This week your child is reading *Riding Freedom*, a historical story about a heroic stagecoach driver.

**Vocabulary on the Go**  How would the owner of a 19th century stagecoach company try to convince people that riding in a stagecoach is a better way to travel than a railroad? Try to use these words in your discussion.

reputation  relieved  deserve  satisfied  situation

Work with your child to make an advertisement for the stagecoach company.

**Timid Need Not Apply**  Driving a stagecoach was a dangerous job in the past. What job in the present does your child think is dangerous? Have your child list three different kinds of dangerous jobs. Talk about the ways in which the jobs are similar and different.

**In Her Boots**  Have your child take the role of Charlotte, the main character in the story. You play the role of a journalist interviewing Charlotte with these questions:

- Why did you want to take the stagecoach out in such a bad storm?
- Some people say you’re a hero. Are you a hero? Why or why not?
- What advice would you give to someone who wants to drive a stagecoach?
Mark Twain’s Stagecoach Ride  The famous writer Mark Twain made a stagecoach journey from Missouri to Nevada in 1861. He later wrote about his experiences in a book called *Roughing It*. Read and discuss this excerpt with your child.

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**A Stagecoach Ride**

We began to get into country now, threaded here and there with little streams. These had high, steep banks on each side, and every time we flew down one bank and scrambled up the other, our party inside got mixed somewhat. First we would all be down in a pile at the forward end of the stage, nearly in a sitting posture, and in a second, we would shoot to the other end, and stand on our heads. And we would sprawl and kick, too, and ward off ends and corners of mail-bags that came lumbering over us and about us; and as the dust rose from the tumult, we would all sneeze in chorus, and the majority of us would grumble, and probably say some hasty thing like: “Take your elbow out of my ribs!—can’t you quit crowding?”

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**Let Me Tell You**  How would you tell about traveling on a bus, plane, or other vehicle to someone who had never been on that vehicle? Ask your child to tell about a trip in one of these vehicles.

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**Book Links**

- *Magnus at the Fire*, by Jennifer Armstrong
- *A Covered Wagon Girl*, by Sallie Hester

**Internet Challenge**  Help your child search websites of local history organizations to find photos or descriptions of your community from about 150 years ago. If your community isn’t that old, look for information about your general area. Share your observations of roads and transportation back then.