A ride on the Blue Goose

Eastern Kentucky Railway | Travel, school, and source checking

Grades 4-8 | Adaptable for families | **45 minutes** | No model or internet needed

THE BIG QUESTION

How can a small passenger vehicle connect everyday life across several communities?

A PLACE AND A QUESTION

Railway history includes daily journeys as well as industrial freight. The Blue Goose gives us a way to study community connections, school travel, and the reliability of labels.

STUDENTS WILL

Identify a power source and a documented use; calculate a hypothetical fare total; read a schematic without treating it as a scale map; investigate conflicting photograph captions.

PREPARE

Within this lesson, print page 2 (picture study) and page 3 (worksheet) for learners. Keep pages 1 and 4 for the teacher. Supply pencils. Use the numbered cartoons during the reading step; captions distinguish a process illustration from a local fact.

TEACH IT IN FOUR STEPS

Start (5 minutes). Ask what learners would want to know before planning a journey.
Read (10 minutes). Read the student box and inspect the selected-place diagram.
Work (20 minutes). Complete the fare problem and evidence questions. Keep facts, calculated examples, and unknown information separate.
Discuss (10 minutes). Explain why a familiar nickname does not authenticate a photograph.

ADAPT AND EXTEND

Younger learners can use repeated addition for the fare problem. Older learners can list the records needed to compare a historical fare with wages or prices of the same period. Do not assume historical dollars equal today's buying power.

CLOSE THE LESSON

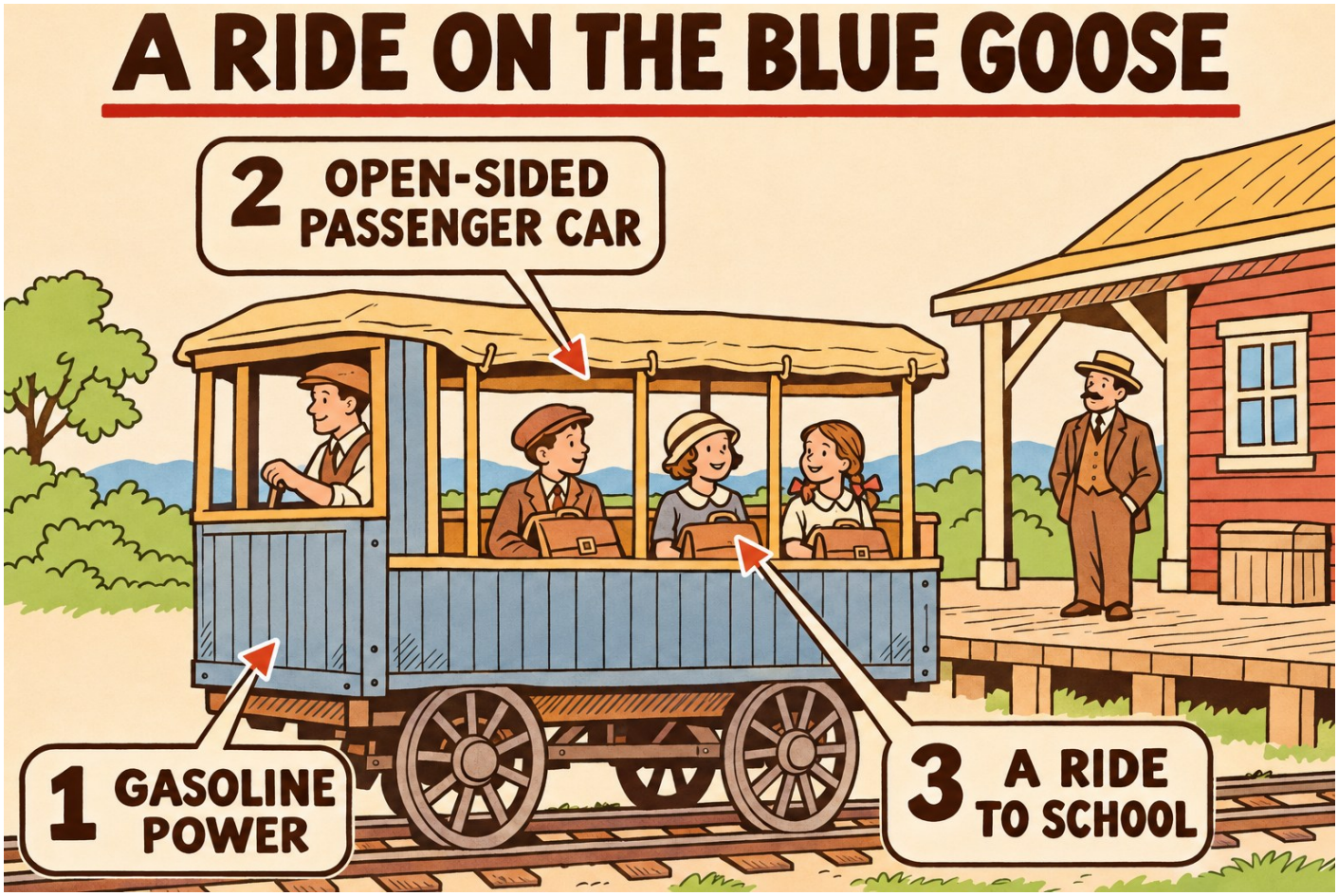
Ask each learner to name one thing a historical marker tells us and one thing a timetable or dated photograph could add.

Free to copy for classroom, community, and home learning. Print on US Letter at 100%. Lesson timing is a planning estimate. These are classroom activities; no site visit or machinery demonstration is required.

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Look closely. Follow the numbered labels, then talk through the questions below.



The gasoline-powered Blue Goose connected communities with Grayson, including pupils going to school. Its colors, vehicle details, and depot are illustrative. This is not a measured replica or a reconstruction of a particular day.

TALK ABOUT THE PICTURE

1. Find three clues that this vehicle carried people along a railway.

2. Imagine a pupil's journey to school. Which part is supported by the history reading, and which details are your own ideas?

Modern AI-generated educational illustration. Representative scene, not an exact reconstruction. Free to print for education.

Learn more: Carter County archive: the Blue Goose; Kentucky Historical Society: school journeys

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Two KHS markers: Webbville's marker identifies the Blue Goose as gasoline-powered and records two daily round trips to Grayson. Willard's marker describes schoolchildren riding it in the 1920s for **$7.20 per month**. Our five-month fare problem is an imagined calculation, not a claim about the school calendar. The amount is in dollars of that period.



Selected places along the line, in order. Schematic only: not to scale, not a complete stop list or a travel map.

1. What powered the Blue Goose? Name one group of riders supported by the reading.

2. Imagine a student paid the reported monthly fare for five months. What would the total be? Show your calculation.

3. Does the diagram tell you the distance between towns or the time of a departure? What source would you need?

4. A railcar photograph is labeled "Blue Goose," but another caption says "Southern Queen." What would you check before repeating either name?

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ANSWERS AND DISCUSSION

1. Gasoline; schoolchildren.
2. $7.20 x 5 = **$36.00**, in period dollars, for the hypothetical five-month example.
3. No. A scale map or measured route could support distance; a dated timetable could support departure time.
4. Check the original caption, readable lettering on the car, date, archive identification, and independent records. The local photo page cited below preserves such a correction.

WHAT THE EVIDENCE DOES NOT ESTABLISH

The diagram shows selected communities, not every stop, exact distances, a timetable, or a modern route. Historical photographs have circulated with conflicting Blue Goose and Southern Queen identifications. Do not treat an inherited caption as proof, or equate every similarly named railcar with this one.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Use the picture labels and captions to guide the oral discussion. For worksheet answers, look for support from the reading and a clear distinction between evidence and a prediction. Accept spoken responses or labeled drawings.

NAMED SOURCES

Kentucky Historical Society, marker 2056. Eastern Kentucky Railway, Webbville.

https://history.ky.gov/markers/eastern-kentucky-railway

Kentucky Historical Society, marker 2301. Eastern Kentucky Railway - Willard.

https://history.ky.gov/markers/eastern-kentucky-railway-willard

Carter County KYGenWeb, East Kentucky Southern Railroad, 1933. The page preserves a correction explaining conflicting Blue Goose/Southern Queen photo labels. Use it as a source-checking example, not as a newly authenticated image.

https://kygenweb.net/carter/photos/place/east_ky_southern_rr_1933.htm

Readings are short original paraphrases. Diagrams and exercises were created for this lesson. Source links are for further study; they do not imply endorsement. These historical accounts do not establish present-day site access.