

The Perilous Journey of the Donner Party

Journal Entry Writing Prompts

Prior knowledge Writing Prompt: *"What do you know about the Donner Party? Write down anything you may have learned or experienced about this group. Are there any places that you have heard of with the name Donner?"*

First journal entry: *Why has your family chosen to move west, and what will you bring in order to prepare for the long journey?*

Second journal entry: *Write about your arrival at Independence, Missouri. Include what you saw on your travels to Independence and how you feel about your arrival there.*

Third journal entry: *What was your family's decision about taking the Hastings Cutoff? Do you think this was a good or bad decision? Why? Do you believe that choosing George Donner as a leader was a good or bad idea? Why?*

Fourth journal entry: *Do you think the banishment of James Reed was just or unjust? Please explain why you feel this way.*

Fifth journal entry: *Please explain what the hardest part of crossing the Great Salt Lake Desert was. Be sure to include how long it took you and what you may have had to leave behind.*

Sixth journal entry. *How do you feel about the long rest you took in the Truckee Meadows? Do you think the hardest part of the trip is over yet? Please explain your answers.*

Seventh journal entry. *Write about your experience during the snowfall at Truckee Lake. What did you have to eat? What type of shelter do you have? Who are you with? Do you feel that you are going to make it out alive?*

Eighth journal entry. *Did you partake in cannibalism due to the fact you and your family were dying from starvation? Please explain what the instinctive rule is?*

Ninth journal entry. *What was it like to reach Sutters Fort? How do you feel about being rescued and about those who rescued you?*

Assessment writing prompt: *"What do you know about the Donner Party? Write down anything you may have learned or experienced about this group. Are there any places that you have heard of with the name Donner? Look at your prior knowledge writing prompt and compare and contrast it to what you have now learned."*