Lesson 14: Orange County Evolves to Modern Times

Lesson Overview: In this lesson, students will contrast Orange County from its early days to modern day life today. They will learn how some of the county's early agricultural areas evolved into some of the most famous landmarks in the county – Knott's Berry Farm, South Coast Plaza and Disneyland.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

In this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define tourism and explain how this industry contributed to the continued growth of Orange County.
- Identify at least two of Orange County's main tourist attractions and provide a brief synopsis of each attraction's origin and development.
- Explain the evolution of Orange County from a land of ranchos, farms and dairies to the modern day tourist destination and industrial center that it has become.

Correlations to California's Content Standards:

- History-Social Studies: 3.1; 3.3; 3.5; 4.1; 4.4
- English-Language Arts (Listening and Speaking): 3.1; 3.2
- English-Language Arts (Writing): 3.1; 3.2
- English-Language Arts (Written and Oral Language Conventions): 3.1
- Visual and Performing Arts (Creative Expression): 3.2

Materials:

- Copy of *My Orange County* history book page for each student
- Student worksheet: "The Orange County I Know"

Target Vocabulary:

Write these words on the board before each lesson to reinforce key lesson concepts:

- tourism
- amusement park
- retail

Starting The Lesson – Activating Prior Knowledge:

- Review teacher background information for this lesson plan.
- Have students brainstorm some of the well-known places they have visited in Southern California. Answers could include Disneyland, Knott's Berry Farm, Soak City, Adventure City, Wild Rivers, Irvine Spectrum, South Coast Plaza, The Great Park, Crystal Cathedral, Anaheim Stadium, Honda Center (formerly the Arrowhead Pond), Balboa Fun Zone, John Wayne Airport, Fashion Island, etc.

The Lesson - Learning Together

- Explain how tourism was a key contributor to the continued growth of the Orange County in the mid –1900s and how major tourist destinations sprang up in the very areas where bountiful crops had grown for more than a century.
- Discuss three of the county's main tourist attractions—Knott's Berry Farm, South Coast Plaza and Disneyland— how they came to be and where they are located on the map.
- Discuss the evolution of the county from the days of ranchos and farming to present day, having students cite

examples of specific events or circumstances that contributed to the transformation.

- Class Discussion:
  - When tourism took off in the county and places like Knott's and Disneyland were built, what kinds of businesses do you think opened up in the surrounding areas? What kind of jobs might have been available?
  - If you could be credited for creating and designing one of Orange County's main tourist attractions, which one would you choose? Why?
  - If you could pick one time in Orange County's history to live, which years would you choose? Working on a rancho? Farming? Growing crops on the Irvine Ranch? World War II? The 1950s?
  - Imagine if Orange County had a cold climate and land that was not very fertile. What differences might there be in the county's history? What probably would have stayed the same?

Check for Understanding/Assessment:

My Orange County history book page:

- Distribute this lesson's page to each student. Either alone, in small groups or as a class, students will complete the sentences using target vocabulary words from the lesson. Review with students and have them self-correct.
- Students add this page to their *My Orange* County history book.

Beyond The Lesson – Extension Activity

- Distribute map worksheet to students.
- On the map, students circle the cities they have lived in or visited. After circling the cities, students write about their two favorite places and draw a small picture to represent each.
- Optional: Individually, students can present their favorite places to the class. Or assign the worksheet as homework and have students conduct further research on city or other Web sites for a more in-depth research project.
- Teacher displays student worksheets in classroom or students add worksheets to their "My Orange County" history books.

Teacher Background

The population explosion in Southern California during the post-War boom created thousands of new jobs in the service industry – medicine, transportation, food service and retail sales. It also brought with it not just business, but a new university (UC Irvine, dedicated in 1964), professional baseball (Anaheim Stadium, opened in 1966), and an expanded airport (Orange County Airport – now John Wayne Airport – in 1967). What put the county on the map, however, was its burgeoning **tourism** industry, spawned by the development of a number of attractions on land once used almost exclusively for farming.

Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park is hailed as one of the first **amusement parks** in the United States. It began as an actual berry farm in 1920, and later grew to include a roadside stand and restaurant. In 1934, Walter Knott introduced the new Boysenberry, developed by Rudolph Boysen of Anaheim, and Cordella Knott began selling chicken dinners to supplement the family income during the depression. Both proved an immediate success.

In the 1940s, as the crowds grew, Knott began construction on a replica of a western ghost town where guests could spend time before their meal. In the 1950s, rides were added, including an 1880s steam locomotive. In 1969, Knott's opened its second themed area, Fiesta Village. Today the park has six themed areas, and is one of the most popular theme parks in America – and crowds still line up for chicken dinners and boysenberry pie.

But Knott's Berry Farm was overshadowed in 1955, with the opening of Disneyland, which set the standard for theme parks around the world. Disneyland quickly

became the most popular amusement park in the United States. Land values around the park soared as hotels and restaurants replaced orange groves and farmland. A second theme park, Disney's California Adventure, was added in 2001, along with Downtown Disney, a shopping, dining and entertainment area.

While ranchers like the Irvines and the O'Neills turned to planned communities, other farmers began commercial development on their land, notably the Segerstrom family, one of the county's largest lima bean growers. Their first major project was South Coast Plaza, which opened in 1967 and quickly became one of the county's premier **retail** shopping destinations.

Industry, business and tourism all played important roles in creating modern Orange County. But it was agriculture that got Orange County started, and set the pattern for its early growth. Its influence can still be seen today in our community development, our politics and our diverse population.

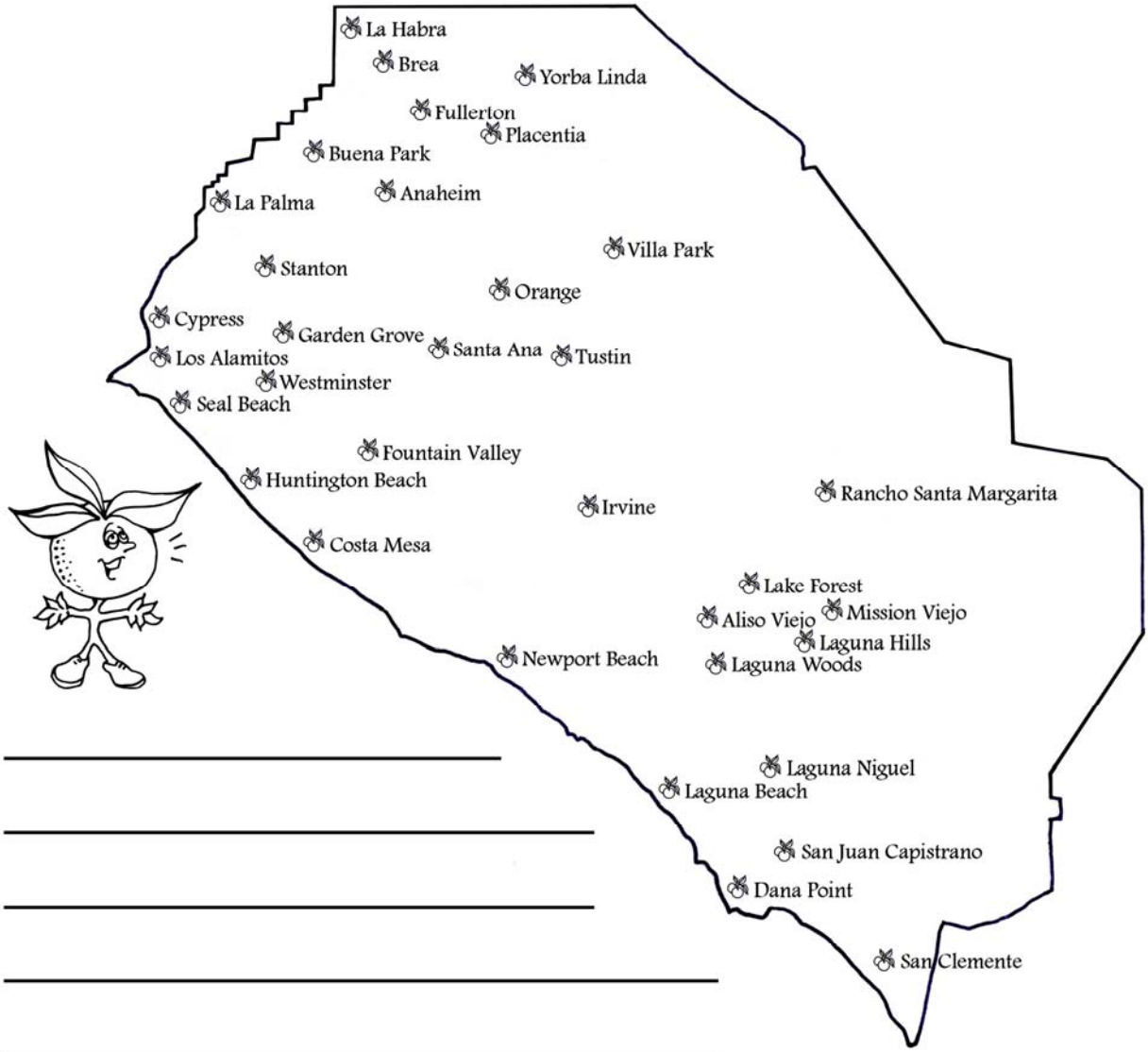
Your Notes Here

Use this space to make notes about the lesson, additional resources used, teaching reminders for next time, etc.

Worksheet ~ The Orange County I Know

(Lesson 14)

On the map below, circle the city in Orange County where you live. With a different colored pen or crayon, circle other cities you have visited. Then, write about your favorite place in the county, when you visited there and what you liked best about it.



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My Orange County History Book

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Then . . .

Then . . .

Now — Knott's Berry Farm - - Buena Park, CA

Now — Disneyland - Anaheim, CA

Directions: Using the vocabulary words from this lesson, fill in the sentences below. Use each word only once.

tourism • amusement parks • retail

1. Located in Costa Mesa, South Coast Plaza has over 300 stores and is one of the largest _____ shopping areas the country.
2. After opening in 1955, Disneyland became one of the most famous _____ _____ in the world.
3. In the mid 1900s _____ replaced agriculture as one of the leading industries in Orange County.