

Tools, Laws, and Land

Trace how westward growth changed lives and places.

USII.1 "The student will apply history and social science skills to examine westward expansion after the mid-19th century by explaining how technology allowed settlers to adapt to the physical features and climate of the West..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each technology or government action in the passage. Circle the words that explain what it helped cause or change.

Moving West, Changing the Nation

- ① After the mid-1800s, many settlers moved into the West, where grasslands, mountains, deserts, and wide rivers shaped daily life. On the Great Plains, tough prairie sod could break wooden plows. John Deere's steel plow cut through it more easily. Windmills pumped groundwater where streams were scarce, and barbed wire helped ranchers fence open land. Railroads carried people, tools, lumber, and crops over long distances. These technologies did not remove every hardship, but they helped newcomers farm, raise animals, and build towns in unfamiliar climates.
- ② People had several reasons to go west. Some hoped to find gold or silver, while others wanted farmland, ranching land, or a new start. The Homestead Act of 1862 offered up to 160 acres of public land to eligible settlers who lived on and improved it for five years. The federal government also gave large land grants to railroad companies. Railroads advertised western land and made travel faster. These laws and policies encouraged settlement, helping the United States extend farms, towns, businesses, and government control westward.
- ③ Westward growth came at a severe cost to Indigenous peoples, who already lived across the region. The United States made treaties that recognized some tribal lands, but officials and settlers often broke those agreements when they wanted land or resources. For example, the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 recognized Lakota control of the Black Hills, yet the United States took the area after gold was found. Military force, reservation policies, and the killing of buffalo disrupted communities, limited movement, and caused loss of land, lives, and traditions. Indigenous nations resisted and worked to preserve their people and cultures.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Choose two technologies from the passage. Explain how each one helped settlers adapt to a physical feature or climate challenge in the West.

2 What were two reasons people moved west? How did the Homestead Act support one of those reasons?

3 How did federal land grants to railroad companies contribute to western settlement and national growth?

4 Use the Fort Laramie Treaty example to explain one effect of United States growth on Indigenous people.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly four sentences about an imagined family moving to the West. Include one physical or climate challenge, one technology that helps the family, one motivation or federal policy, and one effect that settlement could have on Indigenous people.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each technology or government action in the passage. Circle the words that explain what it helped cause or change. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Choose two technologies from the passage. Explain how each one helped settlers adapt to a physical feature or climate challenge in the West.	The steel plow cut through tough prairie sod. Windmills pumped groundwater where streams were scarce. Barbed wire also helped ranchers fence open land.
2	What were two reasons people moved west? How did the Homestead Act support one of those reasons?	People moved west to seek gold or silver, farmland, ranching land, or a new start. The Homestead Act offered eligible settlers up to 160 acres of public land if they lived on and improved it for five years.
3	How did federal land grants to railroad companies contribute to western settlement and national growth?	The grants supported railroad companies, whose railroads advertised western land and made travel faster. This encouraged settlement and helped the United States extend towns, businesses, and government control westward.
4	Use the Fort Laramie Treaty example to explain one effect of United States growth on Indigenous people.	The treaty recognized Lakota control of the Black Hills, but the United States took the area after gold was found. This shows how expansion often broke treaty promises and caused Indigenous people to lose land.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

An imagined family moved to the dry Plains because it wanted a farm of its own. A windmill pumped groundwater, so the family could get water when nearby streams were scarce. The Homestead Act offered a path to claim land if settlers lived on and improved it. This settlement could add pressure to Indigenous people because the United States often confined them to reservations and did not honor many treaty promises.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations from the passage. For the open response, check for exactly four sentences and all four required ideas, including a historically accurate effect on Indigenous people.