Expansion for Whom?

Rights and opportunities in a changing nation

6-12.US1.54 "Describe the impact of geographic expansion during the late 19th century on the political, legal, and social rights of various groups and individuals..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline places where rights or opportunities expanded, and circle places where they were limited. Number one pair of details that shows a contrast between groups.

A Growing Country, Unequal Rights

1 As rail lines pushed west after the Civil War, new towns needed workers and new governments set rules. Chinese laborers helped build the Central Pacific Railroad through the Sierra Nevada, often doing dangerous work for low pay. Yet their work did not bring equal treatment. In Wyoming Territory, lawmakers granted women the vote in 1869. This expanded women's political rights there, though women in most other parts of the country still could not vote.

2 Black soldiers known as Buffalo Soldiers served in the U.S. Army on the western frontier. They built roads and fought Native peoples as the Army seized western lands, but they also faced racism. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, barring most Chinese laborers from entering the United States. This law limited immigration even as railroads and towns had relied on Chinese workers. Irish immigrants faced anti-Catholic prejudice and bias in hiring, including in growing cities.

3 Even as the country expanded west, rights shrank in the South. Black men had gained voting rights after the Civil War, but by the late 1800s many southern states used poll taxes and literacy tests to keep them from voting. These rules sharply reduced Black political power. Segregation laws also separated Black and white people in public places. Across the country, decisions about land, labor, and belonging could widen one group's rights while narrowing another's.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did political rights change differently for women in Wyoming Territory and Black men in the South?

2. How did the treatment of Chinese laborers contrast with their role in western expansion?

3. How did Buffalo Soldiers help expand U.S. control while facing unequal treatment themselves?

4. How could growing cities offer Irish immigrants opportunities while still limiting them?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about who gained rights or opportunities as the United States expanded and who faced limits. Use three groups from the passage, including at least one political or legal change and one social effect.

ANSWER KEY

Expansion for Whom?

GRADES 6-12 · 6-12.US1.54

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline places where rights or opportunities expanded, and circle places where they were limited. Number one pair of details that shows a contrast between groups. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did political rights change differently for women in Wyoming Territory and Black men in the South?	**Wyoming Territory granted women the vote in 1869, while southern poll taxes and literacy tests kept many Black men from voting.**
2	How did the treatment of Chinese laborers contrast with their role in western expansion?	**Chinese laborers helped build the Central Pacific Railroad, but the Chinese Exclusion Act barred most Chinese laborers from entering the United States.**
3	How did Buffalo Soldiers help expand U.S. control while facing unequal treatment themselves?	**They built roads and fought Native peoples as the Army seized western lands, yet they faced racism.**
4	How could growing cities offer Irish immigrants opportunities while still limiting them?	**Growing cities offered work, but anti-Catholic prejudice and hiring bias limited Irish immigrants' opportunities.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As the United States expanded, rights and opportunities did not expand equally. Wyoming Territory gave women the vote in 1869, increasing their political voice there. Chinese workers helped build the Central Pacific Railroad, but a federal law in 1882 barred most Chinese laborers from entering the country. Irish immigrants faced anti-Catholic prejudice and hiring bias in growing cities, showing that expansion could create work without ending social exclusion.

Accept other supported contrasts, including the loss of Black voting rights in the South or the racism Buffalo Soldiers faced. The museum label should use three groups and distinguish a political or legal change from a social effect.