Land and Change

Motives and impacts of migration to Oregon

6-12.US1.29 "Analyze the political and individual motivations and the social, political, economic, environmental impacts of individuals who moved West."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle one personal motive for moving West, underline one government motive, and number four impacts, marking each S for social, P for political, E for economic, or N for environmental.

Who Gained Land in Oregon?

1. In the 1840s and 1850s, thousands of people traveled overland to Oregon. Some farm families hoped to own land they could not afford at home; others sought work or a fresh start. The journey cost money and could be deadly, so land was a powerful draw. U.S. leaders also wanted more American settlers in the region. In 1846, the United States and Britain agreed to make the 49th parallel the border across most of the Oregon Country. In 1850, Congress passed the Donation Land Claim Act. It offered qualifying single settlers 320 acres and married couples 640 acres in Oregon Territory.

2. The act offered newcomers land that Native peoples had long lived on and used. As settlers arrived, they formed new towns and schools, but Kalapuya communities in the Willamette Valley faced growing pressure to give up their homelands. In 1855, federal officials signed treaties with Kalapuya leaders; many Kalapuya people were later moved to the Grand Ronde Reservation. This separation disrupted families' ties to familiar places. As the settler population grew, settlers gained political influence. Kalapuya people, meanwhile, lost control over many decisions about land they had relied on for generations.

3. Settler farms produced crops that supported growing towns and trade. Families who gained land could sell crops and build wealth, while Kalapuya communities lost access to some places used for food and gathering. The land itself changed, too. Kalapuya people had long used controlled fires to manage parts of the valley. As farms spread, settlers plowed grasslands, cut trees, and reduced the use of these fires. Crops and livestock replaced some native plants, changing habitats for wildlife. Migration brought economic opportunities for some people, but its costs fell heavily on others and on the environment.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did a farm family's reason for moving to Oregon differ from the U.S. leaders' reason for encouraging settlement?

2. How did the land offered by the Donation Land Claim Act contribute to both a social change and a political change in Oregon?

3. How did the growth of farms affect settlers and Kalapuya communities differently in economic terms?

4. Explain how the spread of farms changed the valley's environment.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a six-sentence letter to an Oregon Territory official in 1856 proposing one rule for establishing new farms. Use the passage to explain a settler's motive, the federal government's motive, and two different impacts of migration, then explain how your rule would address one impact.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.29

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle one personal motive for moving West, underline one government motive, and number four impacts, marking each S for social, P for political, E for economic, or N for environmental. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did a farm family's reason for moving to Oregon differ from the U.S. leaders' reason for encouraging settlement?	**A farm family might seek land it could not afford at home. U.S. leaders wanted more American settlers in the region.**
2	How did the land offered by the Donation Land Claim Act contribute to both a social change and a political change in Oregon?	**The land offer attracted settlers, who formed towns and schools. As their population grew, settlers gained political influence while Kalapuya people lost control over land decisions.**
3	How did the growth of farms affect settlers and Kalapuya communities differently in economic terms?	**Settlers could sell crops and build wealth. Kalapuya communities lost access to some places used for food and gathering.**
4	Explain how the spread of farms changed the valley's environment.	**Settlers plowed grasslands, cut trees, and reduced the use of controlled fires. Crops and livestock replaced some native plants, changing wildlife habitats.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Dear official, a settler family may seek farmland it could not afford elsewhere. Federal leaders wanted more American settlers in Oregon. New farms can bring crops to towns, but they can also take away Kalapuya access to places used for food. Plowing and tree cutting can change wildlife habitats. I propose that officials stop granting new claims on land still used by Kalapuya communities unless those communities freely agree. This rule would help protect access to food sites while allowing communities to consider agreements about farming.

Accept other passage-supported motives and impacts. For the letter, look for one specific proposed rule and a clear explanation of how it addresses an identified impact.