

Annie Oakley

Teacher's Guide

Annie Oakley provides insights into American history topics including the legends and realities of the American West, westward expansion and the closing of the American frontier, representations of Native Americans, the changing roles of women on the frontier and during the late 19th century, women's suffrage in the West and in the Constitution, the history of popular entertainment, and more. You can use part or all of the film, or delve into the rich resources available on this website to learn more, either in a classroom or on your own.

The following activities are grouped into four categories -- history, civics, geography, and society. You can also read a few [helpful hints](#) for completing the activities.

(<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/teachers-resources/oakley-teachers-guide/2>)

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE* PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



Annie Oakley

Teacher's Guide

Geography

1. The West in myth and imagination.

What are the first things that come to mind when you hear the phrase "the West"? As a class, make a list on the board of the (a) people, (b) plants and animals, (c) landscape, (d) climate, and (e) activities that you associate with the West. Then put these elements together to come up with half a dozen scenes -- specific kinds of people doing a particular activity in a specific setting -- that you think best represent the "old West."

When you are done, discuss where your ideas came from -- movies you have seen, novels you have read, personal experience, or some other source? How many of these ideas can be seen in the [Wild West show](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/oakley-show/) (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/oakley-show/) run by "[Buffalo Bill](#)" Cody, (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-cody) as it was [described by New York newspapers?](#) (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/oakley-new-york)

2. Charting the growth of the West.

Ohio was much more of a "western" state when [Annie Oakley](#) (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-annie) was born there in 1860 than it appears today, because areas to the west of Ohio had not yet experienced large-scale settlement as of 1860. Working with a partner, think of a way to illustrate the expanding settlement of the West during Oakley's lifetime (and afterwards) in a map or chart.

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR AMERICAN EXPERIENCE PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



For example, you might create a map showing when the western states joined the Union, or a map showing which states had the fastest population growth during the late 1800s and early 1900s, or a map or graph showing which areas of the country had the largest cities during the late 1800s and early 1900s, or a graph showing the western states' growing number of representatives in the U.S. Congress, or a graph comparing total population east and west of the Mississippi River over time.

Once you have found the necessary data for your topic, present your topic and the data to your teacher for approval. After you have prepared the graphic, present it to the class and explain what it shows, where you found the data for it, and how you used that data in making the graphic.

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE* PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



Annie Oakley

Teacher's Guide

History

1. A time of change for women.

[Annie Oakley](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-annie) (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-annie)

may not have [considered herself a feminist](#),

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/poll-results/oakley-poll-results) but she

showed the world what a strong woman could accomplish in an era when women were struggling to gain greater equality, including the right to vote. Working with a partner, create

a two-part timeline -- on one side of the timeline, list [some of the notable events](#) of Oakley's life (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/timeline/oakley) -- on the other side,

list the major developments in the long campaign for women's suffrage, beginning with the [1848 Seneca Falls Declaration](http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/democrac/17.htm) (<http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/democrac/17.htm>). Be

sure to include the western territories and states that allowed women to vote long before women's voting rights became part of the U.S. Constitution.

2. America's future -- and its past.

In 1893, even as millions of visitors to Chicago's [Columbian Exhibition](#)

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/chicago/peoplevents/e_court.html) viewed the latest

technologies (including an [early version of the movie camera](#)

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/oakley-star), from

Thomas Edison), many of those same people also attended nearby performances of [Annie](#)

[Oakley](#) (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-annie) and

the [Wild West show](#) (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/oakley-show>) to see scenes from the rapidly vanishing "old West."

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR AMERICAN EXPERIENCE PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



Imagine that you are a reporter for a British newspaper who has been sent to Chicago to cover the Exhibition. You have attended the exhibits and listened to Frederick Jackson Turner's famous address on the "closing" of the West (www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/ansel/peoplevents/e_closing.html). You also decided to attend the Wild West show. Write a 500-750 word story in which you describe the contrasting impressions these events gave you about life in America and consider what they might suggest about America's future.

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE* PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



Annie Oakley

Teacher's Guide

Society

1. Annie Oakley in the audience.

How would the real-life [Annie Oakley](#)

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-annie) have reacted to the posthumous [depictions of her life on Broadway and in the movies?](#)

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/oakley-stage). Imagine you are Oakley and watch a movie based on her life, or read or listen to the musical "Annie Get Your Gun." Then write a letter from Oakley to the producers of the movie or play in which you praise the parts you found realistic, criticize the parts you found unrealistic, and suggest events or themes that you think should have been included. Try to write the letter from Oakley's point of view -- and keep in mind that she felt very strongly about [protecting her reputation](#) (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/oakley-paper).

2. The dime novel.

As the film notes, [Annie Oakley](#)

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-annie) was the subject of at least one dime novel, and [newspaper accounts of the Wild West show](#) (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/primary-resources/oakley-new-york) sometimes compared it to the stories in dime novels. To find out more about dime novels, first look up a definition of the term. Then explore a [Library of Congress exhibit](#) (www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/tri015.html) on dime novels (some of which feature Buffalo Bill), and read excerpts from [some dime novels](#) (www-sul.stanford.edu/depts/dp/pennies/texts/dimes_toc.html) on the website of the Stanford University Library.

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR AMERICAN EXPERIENCE PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



Now try your hand at starting your own dime novel, based on the life and adventures of Annie Oakley. Write a one-paragraph summary of the plot of your novel, as well as the first scene of the novel itself. Then think up a title and design a cover. Compare your results with your classmates'.

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE* PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



Annie Oakley

Teacher's Guide

Civics

1. Still a man's world?

Read historians' opinions about [Annie Oakley's](#)

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-annie) ability to succeed in a [man's world](#)

(www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/interview/oakley-world). In your opinion, do women today have as much freedom as men to build a career, or must they be more careful than men regarding their appearance, their sexuality, being competent yet not threatening, etc.?

Think of a woman alive today -- either a public figure (such as an entertainer, politician, or pro athlete) or someone you know personally -- whose experience in her career supports your opinion on this question. Now compare your opinion with that of your classmates -- do most of the students in your class agree on this question?

2. Dark days for Native Americans.

American Indians like [Sitting Bull](#)

(<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/biography/oakley-sitting-bull>)

played a featured role in the [Wild West show's](#)

(<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/oakley-show>)

depiction of the "old West," but a number of events during the late 1800s pushed Indians more and more to the margins of American life. To understand how this happened, divide the following events among students for research -- (a) the completion of the transcontinental railroad, (b) the destruction of the large buffalo herds of the West, (c) the discovery of gold

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR AMERICAN EXPERIENCE PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



in the Black Hills of Dakota, (d) the opening of the Indian Territory to white settlement, (e) the passage of the Dawes Act of 1887, (f) the passage of the Homestead Act, (g) the signing of the Medicine Lodge Treaty, (h) the surrender of Chief Joseph and the Nez Percé, (i) the Wounded Knee massacre. Students should summarize their assigned event for the class and briefly explain how it affected the lives of the Indians of the West.

Then, using the information students have gathered, prepare a timeline of these events. Review the timeline as a class -- what could the U.S. government have done differently during this period to better protect Native Americans? Why do you think the U.S. government did not act differently?

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR *AMERICAN EXPERIENCE* PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



Annie Oakley

Teacher's Guide

Helpful Hints

Geography

1. You may want to consult the variety of information available on the AMERICAN EXPERIENCE Wild West collection website.
2. Possible sources include Census Bureau tables available as PDF files, on [state population](http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-04.pdf) (www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-04.pdf), [changes in state population](http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-06.pdf) (www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-06.pdf), and [the country's largest cities](http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-07.pdf) (www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-07.pdf).

To introduce this activity, you might want to explore as a class the westward shift over time of the nation's "population center," or the point on the map that is in the center of the country in terms of population (rather than area). [This PDF map](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cenpop/meanctr.pdf) (www.census.gov/geo/www/cenpop/meanctr.pdf) from the U.S. Census Bureau shows the changing population center over time. How did it shift just during Oakley's lifetime?

History

1. Information on women's suffrage can be found at [this Library of Congress website](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawsttime.html) (http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/naw/nawsttime.html) and [this website by the Women of the West Museum](http://theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage) (theautry.org/explore/exhibits/suffrage). Students may also want to read [this essay](http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/index.html?body=culthood.html) (www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/index.html?body=culthood.html) on another PBS website exploring what society expected of women during the 1800s.
2. Students should keep in mind that Oakley and the Wild West show would not have been entirely new to British readers, following their triumphant [tour of Europe](#)

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR AMERICAN EXPERIENCE PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.



(www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/oakley-europe) not long before the Columbian Exhibition.

Society

1. For example, based on what you know about Oakley, how do you think she might have reacted to the line from the song "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better" (in "Annie Get Your Gun") in which Frank Butler sings, "I can drink my liquor faster than a flicker" and Annie replies, "I can do it quicker and get even sicker"?

2. Students may want to look at some [promotional posters](#) (www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/photo-gallery/oakley) of Oakley for ideas for their cover. Students should understand that their novel does not need to be based on fact, but that it should (like a typical dime novel) include highly dramatic events and situations.

Civics

1. If students are having difficulty thinking of prominent women to use as examples, you might suggest Oprah Winfrey, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Condoleezza Rice, or Madonna.

2. Information on a number of these events can be found at the [website](#) (www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/program) of the PBS documentary series "The West"; in their research, students might come across other items to include on their timeline as well. Also, you might ask students to read from Helen Hunt Jackson's classic 1881 book *A Century of Dishonor* (University of Oklahoma reprint, 1995), which examined the federal government's policies toward the Indians.

EXCLUSIVE CORPORATE FUNDING FOR AMERICAN EXPERIENCE PROVIDED BY LIBERTY MUTUAL.
MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY THE ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION, THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND PUBLIC TELEVISION VIEWERS.
AMERICAN EXPERIENCE IS PRODUCED FOR PBS BY WGBH BOSTON.

