Paths to Expansion

Trace the choices and events that moved U.S. borders west.

6-12.US1.35 "Describe the policies, motivations, and events, and subsequent policies that led to the westward expansion of the United States from 1820-1860, including..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline motivations for moving west, circle events or policies that expanded U.S. territory, and number the effects you find. Use your marks to trace how one development led to another.

How the United States Moved West

1. In the 1820s and 1830s, settlers traveled west for land, trade, and religious freedom. Wagon groups followed the Oregon Trail toward farms in the Northwest and the Santa Fe Trail toward trade in New Mexico, then part of Mexico. Mormons later used the Mormon Trail to seek a place to practice their faith. Many Americans believed in Manifest Destiny, the idea that the United States was meant to spread across the continent. This belief often ignored the rights of Native peoples and Mexican residents.

2. In 1836, Texans rebelled against Mexico and formed an independent republic. The United States annexed Texas in 1845, worsening a border dispute with Mexico. War broke out in 1846. The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War, and Mexico ceded a vast area that included California and New Mexico. Meanwhile, explorer John C. Frémont's expeditions reported on western routes and lands. In 1846, the Oregon Treaty with Britain gave the United States control of the southern part of Oregon Country.

3. Gold discovered in California in 1848 drew thousands of newcomers on the California Trail and by sea. Their arrival sped California's admission as a state in 1850. As the nation grew, leaders argued over whether slavery would be allowed in new territories, while Native peoples faced lost land and forced removal. Expansion continued after 1860: in 1867, the United States bought Alaska from Russia. That purchase falls outside the 1820 to 1860 period, but it shows that the policy of acquiring territory did not end there.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the reasons for using the Oregon, Santa Fe, and Mormon Trails differ?

2. How did annexing Texas help lead to a change in U.S. territory?

3. How did the United States gain land through the Oregon Treaty and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo?

4. How did the California Gold Rush affect statehood, and how was the later purchase of Alaska different?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence editorial set in 1850: Should people celebrate westward expansion without question? Defend your view by linking one motivation, two events or policies, and one effect on people.

ANSWER KEY

Paths to Expansion

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.35

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline motivations for moving west, circle events or policies that expanded U.S. territory, and number the effects you find. Use your marks to trace how one development led to another. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the reasons for using the Oregon, Santa Fe, and Mormon Trails differ?	**Settlers used the Oregon Trail to seek farmland, the Santa Fe Trail for trade, and the Mormon Trail to seek religious freedom.**
2	How did annexing Texas help lead to a change in U.S. territory?	**Annexation worsened a border dispute with Mexico. After the war, Mexico ceded land that included California and New Mexico.**
3	How did the United States gain land through the Oregon Treaty and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo?	**The Oregon Treaty with Britain gave the United States control of southern Oregon Country. The treaty ending the war with Mexico gave it a vast area that included California and New Mexico.**
4	How did the California Gold Rush affect statehood, and how was the later purchase of Alaska different?	**The Gold Rush brought newcomers and sped California's statehood in 1850. Alaska was purchased from Russia in 1867, after the 1820 to 1860 period.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

People should not celebrate westward expansion without question. The hope of farmland drew settlers along the Oregon Trail, and the Oregon Treaty gave the United States control of southern Oregon Country. Gold drew newcomers to California and sped its admission as a state. Expansion also cost Native peoples land.

Accept other accurate links supported by the passage. The editorial should use only developments known by 1850.