

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Manifest Destiny or Imperial Overreach? 12th Grade History Quiz

Goes beyond basic dates to analyze the Gadsden Purchase, the Oregon Boundary Dispute, and the ideological shifts in 19th-century American expansionism.

1. Which 1840s geopolitical concept, popularized by John L. O'Sullivan, argued that American expansion was not merely a political choice but a divinely ordained necessity to spread democratic institutions?

Answer: B) Manifest Destiny

Manifest Destiny provided the ideological and moral justification for westward expansion, framing it as an inevitable and God-given right to occupy the continent.

2. In 1853, the United States finalized the _____, a \$10 million land acquisition from Mexico intended to facilitate the construction of a southern transcontinental railroad route.

Answer: C) Gadsden Purchase

The Gadsden Purchase secured land in present-day Arizona and New Mexico, representing the final major territorial acquisition in the contiguous United States.

3. The 'Fifty-Four Forty or Fight' slogan referred to a diplomatic dispute with Russia over the boundary of the Alaska Territory.

Answer: B) False

False. The slogan referred to the Oregon Boundary Dispute with Great Britain; the matter was eventually settled at the 49th parallel via the Oregon Treaty of 1846.

4. How did the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo fundamentally transform the internal political landscape of the United States regarding the 'peculiar institution'?

Answer: C) It reignited the sectional crisis over the extension of slavery into new territories.

The acquisition of the Mexican Cession forced Congress to confront whether the new lands would be 'slave' or 'free,' leading to the Wilmot Proviso and the Compromise of 1850.

5. The _____ of 1862 was a pivotal piece of legislation that incentivized western settlement by offering 160 acres of public land to any head of household, provided they 'improved' the land.

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Answer: B) Homestead Act

The Homestead Act democratized land ownership but also accelerated the displacement of Native American tribes from their ancestral hunting grounds.

6. The 'Frontier Thesis,' proposed by Frederick Jackson Turner in 1893, argued that the existence of an open frontier was the primary driver of American democracy and national character.

Answer: A) True

Turner's thesis suggested that the challenge of the frontier broke down European social structures and fostered a rugged, individualistic American identity.

7. Which indigenous resistance movement, led by the Nez Perce in 1877, involved a 1,170-mile retreat toward Canada to avoid forced relocation to a reservation?

Answer: A) Chief Joseph's Campaign

Chief Joseph led the Nez Perce in a brilliant tactical retreat that garnered national sympathy, though they were ultimately captured just miles from the border.

8. The _____ of 1887 sought to end tribal land ownership by allocating individual plots to Native Americans, a policy of forced cultural assimilation that resulted in the loss of millions of acres of tribal land.

Answer: C) Dawes Severalty Act

The Dawes Act undermined tribal sovereignty by replacing communal land-holding with private property, often leaving 'surplus' land to be sold to white settlers.

9. The Wilmot Proviso was a successful piece of legislation that permanently banned slavery in all territories gained during the Mexican-American War.

Answer: B) False

False. While it passed the House of Representatives multiple times, the Wilmot Proviso was repeatedly defeated in the Senate and never became law.

10. Which demographic group, often called 'Exodusters,' migrated to Kansas in the late 1870s to escape the oppressive 'Redemption' era of the post-Reconstruction South?

Answer: B) African Americans

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Exodusters were Black migrants who left the South for Kansas, seeking political freedom and economic independence through the Homestead Act.