Three Paths West

Compare the hopes, hardships, and effects of westward migration

8.C.9.2.D "Compare the motivations and experiences of individuals and groups who seized opportunities of the West, including those engaged in the California Gold Rush, the settlement of Oregon, and the Mormon migration."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each reason people moved west, circle a hardship they faced, and number the groups 1, 2, and 3 as they appear. Use your marks to compare what the groups hoped to gain and what they experienced.

Different Hopes, Shared Ground

(1) In 1848, news of gold found at Sutter's Mill drew people toward California. Some miners hoped one lucky strike would change their lives; merchants saw a chance to sell food and tools. Travelers came from the eastern United States and from places such as China, Mexico, and Chile. Many spent savings on difficult journeys, only to find crowded claims and costly supplies. California's Native peoples faced violence and the loss of land as newcomers rushed into their homelands. Opportunity for one group could mean disaster for another.

(2) Other families followed the Oregon Trail in the 1840s and 1850s, seeking farmland and a place to build permanent homes rather than a quick windfall. They packed wagons with supplies for months of travel. Rivers, disease, and shortages threatened people along the route; some never reached Oregon. Settlers who arrived claimed land already used and lived on by Native nations, including the Cayuse and Kalapuya. Unlike miners searching for gold, many Oregon migrants planned to farm, but both groups accepted dangerous travel for the hope of a better future.

(3) Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, often called Mormons, moved west for a different reason. After facing hostility and violence in earlier settlements, they sought a place where they could practice their faith together. In 1847, wagon companies reached the Salt Lake Valley, then part of Mexico, and began building farms and canals. The journey brought illness and hunger, while settlement placed new demands on lands and water used by Native peoples. Like Oregon families, these migrants planned lasting communities, but religious safety was central to their move.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the hopes of many California miners differ from those of Oregon families?

2. What did Oregon families and Mormon migrants both plan to build? What different reason was central to the Mormon migration?

3. Compare one difficulty California miners faced with one difficulty Mormon migrants faced.

4. How did the experiences of Native peoples in California and the Salt Lake Valley differ as newcomers arrived?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a six-sentence letter to a cousin who claims that everyone went west for the same reason. Compare the hopes of all three groups, contrast two difficulties they faced, and explain one effect on Native peoples using details from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Three Paths West

GRADE 8 · 8.C.9.2.D

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each reason people moved west, circle a hardship they faced, and number the groups 1, 2, and 3 as they appear. Use your marks to compare what the groups hoped to gain and what they experienced. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the hopes of many California miners differ from those of Oregon families?	**Many miners hoped for a lucky gold strike, while Oregon families sought farmland and permanent homes.**
2	What did Oregon families and Mormon migrants both plan to build? What different reason was central to the Mormon migration?	**Both planned lasting communities. Mormon migrants especially sought a place to practice their faith after facing hostility and violence.**
3	Compare one difficulty California miners faced with one difficulty Mormon migrants faced.	**Miners found crowded claims and costly supplies. Mormon migrants faced illness and hunger on the journey.**
4	How did the experiences of Native peoples in California and the Salt Lake Valley differ as newcomers arrived?	**California's Native peoples faced violence and land loss, while Native peoples near the Salt Lake Valley faced new demands on lands and water they used.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

You say everyone went west for the same reason, but these travelers had different hopes. Some California miners sought a lucky gold strike, while merchants hoped to sell supplies. Many Oregon families wanted farms and permanent homes. Mormon migrants sought a place to practice their faith and build a community. Miners found crowded claims and costly supplies, while Mormon migrants faced illness and hunger. Newcomers also affected Native peoples: in California, they took land and brought violence.

Accept other accurate comparisons supported by the passage. For the letter, look for distinct hopes for all three groups, a contrast between two difficulties, and a specific effect on Native peoples.