

Expansion's Turning Points

Trace the causes, events, and consequences of westward expansion.

SS.8.A.4 "Demonstrate an understanding of the domestic and international causes, course, and consequences of westward expansion."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the three reasons in paragraph 1 that people supported expansion, circle each year in paragraph 2, and number the three sentences in paragraph 3, 1-3, to track consequences in order.

Westward Expansion, 1845–1848

- ① During the 1840s, many U.S. leaders and settlers supported Manifest Destiny, the belief that the United States should expand west to the Pacific Ocean. Farmers wanted fertile land, merchants wanted Pacific trade, and some politicians hoped to increase national power. The United States and Britain both claimed Oregon Country. In 1846, they agreed to divide it at the 49th parallel, avoiding war. Expansion also increased conflict because the United States annexed Texas in 1845 after it had been an independent republic.
- ② Mexican leaders had warned that annexing Texas could lead to war. A border dispute followed: Mexico said the boundary was the Nueces River, while the United States claimed the Rio Grande. After fighting began in 1846, U.S. forces captured Mexico City in 1847. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war in 1848. Mexico recognized the Rio Grande as Texas's boundary and ceded California and a vast region that included present-day Nevada, Utah, and parts of several other states.
- ③ The new lands opened routes for settlers and added ports on the Pacific, but they also raised a fierce U.S. debate over whether slavery could spread into western territories. Indigenous nations faced broken treaties, military attacks, and pressure to leave homelands as settlers arrived, while Mexico experienced the loss of land and people as a major national defeat. Gold discovered in California in 1848 drew migrants from the United States and other countries, making the West more internationally connected.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the United States and Britain settle their competing claims to Oregon Country, and what conflict did their agreement avoid?

2 What two different boundary claims helped lead to war between the United States and Mexico?

3 According to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, what boundary did Mexico recognize for Texas, and what lands did Mexico cede?

4 Name one consequence of expansion for Indigenous nations and one consequence for U.S. politics.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly five sentences explaining whether the benefits and costs of westward expansion were shared equally. State a claim, then use details about at least two groups from the passage as evidence.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the three reasons in paragraph 1 that people supported expansion, circle each year in paragraph 2, and number the three sentences in paragraph 3, 1–3, to track consequences in order. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the United States and Britain settle their competing claims to Oregon Country, and what conflict did their agreement avoid?	They divided Oregon Country at the 49th parallel in 1846, avoiding war between the United States and Britain.
2	What two different boundary claims helped lead to war between the United States and Mexico?	Mexico said the Texas boundary was the Nueces River, while the United States claimed it was the Rio Grande.
3	According to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, what boundary did Mexico recognize for Texas, and what lands did Mexico cede?	Mexico recognized the Rio Grande as Texas's boundary and ceded California plus a vast region that included present-day Nevada, Utah, and parts of several other states.
4	Name one consequence of expansion for Indigenous nations and one consequence for U.S. politics.	Indigenous nations faced broken treaties, military attacks, and pressure to leave homelands. In U.S. politics, expansion raised debate over whether slavery could spread into western territories.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Westward expansion did not share benefits equally. Many U.S. settlers gained routes, Pacific ports, and chances connected to California gold. Indigenous nations faced attacks and pressure to leave homelands. Mexico lost land and people after the war. These costs show that expansion brought opportunity to some groups while harming others.

Accept equivalent cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. For the open response, accept a defensible claim that uses accurate evidence about at least two groups and contains exactly five sentences.