

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Although Athena misses her truck-driving daddy when he's on the road, she thinks he has the most amazing job in the world. She loves showing off her love of all things trucking. But her classmates don't quite get her or why she calls herself Trucker Kid. Can Athena change their minds and show the other students that it's cool to be Trucker Kid? Highlighting a child's pride for a parent's job, author Carol Gordon Ekster and illustrator Russ Cox remind readers of the essential role truck drivers play in their everyday lives.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



**Carol Gordon Ekster**

Carol Gordon Ekster was a passionate fourth-grade teacher for 35 years and started writing picture books near the end of that career. She loved having students respond to her stories and share in her journey to becoming an author. Carol loves biking, yoga, and playing with her grandson when she is not writing. She has never ridden in a truck but hopes to one day. Find out more about Carol and her other books at [carolgordonekster.com](http://carolgordonekster.com).

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



**Russ Cox**

Russ Cox was raised by hillbillies in the backwoods of Tennessee. Without many modern conveniences, like a television or running water, he spent his time drawing, whittling, and throwing dirt clods at his cousins. With the bulk of his life spent in Pennsylvania, he met his wife; became a graphic designer; played in punk, alternative, and surf bands; had two kids; and started his own illustration studio, Smiling Otis Studio. Russ creates his art digitally and traditionally. He lives in Maine with his wife and three cats. Learn more at [smilingotis.com](http://smilingotis.com).

## Before Reading

1. What do you think it means to be a trucker? What do they do?
2. Do you have a family member who goes to work? What are their jobs? Do you think they interact with truckers at their job?
3. When your family member goes to work, how long are they gone? When a teacher goes to their job at school, they are gone from their home and family for about 8 hours. They leave their home in the morning and come back in the evening on the same day. Some people go to work during the day, and some go to work at night. Some people work for longer or shorter amounts of hours at a time during a single day. But truckers have a unique job where they can be gone for days or weeks at a time. Why do you think truckers work for such a long stretch of time before going home?
4. Truckers provide a service (they deliver goods). Why do you think that service is important? What would happen if we didn't have trucker drivers?



## During Reading

1. How does Athena feel when her dad leaves?
2. What are some ways Athena copes with missing her dad?
3. How does Athena feel about her dad and his job?
4. How does the author show you that Athena feels proud/happy?

## After Reading

1. What did you learn about being a trucker?
2. If you could ask Athena's dad a question, what would you ask?
3. What do you do when you're feeling sad or missing someone?

## Extension Activities

### Whole Class Ideas:

1. Brainstorm goods that we have access to, thanks to truckers.
2. As a class or as individuals, write thank you letters to a truck driver.
3. Show pictures of other community helpers and the goods we associate with them: doctors/medicine, restaurateur/food, cashier/toy, postal worker/mail, etc. Ask students to brainstorm how truckers help those community workers do their jobs.
4. Ask students to share a family member's job that they are proud of or why it's important. Then have students draw or write about that person's job.

### Individual Student Ideas:

1. Identify and discuss the meaning of similes. Ask students to make silly drawings that reflect the simile.
  - "She deflates like a tire"
  - "I sleep like a stalled vehicle"
  - "Everyone's interest rises like a liftgate"
  - "Silent as a stop sign"

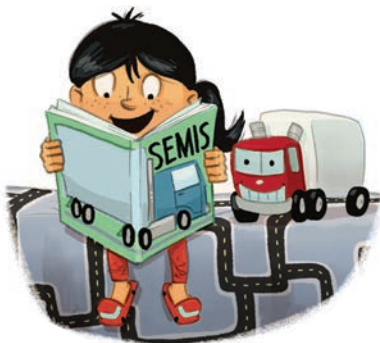


2. Identify and discuss the meaning of metaphors. Ask students to make silly drawings that reflect the metaphor.

- “Out of gas tired”
- “Truckload of clapping”
- “Highbeam smile”

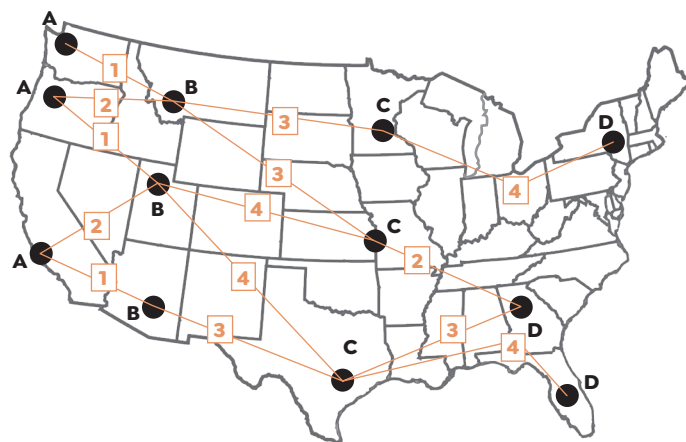
3. Draw yourself as a trucker. What does your truck look like? What do you deliver?

4. Choose a “home” city on the map to begin your route. You need to travel across the country and make at least 3 stops. Where do you go on your route? Use a crayon to highlight your route.

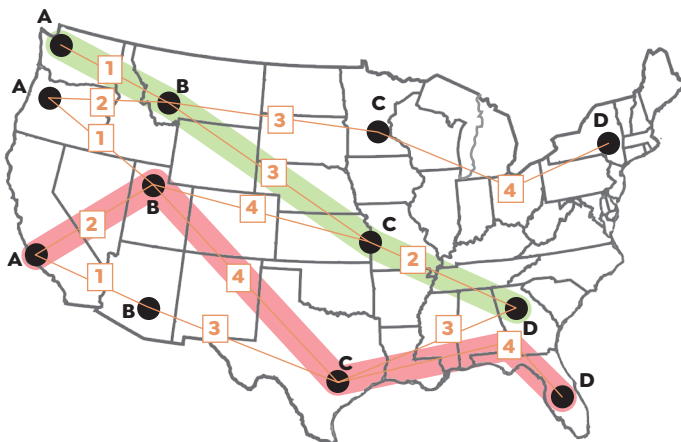


5. You are planning your trucking route and have to make delivery stops at each of an A, B, C, and D. The number of days is labeled between stops. What would be the longest and shortest route you could take? What would be your favorite route?

- Highlight the **longest** route from A-D in **RED**.  
How many days is that trip?\_\_\_\_\_
- Highlight the **shortest** route from A-D in **GREEN**.  
How many days is that trip?\_\_\_\_\_
- Highlight your **favorite** route A-D in **BLUE**.  
How many days is that trip?\_\_\_\_\_



**Answer Key:**



**Longest** route: 10 days

**Shortest** route: 6 days