

Tracks, Land, Loss

Compare how federal expansion policies affected the economy and Native nations.

11.4c "Federal policies regarding westward expansion had positive effects on the national economy but negative consequences for Native Americans."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline economic benefits of federal policies. Circle harms to Native nations. Connect each effect to the policy that helped cause it.

Federal Expansion and Its Costs

- ① The Homestead Act (1862) offered eligible settlers claims of up to 160 acres, usually requiring five years of residence and improvement plus fees. The Pacific Railway Act (1862) supported railroad construction through federal loans and land grants. Farms and railroads connected western production with distant markets, expanding trade and investment. These policies benefited many settlers and businesses, but the land was not empty: Native nations already held homelands and treaty rights.
- ② Settlement and railroad expansion increased pressure on Native lands. Commercial buffalo hunting and other disruptions damaged food supplies and livelihoods. Federal warfare and coercive policies confined many communities to reservations and restricted movement. Officials claimed they were protecting Native peoples, yet dispossession and outside control threatened Native sovereignty. Reservations did not erase Native nationhood; communities continued resisting and defending their lands and cultures.
- ③ The Dawes Act (1887) authorized dividing many tribal lands into individual allotments. Land designated "surplus" was opened to non-Native settlement, contributing to enormous losses of Native land. Officials promoted private farming and assimilation into white American society. Boarding schools pursued assimilation too. At Carlisle, children were separated from families and forbidden to speak Native languages. Allotment targeted landholding and governance; schools targeted cultural continuity. Economic expansion for some thus accompanied dispossession and coercion for others.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Homestead Act and the Pacific Railway Act help expand the national economy?

2 Explain one way westward expansion harmed Native communities, according to the passage.

3 What did officials say reservations would do? What harmful effect did reservations have on Native peoples?

4 What was one goal shared by the Dawes Act and federal boarding schools such as Carlisle?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a three-sentence historical claim about federal westward-expansion policies. Name two policies, explain one economic benefit, and explain one consequence for Native Americans using evidence from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline economic benefits of federal policies. Circle harms to Native nations. Connect each effect to the policy that helped cause it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Homestead Act and the Pacific Railway Act help expand the national economy?	The Homestead Act encouraged settlement and farming, while the Pacific Railway Act supported rail construction that moved western goods to eastern markets.
2	Explain one way westward expansion harmed Native communities, according to the passage.	Settlement and railroads increased pressure on Native lands; buffalo destruction damaged livelihoods, and coercive federal policies restricted movement.
3	What did officials say reservations would do? What harmful effect did reservations have on Native peoples?	Officials said reservations would protect Native people and reduce conflict. Reservations restricted movement and weakened tribal control over land.
4	What was one goal shared by the Dawes Act and federal boarding schools such as Carlisle?	Both promoted assimilation into white American society, undermining Native landholding, governance or cultural continuity.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Federal westward-expansion policies increased national wealth, but they harmed Native sovereignty. The Pacific Railway Act helped connect western products with eastern markets, supporting trade and settlement. The Dawes Act broke reservation lands into individual allotments and opened surplus land to non-Native settlers, reducing tribal landholdings.

Accept supported comparisons naming two policies, an economic benefit and a Native consequence. Native peoples retained nationhood and resisted; neither western land nor Native cultures were empty or absent.