

Name: _____ Date: _____

Answer Key: Wrangle the Frontier: Your 5th Grade Westward Expansion Challenge

Synthesize historical perspectives and analyze the complex consequences of the Great Plains migration in this rigorous inquiry-based assessment.

1. The concept of 'Manifest Destiny' was a powerful ideology in the 1840s. Which statement best synthesizes how this belief influenced US government policy?

Answer: B) It provided a moral justification for territorial acquisition across the continent.

Manifest Destiny was the 19th-century belief that the expansion of the US throughout the American continents was both justified and inevitable, driving political decisions to acquire new territories.

2. The 'Exodusters' were African Americans who migrated to Kansas after the Civil War to escape the Jim Crow South and seek economic opportunity through the Homestead Act.

Answer: A) True

The Exoduster movement was a significant migration of Black Southerners to the West, representing a search for freedom and land ownership outside of the post-Reconstruction South.

3. In the mid-1800s, many Chinese immigrants traveled to the American West primarily to work on the _____ and in mining camps, facing significant discrimination despite their essential labor.

Answer: C) Transcontinental Railroad

Chinese immigrants provided the bulk of the difficult labor for the Central Pacific Railroad, playing a critical role in connecting the nation's coasts.

4. Which of these technological innovations most directly caused the end of the 'Open Range' era for cowboys and cattle drives?

Answer: B) Barbed Wire

Barbed wire allowed farmers and ranchers to fence off their land cheaply, preventing cattle from roaming freely and effectively ending the era of long-distance cattle drives.

5. The _____ was a religious movement among Native American tribes in the late 1800s that hoped to see the return of the buffalo and the disappearance of white settlers, which the US government viewed as a threat.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Answer: B) Ghost Dance

The Ghost Dance was a spiritual movement that spread across the Plains; the US government's fear of this movement eventually led to the tragedy at Wounded Knee.

6. The Mexican-American War ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which resulted in the United States acquiring a vast territory known as the Mexican Cession.

Answer: A) True

This treaty added 525,000 square miles to United States territory, including present-day California, Nevada, Utah, and parts of neighboring states.

7. How did the disappearance of the American Buffalo (Bison) affect the Plains Indians' way of life?

Answer: C) It destroyed their primary source of food, clothing, and shelter, forcing reservation dependency.

The Buffalo was central to the survival and culture of Plains tribes; the systematic destruction of the herds was a tactic used to force tribes onto reservations.

8. The _____ of 1848-1855 saw over 300,000 people rush to the West Coast, sparking rapid statehood for California but also leading to the devastation of local Indigenous populations.

Answer: C) California Gold Rush

The Gold Rush caused a massive population boom and fast-tracked California's admission to the Union, but resulted in the 'California Genocide' of Native Americans.

9. The Gadsden Purchase was an agreement where the US bought a strip of land from Mexico primarily to provide a flat southern route for a transcontinental railroad.

Answer: A) True

The 1853 Gadsden Purchase finalized the southern border of the continental US specifically because the terrain was better suited for rail tracks than the northern mountains.

10. Analyzing the 'Frontier Thesis' by Frederick Jackson Turner, what was his main argument about the impact of the West on the American identity?

Answer: B) He suggested that the frontier experience fostered democracy and individualism.

Turner's famous thesis argued that the constant move westward and the challenges of the frontier defined the unique characteristics of American democracy and self-reliance.

Name: _____

Date: _____