. Then, read the captions attached to the images. Display and discuss the Vocabulary Card defining thoroughbraces, the innovation that made the Concord coach an improved model of stagecoach, to reinforce the meaning of that new word. Distribute the prepared "Caption Match" slips or pages and read each caption. Show the images again, one at a time, and ask the students to hold up the caption slip they think best describes the image.

Complete the reading response

The passage on this response page is adapted from Moose on the Loose, Unit 7: Building a State, [Learn It! "A Transportation Network."](#) It also includes some quotations from people who actually rode on Concord coaches. In addition to assessing their reading comprehension, the material on this page can be used to help groups later in the lesson as they develop their skits.

Answers:

1. Image on the left is a stagecoach;
2. Stagecoaches were used to travel long distances and deliver mail and goods before railroads and cars;
3. Stagecoaches carried mail, supplies, and people locally and across the country;
4. Abbot and Downing used straps of leather called thoroughbraces to help the cabin sway.

Wording of answers will vary.

Play the game

This game uses the luck of rolling the die, combined with addition and subtraction skills, to guide students through the experience of saving money for a stagecoach trip. A deck of "Spend or Save?" cards gives students experiences where they need to spend some of the money they have saved or earn money to put toward their tickets. By the end of the five rounds, students will see who has enough money to buy their tickets for the ride. Consider providing students with play money to support their paper calculations.



After the game, discuss with students what makes it easy or difficult to save for something they want to do. Everyday life has situations where money is needed for spending, whether for food, clothing, shelter, or another need or want. Discuss why a journey within the state would be less expensive than a journey outside of the state. Guide students to understand that longer journeys put more wear and tear on the wagons, required more teams of horses and drivers to take turns for the different "stages" of a trip, and required overnight stays at taverns or inns.

Plot the dimensions

This activity and the skit activity are adapted from an extension activity that accompanies the Moose on the Loose Virtual Field Trip, "[The Concord Coach](#)." For this exercise, use the dimensions of the "Kearsarge" model of Concord coach: 78 inches wide and 152 inches long. Draw a large rectangle on a whiteboard or chart paper and label it with those dimensions. Explain to students that this basic shape will give them a sense of the size of a Concord coach. Then, provide students with masking tape, rulers or yardsticks, or tape measures and give them space to mark out the rectangle in its actual size on the floor. Help them work together to calculate and lay out the sides of the rectangle using the tape. After this is completed, students may enjoy testing how many people can fit inside the rectangle. Talk about how many passengers might be too many for comfort. Tell students that this particular model had room for nine passengers inside and needed four horses to pull it. But, remind them that some people bought a cheaper seat on top of the stagecoach.

Plan and perform skits

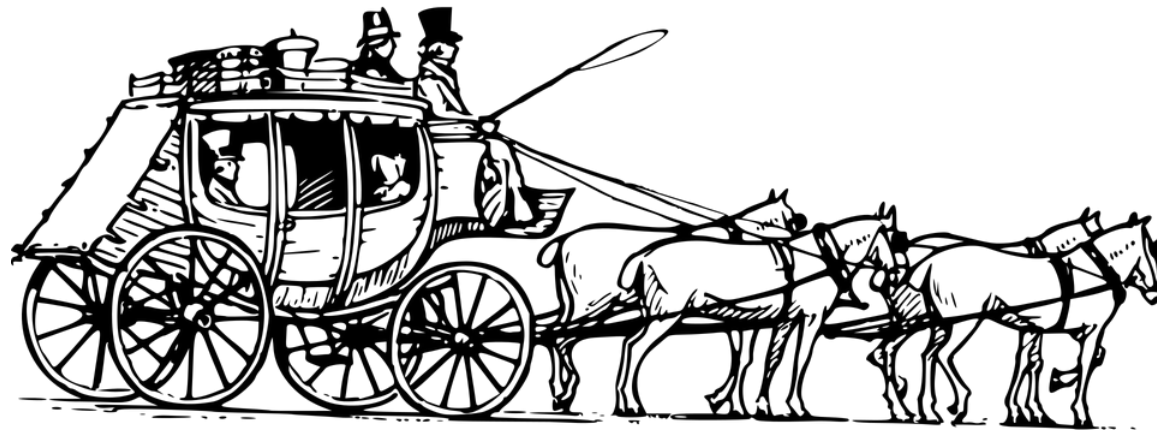
Divide students into small groups as appropriate for your class. Provide each group with enough skit templates for each student. Preview the template as a whole group and then give the groups time to make their plans, assign parts, and practice their skits. Each student should fill out the template. Tell students they will use the outline of the Concord coach on the floor as their stage. Encourage students to use classroom items as props as necessary. Remind students that they may refer back to the image set, the reading response, and the game cards to get inspiration for the plot of their skits.



STAGECOACH

Definition: An enclosed horse-drawn vehicle used to carry people and mail on a regular route

How to use it: The family used the **stagecoach** to travel to see their relatives, who lived 30 miles away.

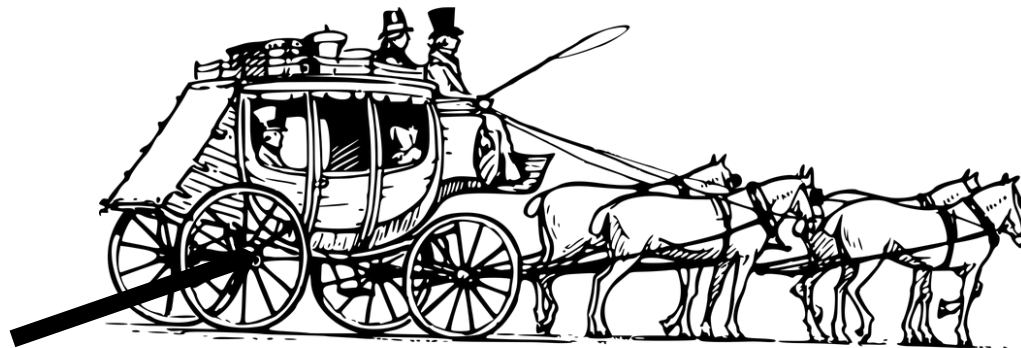




THOROUGHBRACES

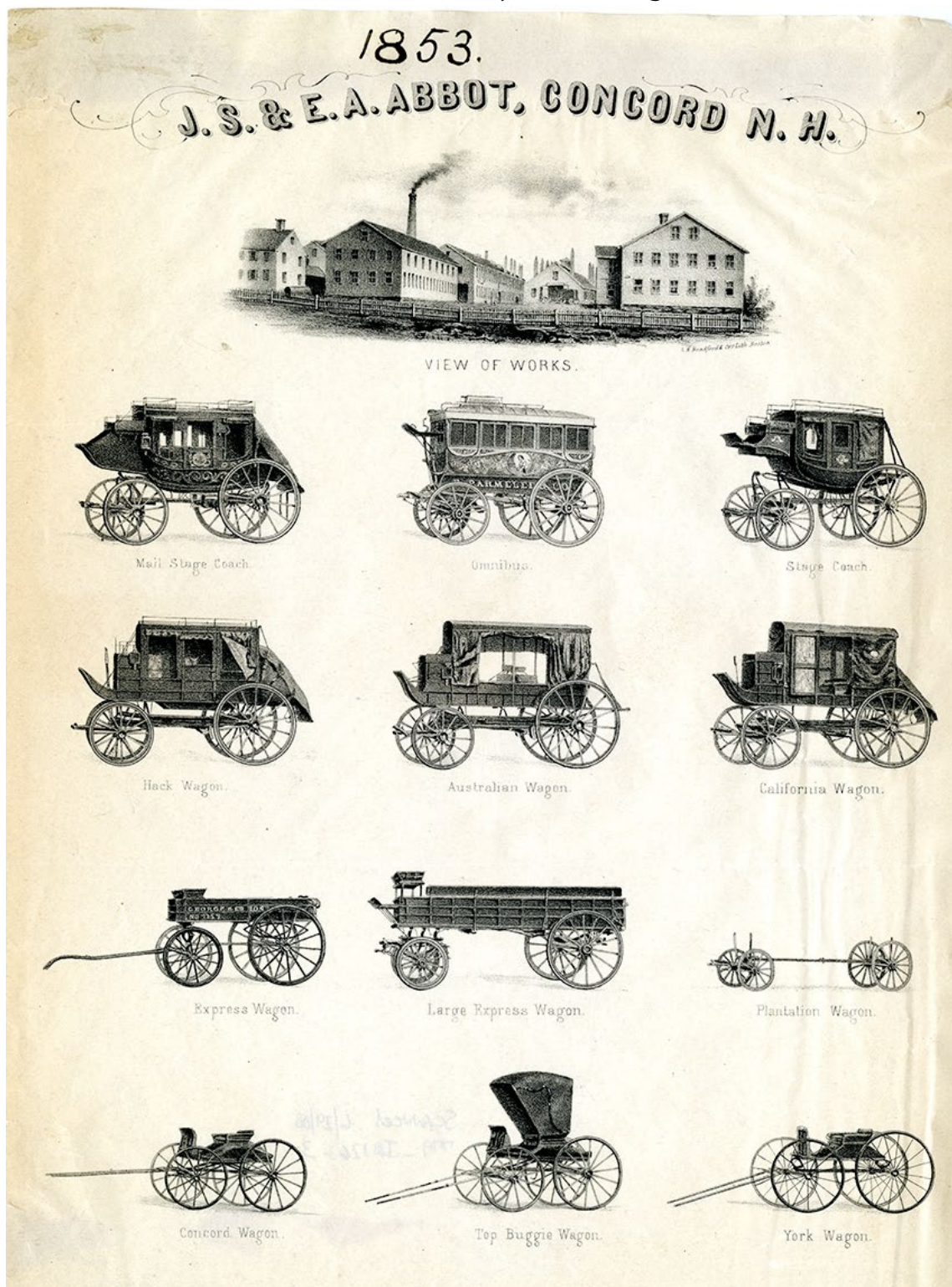
Definition: Thick leather straps that held up the cabin of a Concord coach

How to use it: The **thoroughbraces** allowed the stagecoach cabin to sway side to side, instead of bumping up and down, as the wheels traveled over rough and rocky roads.





Advertisement for Carriages



This advertisement for the Abbot Company from 1853 shows all the different vehicles the company manufactured, including the Concord coach.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



The Pemigewasset Coach



This painting shows a Concord coach heading off on a journey. A stagecoach is a large horse-drawn carriage that carries many people. The Concord coach is a specific type of stagecoach. It was designed by two men in New Hampshire, Lewis Downing and Stephen Abbot. They designed their coach so that the cab, where passengers rode, swung gently back and forth instead of bouncing up and down on the rough roads. Concord coaches were manufactured in Concord, New Hampshire, and became the most popular stagecoaches in the world.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Thoroughbraces



Thoroughbraces made Concord coaches different from all the other coaches and wagons in the world. They were leather strips that were fastened together to make a piece three inches thick. The body of the coach sat on top of the thoroughbraces, so that when it was traveling on the bumpy roads, the coach swayed back and forth instead of bouncing up and down on springs. It made the ride much more comfortable—although we would find it pretty uncomfortable compared to a car!

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Lewis Downing and Sons Factory



J. Stephens Abbot and Lewis Downing worked together and separately on and off from the 1820s to the 1860s. When this photograph was made, they each had their own company. The Lewis Downing and Sons factory was located on North Main Street in Concord. When Downing retired in 1865, his sons joined back with Abbot and his son.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Shipment of 30 Concord Coaches



People and businesses in New England were not the customers to buy Concord coaches. By the 1850s, the company was shipping coaches to every state in the country as well as Mexico, South America, South Africa, and Australia. In 1868, the Wells Fargo Company ordered 30 coaches to be delivered to its office in Nebraska. It took 15 rail cars to fit all of them! Today we know Wells Fargo as a bank, but back then it delivered mail and packages. The company used the coaches to make their deliveries.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



The Concord Coach



This Concord coach delivered mail and passengers in Massachusetts. Later it was displayed in the train station in Concord. In 1957, the railroad company donated it to the New Hampshire Historical Society.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Caption Match

1. These thick leather straps are called thoroughbraces. They were placed under the coach's cabin. As the stagecoach moved, the straps made the cabin sway from side to side instead of bumping up and down. This made the ride more comfortable for passengers.
2. Long ago, people used wagons to transport people, animals, and all kinds of goods. There was a style of wagon for almost every need. A stagecoach was just one type of wagon.
3. The arrival and departure of a stagecoach were exciting times. Stagecoaches carried people and mail over long distances. The arrival of a stagecoach meant you might receive a package or letter. The departure of a stagecoach meant a new adventure had begun.
4. There are just a few Concord coaches left today. This one is on display at the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord, New Hampshire. If you look closely, you can see an important symbol of New Hampshire painted on the door.
5. Concord coaches were delivered to towns and cities all over the world. These coaches are being delivered by train so a company can use them to deliver goods and mail in the western territories of the United States.
6. Concord coaches were made in Concord, New Hampshire. This photograph from 1860 shows the entrance to the factory on North Main Street. Look carefully at the clothing the people are wearing. Look at the road. What about those things tells you this photograph is from long ago?



Reading Response: Stagecoaches

Read the passage. Then, answer the questions on the next page.

Before we had railroads, cars, and planes to make long trips, people used carriages for travel and to transport goods. Long ago, not everyone had their own horse and carriage to make long trips. So, many people bought tickets to ride on stagecoaches.

A **stagecoach** is a large carriage drawn by four to six horses. A stagecoach made stops to pick up and drop off passengers and make deliveries. The distance between these stops was called a stage.

Stagecoaches could hold many people. Some of the biggest stagecoaches could carry up to 16 people. Some passengers rode inside the stagecoach. Some passengers rode on the top of the stagecoach!

Stagecoaches also carried mail. The United States Postal Service hired stagecoach lines to carry mail over short and long distances. Stagecoaches connected people living on the East Coast to people out west by carrying messages and goods.

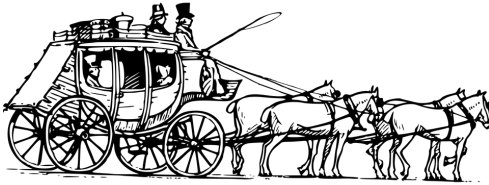
Travel by stagecoach was crowded and uncomfortable. Roads used to be very bumpy. Two men in New Hampshire named Lewis Downing and Stephen Abbot came up with an idea to make riding in a stagecoach more comfortable.

Abbot and Downing used thick leather straps called **thoroughbraces** to make the cabin of the stagecoach sway instead of bumping up and down. They opened a business in Concord, New Hampshire, called the Abbot-Downing Company. Their stagecoaches became known as Concord coaches. This type of stagecoach became the most popular stagecoach in the world!



Reading Response: Stagecoaches

1. Circle the image that shows a stagecoach.



2. Why did people use stagecoaches?

3. How did stagecoaches connect people in the eastern and western United States?

4. What did Abbot and Downing invent to make stagecoach travel more comfortable? How did it work?



Stagecoach Saving and Spending

Materials needed: One Mason's Stagecoach Line chart, one die, deck of "Save or Spend?" cards, one game board for each player, and one pencil for each player.

Directions:

Each player begins by doing these steps to prepare their game card.

1. Roll **one** die. Use that number to find your stagecoach journey destination on the chart. Find out how much one fare (ticket) to that destination costs.
2. Then roll one die to find out how many tickets you need to buy.
3. Add the fare for your journey that many times to find out how much you will need to save by the end of the game. For example, if the fare is \$5.00 and you roll a 3, add $5 + 5 + 5 = 15$. You need to save \$15 for your tickets. Fill in your game card with this information.
4. Roll the dice again. Add the digits together. This is your "Money in the Bank."

Now the game begins! Each player **takes a turn** rolling the dice.

5. On your turn, if you roll a 1 or 2, congratulations! You did some extra saving! Add that number to your "Money in the Bank." If you roll a 3, 4, 5, or 6, draw a card. Read the card aloud and follow the directions to either add to (save) or subtract from (spend) your "Money in the Bank." Write your new total in the "Money in the Bank" column.
6. Repeat step 5 **four** more times until five rounds are completed. Fill in each row on your game card to show the spending or saving you did for each round.
7. At the end of five rounds, compare with other players to see who has saved enough, more than enough, or not enough for their tickets.



Stagecoach Saving and Spending: Game Board

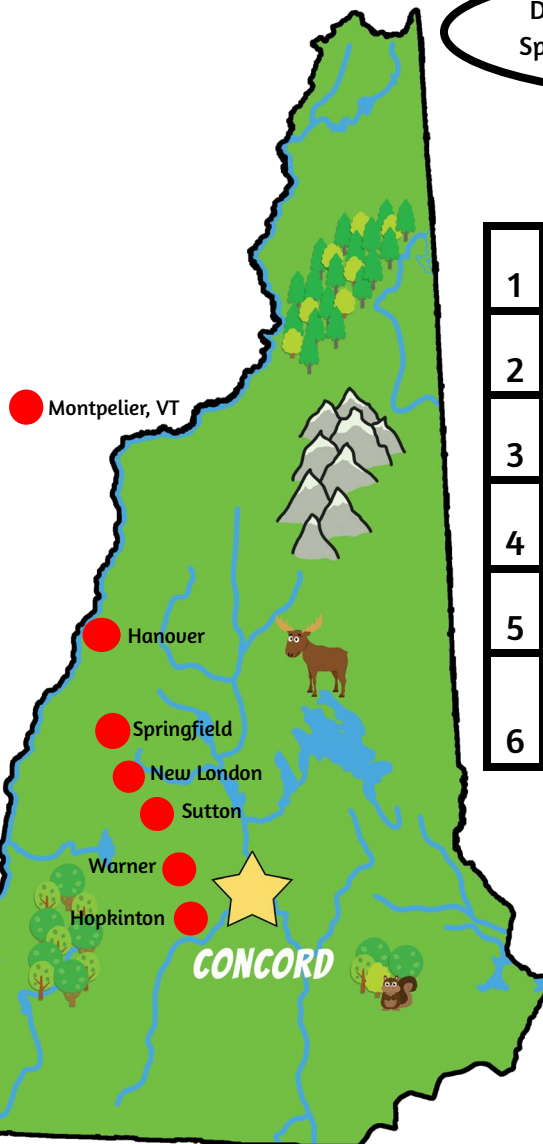
My destination:	Cost of one fare:	Number of tickets:	Total I need to have saved in the bank:

			Starting Amount	Money in the Bank
	Number rolled	How much do you save or spend?	Write the number sentence.	Write your new total.
Round 1				
Round 2				
Round 3				
Round 4				
Round 5				



MASON'S STAGECOACH LINE

Daily service from Concord to Hanover.
Special service Fridays to Montpelier, VT.



	Destination	Fare
1	Hopkinton	\$0.40
2	Warner	\$0.50
3	New London	\$1.00
4	Sutton	\$1.25
5	Hanover	\$1.50
6	Montpelier, Vermont	\$2.00

- No refunds
- Weather and road conditions may cause delays
- Driver will determine length of stop
- Mail delivered at each stop

Late arrivals may be required to ride on top of coach!



“Save or Spend?” Cards

Print on cardstock and cut along dotted lines.

Save You sell two extra bushels of wheat. You earn \$2.00.	Spend Your oldest child needs new shoes. Spend \$1.50.	Spend A winter storm knocks a tree onto your barn. Pay a carpenter \$1.00 to make repairs.
Save You sold 10 pounds of cheese at the market this week. You earn \$0.50.	Save You can wear your gloves for another year. You save \$0.70.	Spend You buy your mother a silk parasol for her birthday. Spend \$1.00.
Save You have leftover sugar from last week's baking. You save \$0.20.	Save You are promoted at the paper factory. You earn \$1.50.	Save Your cow has two calves. You sell one for \$2.50.
Spend You need to buy a barrel of flour. You spend \$3.00.	Spend You buy five pounds of coffee for \$0.60	Spend You need two new lanterns. Spend \$2.00.



Save The extra daylight means you burned less kerosene in your lamps. Save \$0.30.	Save Your apple trees did well this season. You sell the extra bushel and earn \$3.00.	Save You made a set of chairs and sell them to your neighbor. You earn \$5.00.
Spend You buy eight pounds of butter. You spend \$1.20.	Spend You visit the doctor. Spend \$1.00.	Spend You buy seven yards of calico cloth to make a new dress. You spend \$0.70.
Spend You need extra socks. You buy three pairs for \$1.00.	Save You made your own soap this year. You save \$0.50.	Save Your shovel is still in good shape for your garden. You save \$0.90.



Plan a Stagecoach Skit

Where is your stagecoach going?	Who and what is on your stagecoach?	
	Character or item	Person or prop
What is the problem?	How is the problem solved?	