Core Skills Analysis

History

- The student understands the challenges and experiences of 19th-century pioneers traveling westward by simulating decision-making throughout the Oregon Trail game.
- They learn about the importance of resource management, such as food, oxen, and supplies, reflecting historical realities of westward expansion.
- The game introduces geographical knowledge by navigating various landmarks and terrains significant to American history.
- The student gains insight into historical consequences of health, weather, and other factors affecting travel, helping comprehend cause-effect relationships in history.

Mathematics

- The student applies basic arithmetic to manage supplies, budget resources, and calculate distances traveled during the game.
- They develop an understanding of estimation and measurement concepts through allocating resources over the journey.
- The game encourages strategic thinking and problem-solving when determining the best allocation of limited materials to sustain the journey.
- Time management and sequential reasoning are practiced as the student tracks days versus progress on the trail.

Technology

- The student improves digital literacy by interacting with computer interfaces and navigating the game controls.
- They develop problem-solving skills by making decisions in an interactive environment where consequences affect game outcomes.
- The activity introduces basic concepts of simulation technology as the game mimics real-life scenarios and decision consequences.
- They also learn about cause-and-effect within software, understanding how inputs from the player impact the virtual environment.

Tips

To further develop these subjects, consider planning a lesson where students create their own simple board game about a historical journey to reinforce sequencing and cause-effect relationships. Introduce a mapping activity where students plot routes on U.S. maps to strengthen geography and spatial reasoning. In math, incorporate budgeting exercises using pretend currency tied to the game’s resource management to deepen arithmetic skills. For technology, designing a basic 'choose your own adventure' story using simple coding or storyboarding tools will enhance decision-making and digital storytelling abilities. These activities provide hands-on experiences and foster creativity, critical thinking, and deeper engagement with history, math, and technology concepts.

Book Recommendations

- If You Traveled West in a Covered Wagon by Ellen Levine: This book provides a detailed and child-friendly description of what life was like traveling west on the Oregon Trail, helping kids understand the historical context of the game.
- Why Did the Westward Trail End at Oregon? by Sarah L. Thomson: A book that explains the geography and decisions involved in westward expansion, linking geography and history relevant to the Oregon Trail game.
- Math for Kids: Big Adventures with Numbers by Jennifer DiBrienza: This book introduces basic math concepts through fun and engaging adventures which can help strengthen arithmetic

skills related to resource management in the game.

Learning Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.2.3 - Describe the connections between a series of historical events or steps in a process.
- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.A.1 - Measure lengths using appropriate tools to the nearest unit.
- CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.NBT.B.5 - Fluently add and subtract within 100.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7 - Use information gained from illustrations and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2 - Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas.