

## Unit 4: Westward Expansion

### Key Connections:

- Geography influenced the migration and settlement of people in North America.
- The Louisiana Purchase led to geographic and economic expansion of the United States.
  - Technological innovations helped expand the boundaries of the United States.
- The Belief in Manifest Destiny supported the expansion of the United States and the spread of democracy

### **Topic One: Migration and Manifest Destiny**

**Connections to the unit content:** Students learn that the US borders expanded as people chose to migrate to the West and apply knowledge of regional geography to the historical context of Westward Migration. The acquisition of new territory in the West with the Louisiana Purchase opened new lands up for exploration and settlement. Additionally, the transcendent call for Manifest Destiny emboldened Americans to settle West, in fulfillment of their perceived destiny to expand from Atlantic to Pacific. Students will also learn the negative impact of westward expansion on Native Americans who occupied lands west of the original states.

### Key Questions:

- What conditions enabled people to move west?
  - What motivated people to move west?
- What were the effects of Westward Migration on Native Americans?
- How did Westward Migration impact the borders of the United States?

### Description:

Students investigate the causes and effects of Westward Migration. Students explore motivations for westward migration, including Manifest Destiny and economic factors. Finally, students examine the human impact of settlement in the West for both new settlers and Native Americans.

### Activities:

- Students answer the following question: Would you have been a pioneer and migrated West? Students will use evidence from documents to support their response.

Students answer the following question: Was Westward Migration a positive or negative event in the United States history?

### **Topic Two: Transportation and Movement**

**Connections to the unit content:** Students examine the effects of transportation and technology on people, environment, and borders. The development of the Transcontinental Railroad resulted in faster shipment of supplies and materials and made it easier and safer for many Americans to migrate west. When the American labor market could not keep up with the rapid expansion of the railroad, immigrants eagerly filled the jobs and settled near the railroad routes. However, the railroad came with drawbacks for the environment and Native Americans, cutting through Native American lands and destroying animal populations.

### Key Questions:

- What factors led to the development and expansion of the railroad?
- How did the advancements in transportation impact borders of the United States?
- How did the transcontinental railroad affect life for people living in the US, including migrants and Native Americans?
  - How did the transcontinental railroad affect the environment in the West?

### Description:

Students investigate the benefits and drawbacks of the development of the Erie Canal, National Road, and Transcontinental Railroad. Students examine the impact of the railroad as a catalyst to rapid westward expansion while also looking critically at its negative impact of the native people and the environment.

### Activities:

- Students will engage in an activity on the Transcontinental Railroad
- Students will engage in an activity on the types of inventions that aided migration.

## Priority Content and Concepts:

- Explain how the territory of the United States changed with the Louisiana Purchase.
- List the major physical features the U.S. gained in the Louisiana Purchase and their importance (Mississippi River for trade, more land for agricultural production and settlement).
- Explain why Napoleon decided to sell the Louisiana Territory to the U.S.
- Describe the purpose and hazards of the Lewis and Clark expedition (map the territory newly acquired by the U.S., document natural resources, establish trading relationships with Native Americans, open the door for other Americans to move west).
- Explain what the term “Manifest Destiny” means, and how the belief in Manifest Destiny influenced Westward Expansion.
- Identify the impact of the Homestead Act on Western Expansion.
- Explain why Americans wanted to move West (wanted to claim land for farming and economic opportunities, in search of fortune from new natural resources such as gold).
- Describe the experience of pioneers on the Oregon Trail migrating westward (traveling in wagons pulled by mules/oxen, physical risks of the journey, camping, encountering Native Americans, supplies needed).
- Explain the impact of Westward migration and expansion on Native American populations (pushed out of land and forced relocation, loss of resources vital to survival, substantial population losses due to spread of foreign diseases).
- Explain migration patterns as influenced by the belief in Manifest Destiny.
- Explain the negative consequences of the belief in Manifest Destiny (justification for forced cultural assimilation of Native tribes, loss of identity, forced relocation).
- Explain the impact of the cotton gin on America’s economy and western migration (made cotton production more profitable, more Americans wanted to move west to find land to produce cotton, slavery increased with growth of cotton production).
- Explain the impacts of new farming technologies on the economy and settlement in the West (barbed wire, plows, water pumps).
- Explain the impact of the Erie Canal on America’s economy and western migration (easier to transport goods, increased access to fertile farmlands in the west, and helped make New York City a world financial capital).
- Explain the impact of steamships on America’s economy and western migration (faster transport of people and goods).
- Explain the impact of the National Road on migration and the economy.
- Explain the effects of the Transcontinental Railroad on people, migration, and the economy (faster transport for people moving west, easier transport for goods and materials, provided jobs, dangerous to construct, damaging to environment and animals, destructive to Native American lands and hunting).
- Analyze how the physical characteristics of the land in the Midwest and the Great Plains attracted settlers and provided economic opportunity (lots of fertile soil and affordable land for farming or mining).
- Explain how physical features of the Midwest and the Great Plains made for favorable settlement (fertile soil, plentiful land, profitable natural resources).
- Explain how the Transcontinental Railroad and the National Road removed the barrier of the Appalachian Mountains in migrating to the West.
- Define and provide examples of the economic terms human, natural, and capital resources.
- Explain how human, natural, and capital resources were used in cotton production in the South.
- Use the terms profit and risk to discuss cotton production, the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, and farming in the Midwest and Great Plains.
- Investigate how supply, demand, and price impacted cotton production in the South.
- Investigate how the Transcontinental Railroad influenced the supply of goods.

