Westward Ripples

Trace how migration changed homelands and national politics.

8.C.9.2.E "Describe the impact of westward migration on American Indian culture, homelands, Tribal sovereignty, and the growing sectional tensions regarding the expansion of slavery in new territories."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two effects of migration on American Indian homelands or daily life, and circle the sentence that explains Tribal sovereignty. Label 1 and 2 on the sentences that show how California's growth led to a dispute over slavery.

More Than a Journey West

1. In the 1840s, wagon trains rolled along the Platte River toward Oregon and California. The route passed through lands used and governed by American Indian nations, including the Lakota and Cheyenne. More travelers meant less grass for horses and bison and more competition for water and game. Illnesses brought by newcomers also harmed communities. When hunting grounds changed or families had to move, people faced new obstacles to gathering food and passing on knowledge tied to those places. Westward travel reshaped daily life even where settlers did not build towns.

2. The U.S. government signed the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 with several Plains nations. It recognized Tribal territories and promised payments to the nations in exchange for allowing roads and safe passage for travelers. A treaty acknowledged that these nations had authority over their lands, a part of Tribal sovereignty. Yet continuing migration and broken federal promises made that authority harder to exercise. Farther west, the California gold rush drew miners onto American Indian homelands. Mining damaged streams and hunting areas, while violence drove many Native people from their communities.

3. Westward migration also forced Congress to ask whether slavery would spread into lands gained from Mexico in 1848. After the gold rush drew thousands west, California sought statehood. Northern and southern lawmakers disagreed because new states could shift the balance of power in Congress. The Compromise of 1850 admitted California as a free state but allowed settlers in the Utah and New Mexico territories to decide slavery's future. That plan did not end sectional tension. In 1854, Congress let settlers vote on slavery in Kansas and Nebraska, and violence followed in Kansas.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How could travel along the Platte River affect the passing on of knowledge in American Indian families?

2. How did the California gold rush affect American Indian homelands and communities?

3. How did the Fort Laramie Treaty recognize Tribal sovereignty, and how did migration make that sovereignty harder to exercise?

4. Why did California's growth increase sectional tension, even after the Compromise of 1850?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label about how westward movement affected both American Indian communities and the national debate over slavery. Use at least two specific details from the passage, and explain how they fit into the larger story of migration.

ANSWER KEY

Westward Ripples

GRADE 8 · 8.C.9.2.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two effects of migration on American Indian homelands or daily life, and circle the sentence that explains Tribal sovereignty. Label 1 and 2 on the sentences that show how California's growth led to a dispute over slavery. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How could travel along the Platte River affect the passing on of knowledge in American Indian families?	**Travelers changed hunting grounds and competed for resources. Families who had to move faced obstacles to passing on knowledge tied to those places.**
2	How did the California gold rush affect American Indian homelands and communities?	**Miners entered American Indian homelands and damaged streams and hunting areas. Violence drove many Native people from their communities.**
3	How did the Fort Laramie Treaty recognize Tribal sovereignty, and how did migration make that sovereignty harder to exercise?	**The treaty recognized Tribal territories and the nations' authority over their lands. Continuing migration and broken federal promises made that authority harder to exercise.**
4	Why did California's growth increase sectional tension, even after the Compromise of 1850?	**California sought statehood after the gold rush, raising concerns about the balance of power between free and slave states. The compromise admitted California as a free state but left slavery's future unsettled in other territories.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A westbound wagon could affect more than the people riding in it. Along the Platte River, travelers' animals used grass needed by horses and bison on American Indian homelands. After the gold rush drew thousands west, California sought statehood, and lawmakers worried that a new state could shift the balance of power over slavery. Westward movement disrupted life on Tribal homelands while also sharpening a national political divide.

Accept other passage-based effects on culture, homelands, or sovereignty when students explain the connection to migration. For the museum label, look for four sentences, at least two accurate details, and a connection between local and national impacts.