



The 22nd California Mission

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SECTION I.

Project Overview

Subject

Social Studies, English Language Arts

Time Required

10-15 hours of class time

Grade

4

Project Idea

The “Mission Project” is almost a cliché in California elementary school classrooms — and there are projects like it in every state. For generations, fourth grade teachers have been assigning virtually the same project: students either choose or are assigned to research one of the 21 missions built by Spain in the late 1700s and early 1800s. The children then search for information according to an outline or prescribed list of questions. They write a report, make a poster, build a model, or turn in some combination of these products and perhaps present their research in class.

But in *The 22nd California Mission* project, students gain knowledge about the mission period of California history by engaging in a task that requires critical thinking and creativity. They also build Common Core-aligned skills in informational reading, constructing an argument, and making presentations. The project begins when students are placed in a scenario in 1818 with a letter from the Archbishop of Mexico, asking them to recommend a location for a new mission. Working in teams, students choose a site, create a design for the layout and buildings, make maps, and then present their proposals to an audience. A written proposal may also be added. *The 22nd California Mission* project is multi-curricular, including social studies, language arts, art, and even some mathematics. As such, project activities can fit into many different time slots of the school day.

Content And Standards

The 22nd California Mission addresses the following 4th grade History-Social Science Content Standards for California:

4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

3. Describe the Spanish exploration and colonization of California, including the relationships among soldiers, missionaries, and Indians (e.g., Juan Crespi, Junipero Serra, Gaspar de Portola).
4. Describe the mapping of, geographic basis of, and economic factors in the placement and function of the Spanish missions; and understand how the mission system expanded the influence of Spain and Catholicism throughout New Spain and Latin America.
5. Describe the daily lives of the people, native and nonnative, which occupied the presidios, missions, ranchos, and pueblos.
6. Discuss the role of the Franciscans in changing the economy of California from a hunter-gatherer economy to an agricultural economy.



Common Core State Standards Addressed

The *22nd California Mission* project addresses the following Common Core State Standards for 4th Grade English Language Arts. Writing assignments may also be designed by the teacher to address CCSS standards for Writing.

English Language Arts

ID	CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	TEXT OF STANDARD
4.RI.3	Reading Informational	Key Ideas and Details	Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
4.RI.9	Reading Informational	Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
4.SL.1	Speaking & Listening	Comprehension and Collaboration	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
4.SL.4	Speaking & Listening	Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Placement in the Curriculum

This project typically fits somewhere in the middle of the 4th grade year, when most students learn about their state's history. It is important that students have some history and geography background knowledge and skills before embarking on this project, including:

Basic Map Skills and Geographic Knowledge

- Coordinate grid system of latitude and longitude to determine the absolute locations of places in California and on Earth
- The various regions of California and how humans use the resources (water, landforms, vegetation, climate) in those regions
- Identify the locations of the Pacific Ocean and regions in the state, including major rivers, valleys, mountains, deserts

The California Native Societies

- The major nations of California Indians (especially along the coast), including their geographic distribution, economic activities, legends, and religious beliefs; and how they depended on, adapted to, and modified the physical environment

The Early European Explorers

- The early land and sea routes to and European settlements in California, with a focus on the exploration of the North Pacific (e.g., by Captain James Cook, Vitus Bering, Juan Cabrillo), noting especially the importance of ocean currents and wind patterns
- The Spanish exploration and colonization of California, including the relationships among soldiers, missionaries, and Indians (e.g., Juan Crespi, Junipero Serra, Gaspar de Portola)

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SECTION II. Essential Elements of PBL

1. Significant Content

The 22nd California Mission project is focused on teaching students about the history and geography of their state, which are important state Social Studies standards for this grade level. The project also addresses Common Core State Standards for reading informational text, conducting research, and writing opinion pieces that support a point of view with reasons and information (see list of CCSS on page 3).

2. 21st Century Skills

This project builds students' skills in critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration, and communication — and provides opportunities for creativity. Students must think critically as they consider the purpose of the California missions, develop criteria for deciding where to place their mission and what it should look like, and apply these criteria when evaluating the appropriateness of various possible locations. Students collaborate as a team to make decisions about their mission, develop their proposal, and plan and deliver their presentation. They use communication skills to share ideas with teammates, negotiate compromises, conduct meetings, and to explain and show their proposal to the Archbishop.

3. In-Depth Inquiry

This project is not meant to be a quick and engaging way to “cover” some state history content standards. It is, rather, an extended investigation in which students ask their own questions, find information, and discover new questions as they dig deeper. Students initially ask questions such as, “Why were the missions built?” and “What kind of location is good for a mission?” and “What were the Indians like in the area?” As they develop their proposals, students may ask new questions such as, “Can our mission help Spain gain more power over the Russians and the Americans?” and “How can we design our mission so it uses the natural resources in the area?”

4. Driving Question

The Driving Question for this project may be crafted by the students and teacher working together after the Entry Event, but it should be something close to, “How can we choose a good site and design for a new mission so that it will meet the Church’s historic goals in California?” The question frames the students’ challenge, and is open-ended: there is no single “right answer.”

5. Need to Know

After receiving the message from the Archbishop of Mexico that launches the project, students have an authentic reason for learning about early California history and where, why and how the missions were built, as well as how to write and speak persuasively.

6. Voice & Choice

Since there are several possible places where the 22nd mission could be built, and many ways to design it, students have lots of choices to make about the best site and appropriate architecture. They

can decide how they will find information and what information to use. They make their voices heard when meeting as team to compare ideas and arrive at a consensus, and when they decide how to present their proposal to the Archbishop and create their own unique visual aids.

7. Revision & Reflection

At several checkpoints during the project, students receive feedback from the teacher — and sometimes from each other — so they can improve the quality of their work. They turn in such products as research notes and historical summaries and sketches of mission floor plans and facades, compare ideas about potential locations for their missions, and finally practice their presentations. Students also reflect on how well they solve problems and work together as a team, both during and at the end of the project. After the presentations are over, the whole class reflects on the knowledge they've gained and the concepts they've explored, as well as the skills they have built.

8. Public Audience

Although this project is a fictitious scenario and does not have a “real” audience, students still present their work to someone playing the role of the Archbishop, and perhaps some of his advisors or other representatives from Spain or Mexico too, in a panel. The audience asks questions about both content and process, requiring students to defend their decisions and explain how they did their work in the project.



SECTION III.

Teaching the 22nd California Mission

Students complete *The 22nd California Mission* project by following a set of activities in a recommended order. But within this sequence, there will be variation in the timing and in the way students complete them.

The activities are described below. Changes may be made to meet time constraints, address the needs of specific student populations, or include additional instructional materials and learning opportunities. Each activity is discussed in more detail in the following section, the Step-by-Step Teaching Guide.



Sequence of the Project

Preparing for the Project

- 0 Teacher prepares for successful project implementation.

Launching the Project

- 1 Students receive the Letter from the Archbishop of Mexico, and discuss it as a whole class.
- 2 Students develop a Driving Question with the teacher.
- 3 Students develop initial Need to Know list with the teacher.

Scaffolding and Managing the Project

- 4 Teacher explains project details and places students in teams.
- 5 Students begin building knowledge by creating timelines and summaries of early California history.
- 6 Students share their timelines and summaries with other teams.
- 7 Students use their timeline and research materials to consider why another mission is needed.
- 8 Students consider what kind of site a mission needs.
- 9 Students use a map to decide the location of their proposed mission and write an explanation.



- 10** Teacher checks in with student teams on their progress and they decide on presentation visual aids and project products.
- 11** Students look at examples of mission architecture and sketch ideas for how theirs will look.
- 12** Student teams meet to review church facades and floor plans sketched by individual members and decide how they will collaborate on a final design.
- 13** Teacher shares rubric with students to guide their work.
- 14** Student teams finalize proposals and prepare for presentations.

Assessing and Showcasing Student Work

- 15** Students present proposals to the Archbishop and/or representatives from Spain/Mexico.
- 16** Teacher and students reflect on the project.



Step-by-Step Teaching Guide

Each of the above instructional activities is discussed in more depth below, with tips for successful classroom implementation.

Preparing for the Project

0 Teacher prepares for successful project implementation.

There are a number of issues that must be considered before embarking on this project with students. These include:

- How much time will be devoted to the project?
- What California mission content resources need to be collected/prepared in advance?
- Do all students have the basic skills (such as reading, using information resources, working in teams, etc.) they need to tackle the project? If not, is it necessary to pre-teach some of these skills?
- How will student teams be formed?
- How will teams report on their progress and be held accountable? Do report forms or other tools need to be developed?
- Is it necessary to arrange access to the media center or computer lab?
- Will you invite a guest to play the role of the Archbishop when students present their ideas? Will you include additional people in the audience as the Archbishop's "advisors" or other representatives from Spain/Mexico? If so, how much in advance do you need to arrange the day and time?



To learn how to implement a project, take classes at **PBLU.org**, and earn certification as a PBL Teacher if you try this project with students!

In addition to considering the above issues, be sure student handouts and lesson materials are ready — or at least underway.

Launching the Project

1 Students receive Entry Document, the letter from the Archbishop of Mexico, and discuss it as a whole class.

The **Letter from the Archbishop of Mexico** can be found in Section V, Teacher Materials.

The letter can be projected so the class can focus on it. Alternatively, copies of the letter can be duplicated and handed out to students. Read and discuss the letter as a whole class, making sure that all students understand it.



2 Students develop a Driving Question with the teacher.

After students have discussed the letter from the Archbishop of Mexico, present the Driving Question for the project, or write one together with students. A Driving Question is an open-ended question that focuses the students' task in the project. Here is an example of a Driving Question for this project:

How can we choose a good location and design for a new California mission?

3 Students develop the initial Need to Know list with the teacher.

Coach students to identify information they think they might need to know in order to answer the Driving Question and complete their task. Guiding students to pay close attention to each part of the letter, create list of questions under the heading, "What Do We Need to Know?" If students are missing a key piece of information about the content or their task, ask questions to elicit items for the list.

Although each class generally produces a unique Need to Know list, an example of the type of items that might appear on the list follows.

Example of Initial Need to Know List

What do we need to know?

- Where is Alta California?
- What is a mission?
- Why were the missions built?
- Who is Archbishop Fonte?
- What are the "historic goals" in California?
- Why is this "urgent"?
- Why were the missions in Northern California built?
- Where are the other missions?
- How did they decide where to build the other missions?
- What buildings are in a mission?
- What does a mission look like?
- What work is done in a mission?
- How and when do we need to present our ideas?



Potential Hurdle: *Students may find a long list of questions daunting. For this reason you may wish to divide the list into sections or categories, such as location, purpose, history, and design, and create questions for each list separately. The content of the Need to Know List will depend on how much students already know about California history before the project is launched.*



4 Teacher explains project details and places students in teams.

Tell students that they will be finding answers to their Need to Know questions soon, but at this point you can tell them about how they will be working on the project, and how and when they need to present their ideas.

Explain that they will be working in teams to create these major products:

- A map showing the location of their mission
- A set of drawings or a model of their mission
- An oral presentation to the “Archbishop” (and/or other representatives from Spain/Mexico, if you wish)
- (Anything else you wish to add)

Explain as much as you feel is appropriate at this point about the Project Calendar, due dates, checkpoints, etc.

Place students in project teams using a process that works for you and your class. Teams of four are recommended. Conduct any team-building and norm-setting activities you think are appropriate. If you wish, give students handouts or online tools for organizing their time and tasks for the project and explain how to use them.

Scaffolding and Managing the Project

5 Students begin building knowledge by creating timelines and summaries of early California history.

To build students’ knowledge of California history, choose what you feel is the right balance between independent research and direct instruction. For direct instruction, you can use lessons and materials you might already have — but be sure to link everything to the students’ Need to Know questions. To support independent research, provide each student team with access to computers, books, and other content-related materials on the history of California in the period leading up to and during the building of the missions.

One way to begin is to have students gain a broad sense of the historic time period covered in the project by creating a timeline. Provide each team with materials (such as sentence strip papers) for creating a timeline of major events in California history from 1690 – 1818. If necessary, teach students what a timeline is and demonstrate how to mark off the years and begin. Give students guidelines as to what events to include and how many events to list (no more than 10-12 is good). Depending on the size of the teams, it may be wise for students to divide up the timeline and have pairs work on different decades.

Have students prepare a written or orally-presented summary of California history from 1690 – 1818 as they construct their timelines.

6 Student teams share their timelines and summaries with other teams.

Have student teams meet with another team or two and share their timelines and summaries. Encourage them to compliment the efforts of other teams as well as offer suggestions. To conclude the activity, have each set of teams come up with a list of what they think the answers might be to the question prompted by the Archbishop's letter: *What were the historic goals that Spain and the Catholic Church had for the missions in California?*

Conduct a class discussion by having students share out their initial ideas about the historic goals for building missions in California. This will give you a sense of how much more information students will need to complete the picture. Fill in gaps through direct instruction or by guiding students to do further research.

7 Students use their timeline and research materials to consider why another mission is needed.

Ask students to brainstorm a list of reasons for why a 22nd mission might be needed, working in their teams and then sharing with the whole class.

The reasons may include:

- To establish ownership of northern California
- To convert the native people of the area to Christianity
- To discourage Russian, American and English colonization
- To expand the Spanish Empire
- To provide fresh provisions for the Manila galleons

If information about the English, Russian, and American exploration of northern California has not been covered in class or discovered through student research, the teacher needs to teach this topic.

8 Students consider what kind of site a mission needs.

Give students the worksheet titled *What's a Good Place for a Mission?* Review the questions with the class, then have student teams discuss and fill in the answers together. Monitor teams as they work and coach them if necessary to think about issues they may be overlooking. Conduct a whole-class discussion when the teams are done, and decide if further lessons on any of the topics on the worksheet are needed.

The ***What's a Good Place for a Mission?*** worksheet can be found in Section IV, Student Handouts.

9 Students use a map to decide the location of their proposed mission and write an explanation.

Give students an outline map of Northern California, or have them create one, showing the Central Valley and the coastal area from Monterey Bay to the Oregon border. The map should include natural

features such as the coastal mountains, major rivers, lakes, and bays. It should also show the locations of the missions from Monterey north, the presidios and other major settlements. Make sure the map has an accurate scale so students can measure distances. (Note: You may also have students use maps found online to help decide on their mission's location, but remind them that they need to show a map in their presentation.)

Allow time for student teams to do further research or ask you questions to help them make their decision. When they are ready, have each team write a paragraph (or two) explaining their decisions and the reasons for them. You should review these explanations carefully, and could also have other student teams read them and give each other "kind, specific, and helpful" critique.

 **Potential Hurdle:** *If students begin creating a map to use as a visual aid for their presentation, it is important that this map is large so that (a) several children can work on it together, and (b) the audience can see it. Also remind students that no coloring should be done on the map until it is checked for accuracy and completeness. It is very difficult to erase or change map details if the map has been colored!*

10 Teacher checks in with student teams on their progress and they decide on presentation visual aids and project products.

In a whole-class discussion, have each team report on their progress. This is a good opportunity to revisit the Driving Question and Need to Know list. Decide if students need more information, clarification, resources, etc.

Discuss what and how many visual aids will be needed for the presentation to the Archbishop and/or representatives from Spain/Mexico. Also decide if each team will have the same visual aids or whether they can create different ones. (You may decide all of this in advance, or leave it to student choice.)

For example, a team could show:

- A map of Northern California
- A site map with details about a particular location
- A floor and outside area plan for the mission
- A drawing or set of drawings (or painting, etc.) to show what the mission will look like
- A scale model of the mission

Also decide if students could make their presentation using PowerPoint or other modern presentation aids, or if they should stick to what would have been possible in 1818.

Finally, decide if students will submit a written proposal for the 22nd mission along with their presentation. You could have each student write a persuasive letter to the Archbishop, which is helpful for assessing individual knowledge and writing skills. Or each team could write a letter together and include it with their presentation materials. If you do decide to require a written proposal, build in additional time for students to write, critique, and revise their work.

11 Students look at examples of mission architecture and sketch ideas for how theirs will look.

To learn about what a mission looks like, have students consult books and other print material, go online to visit websites of various missions, or you could prepare a presentation using PowerPoint or other media. Ask students to gather ideas for their mission by pointing out the distinct features and variety they observe in the design of the church, other buildings, courtyards and grounds.

To allow for all students to have an opportunity to come up with ideas and do some artwork, have *each* student make two sketches:

-  a church façade for their team’s mission
-  a floor plan of the building and grounds

If possible, invite an art teacher/specialist into the classroom to help students with this task, and with step 13 below.

Note: You could break this step and the next into two parts, if you want students to focus on one sketch at a time.

12 Student teams meet to review church facades and floor plans sketched by individual members and decide how they will collaborate on a final design.

Give students a process — or help teams come up with their own — for reviewing each team member’s sketches and deciding how to combine their ideas.

Allow time for teams to work on their drawings, models, or other visual aids.

13 Teacher shares rubric with students to guide their work.

Give a copy of the *22nd California Mission Proposal Rubric* (or one of your own) to each student, or display it on an overhead or computer projector so every student can read it. Discuss the rubric with students to be sure they understand it. Emphasize that showing their knowledge of California history is the most important part of the proposal.

A **22nd California Mission Proposal Rubric** can be found
in Section V, Teacher Materials.

14 Student teams finalize proposals and prepare for presentations.

Allow substantial time for this step. If you are requiring students to write a written proposal as well as make a presentation, allow time for drafting, feedback, and revision.

Have students teams meet to discuss, prepare, and practice the oral presentation. Give each team a copy of the 22nd Mission Presentation Planning Notes worksheet to help organize their presentation (and written proposal, if you assign it).

The **22nd Mission Presentation Planning Notes** worksheet can be found in Section IV, Student Handouts.

This task may take one or two full class periods, or if possible some of it may be assigned as homework. Provide feedback as needed, by talking with teams during class and reviewing drafts and practice sessions. Have student teams practice giving presentations to each other, using the *22nd California Mission Proposal Rubric* to give feedback.

Give students some guidelines for the presentation, such as:

- 👉 Keep to the time limit. (It could be 6, 8, 10 minutes — whatever works given the total number of teams and how much time you have for this phase of the project).
- 👉 Be sure each member of the team is responsible for part of the presentation, but is prepared to answer questions about any part of the presentation.
- 👉 Be ready to answer questions from the Archbishop and/or representatives from Spain/Mexico.

Remind students that they need to be persuasive and confident. Coach them to use some type of notes to be sure they cover all parts of their proposal.

Assessing and Showcasing Student Work

15 Students present proposals to the Archbishop and/or representatives from Spain/Mexico.

If you wish, involve the class in planning and setting up the presentation day. Think about:

- How students should dress for the occasion
- The order in which teams will present
- How time will be kept and signals will be given when time is running out
- The arrangement of tables, chairs, and presentation materials/equipment
- Handouts for the Archbishop and/or representatives from Spain/Mexico (You could give them the rubric or a set of questions they should or could ask.)
- How guests will be greeted and oriented to their task
- How the class will celebrate a job well done with their guests after presentations are over

Facilitate the presentations. Use the *22nd California Mission Proposal Rubric* to assess each team's presentation. You could also have students assess each other, and do a self-assessment of their team's presentation when it is over.

16 Teacher and students reflect on the project.

After the presentations are all over, conduct a debrief to clarify and consolidate students' understanding of key history facts and concepts (as necessary).

Ask students to reflect (in teams or as a whole-class discussion, or in writing) on what they learned, both in terms of content and 21st century skills.

Finally, reflect on the project itself, so it can be improved for the next time you run it.

Extensions to the Project

- 👉 Teams could correspond with the Archbishop of Mexico, Viceroy of Mexico, or King of Spain. This would allow them to ask questions and clarify any confusion, making it a good formative assessment for the teacher. You could write or read aloud the responses from the Archbishop, Viceroy, or King.
- 👉 Students (in religious schools) could research saints to decide what to name the new mission. Students could invent a saint and his/her biography to name the mission after.
- 👉 Students might like to create short skits or plays about some aspect of their 22nd mission: surveying the land, first meeting with the natives, etc.
- 👉 Students might create journal entries or creative stories about aspects of mission life.
- 👉 Student teams might create a mission board game similar to Life or Monopoly.
- 👉 Consider doing a class play about the California missions. The Bad Wolf Press has created a play called *California Missions and More*, which is appropriate and fun for students to perform.



SECTION IV. Student Handouts

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Name _____ Team _____

What's a Good Place for a Mission?

Answer these questions (in notes and phrases) to help you think about a good location for your team's mission.

1. How far should a mission be from another mission? Why?

2. How far should a mission be from the coast? Why?

3. How can a mission make trade work with ships from Boston, Spain, etc.?

4. What should the land be like where a mission is built? (flat, hilly, forested, etc.)

5. What resources does a mission need to make it a good place for people to construct buildings, live, and raise crops and animals?

6. What does a mission need in relation to the native people in the area?

7. Any other ideas you have: _____



SECTION V. Teacher Materials

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Dear Keepers of the Missions,

The Church is eager to establish another mission, the 22nd, after we build the one now being planned for Sonoma.

The new mission could be anywhere in the northern part of Alta California.

Please tell us exactly where you think the mission should be located and what it should look like, based on your knowledge of the area. When you present your ideas, explain how the mission will help meet our historic and urgent goals for this part of the world.

With gratitude,

Archbishop Fonte

Mexico City

10 June 1818

22nd California Mission Proposal Rubric

	Not at Standard	At Standard	Above Standard
Quality of Proposal: Location (20%)	Location is too far from or too close to other missions. Location shows only some understanding of the resources, geography, etc. that influence the selection of a mission site.	Location is the right distance from other missions. Location shows an understanding of the resources, geography, etc. that influence the selection of a mission site.	+ Location shows creative thinking but still makes sense. + Location is chosen strategically to benefit Spain/Mexico.
Quality of Proposal: Design (20%)	Design of the mission shows only some understanding of the purpose of a mission (housing, work, worship, etc.). Design of the mission is too much of a copy of another mission.	Design of the mission shows a basic understanding of the purpose of a mission (housing, work, worship, etc.). Design of the mission is similar to other missions, but with some new ideas that make sense.	+ Design of the mission shows a deep understanding of the purpose of a mission for this particular location. + Design shows creative thinking but still makes sense for the time & place.
Quality of Proposal: Knowledge & Understanding of History (30%)	Some important historical facts are incorrect. Proposal shows only some understanding of why the missions were built and their impact on native peoples and early California history.	All important historical facts are correct. Proposal shows an understanding of why the missions were built and their impact on native peoples and early California history.	+ All historical facts are correct. + Proposal shows a detailed and thoughtful understanding of why the missions were built and their impact on native peoples and early California history.
Quality of Drawings, Map, Model, Other Visual Aids (30%)	Drawing, model, map and other visual aids are not carefully made, are messy, and have mistakes.	Drawing, model, map and other visual aids are carefully made, neat, and accurate.	+ Visual aids are especially nice-looking, detailed, and have creative touches.