

## Oregon Trail: Independence Rock

### Analyzing Events

Directions: Read the journal excerpts from 1842 Oregon Trail pioneers and answer the questions.

The **Oregon Trail** was one of America's true adventures. From 1840-1869, over 400,000 pioneers made the 2,000-mile journey. They traveled 15 miles a day for 4-6 months. Each spring, eager pioneers gathered at Independence, MO to organize a company and wait for grass to grow. By July 4, the pioneers hoped to be at Independence Rock, WY. It was tradition to inscribe your name in the rock, as the company passed through the area.

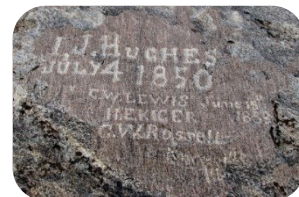


### Taken hostage by Sioux Indians for ammunition.

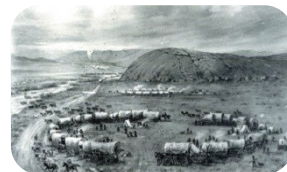
**#1** July 15 – “While at Independence Rock, where some of the party was ambitious to inscribe their names, Hastings and Lovejoy, who had fallen behind, were cut off by a party of Sioux. They narrowly escaped to camp after several hours of detention by Indians.”



**#2** “We were treated with the utmost rudeness [said Hastings of their situation after they climbed down from carving their names to find themselves captured.] Our guns and pistols were taken from us, when we were compelled to sit upon the ground, surrounded by a numerous guard who performed its whole duty, not permitting us to change our positions in any manner, either to avoid danger or acquire comfort. From the time we were taken, every additional Indian party that arrived invariably offered some indignity to our persons, either by striking or attempting to strike us with their bows, arrows, or the rammers of their guns. The chief, however, protected me from this insult, for which purposes he constantly stood or sat by me; yet he appeared unable or unwilling to protect my companion, who was repeatedly stricken with much violence.”



**#3** “A great band of Sioux developed out of the prairie [said Matthieu], galloping in wild fashion upon their ponies or in large part running on foot... in full war dress and paint. Lovejoy and Hastings were among them, being held as captives and looking very much crestfallen. They had delayed, as it seems, in boyish spirit, to inscribe their names among others on the face of Independence Rock; and having just completed their task, had turned to go only to find themselves in the embrace of some very large Indians. They wanted ammunition, not to fight the whites but other Indians; when this was given to them they surrendered Hastings and Lovejoy.”



### Questions:



- Three pioneers described the dangerous encounter with the Sioux. Summarize the incident.  
(≥3 sentences) **Pioneers at Independence Rock, captured by Sioux, ransomed for ammunition.**
- What caused Hasting and Lovejoy's capture? (1 sentence) **They left the party to inscribe names.**
- How would the situation be different if the two stayed with the other pioneers? (≥1 sentence) **Less likely there would be an incident, but a large Sioux war gathering could still be troublesome for the party.**
- Is the chief also guilty of kidnapping, or did he prevent additional violence? (≥1 sentence, use “because”) **He should be guilty because he held them against their will, but he did mitigate the violence.**
- What reason was given for the capture, and what was the result? (≥1 sentence) **Ammunition desired to fight other tribes; hostages released upon receiving ammunition.**
- Encounters with tribes on the Oregon Trail were both friendly and troublesome. As leader of a wagon company, how would you approach an unknown tribe blocking a narrow trail crossing? (≥3 sentences) **Answers will vary.**

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