

# The Santa Fe Trail: A Gateway to the American Southwest

The Santa Fe Trail was a 780-mile trade route that connected the Missouri River to the city of Santa Fe, New Mexico. The trail played a pivotal role in the westward expansion of the United States, facilitating trade, settlement, and the eventual acquisition of the American Southwest.



## US Expands Its Territories | Manifest Destiny & Santa Fe Trail | U.S. History 1820-1850 | History 5th Grade | Children's American History of 1800s by David Lubar

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## Origins of the Trail

The Santa Fe Trail originated in the early 1820s, as American traders began to seek new markets for their goods. At the time, the Mexican government controlled the territory of New Mexico, and Spanish law prohibited trade between the United States and its colonies. However, Mexican officials were willing to overlook this law in Free Download to profit from the trade. As a result, a thriving black market developed along the Santa Fe Trail.

## The Trail's Route

The Santa Fe Trail began in Independence, Missouri, and followed the Missouri River westward. After crossing the river, the trail continued southwest through present-day Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico. The trail was a dangerous and arduous journey, with travelers facing the threat of attack from Native Americans, bandits, and harsh weather conditions.

### **The Impact of the Trail**

The Santa Fe Trail had a profound impact on the development of the United States. The trail facilitated the trade of goods between the United States and Mexico, and it helped to open up the American Southwest to settlement. The trail also played a role in the Mexican-American War, as American troops used the trail to invade Mexico in 1846.

### **The Trail's Legacy**

The Santa Fe Trail ceased to be a major trade route after the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. However, the trail's legacy lives on. The trail is now a National Historic Trail, and it is a popular destination for tourists and historians. The trail is also a reminder of the westward expansion of the United States, and the role that it played in the development of the nation.

The Santa Fe Trail was a vital artery in the westward expansion of the United States. The trail facilitated trade, settlement, and the eventual acquisition of the American Southwest. The trail's legacy lives on, as it remains a popular destination for tourists and historians, and a reminder of the westward expansion of the United States.

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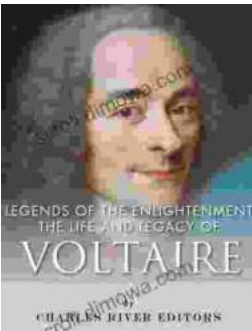
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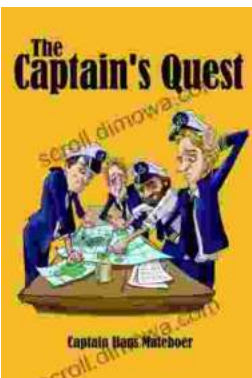
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