

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Answer Key: Seward's Folly or Fortune? A 10th Grade Westward Expansion Quiz

Territorial acquisition, resource extraction, and infrastructure development—uncover the economic motivations that transformed the American map during the late 19th century.

---

**1. Which 1867 land acquisition was mockingly referred to by contemporary critics as 'Seward's Icebox' before valuable resources were discovered there?**

**Answer:** B) The Alaska Purchase

Secretary of State William Seward negotiated the purchase of Alaska from Russia; while initially ridiculed, it later proved vital for gold and oil resources.

**2. The \_\_\_\_\_ of 1862 was instrumental in the 'Closing of the Frontier' by providing legal land titles to settlers, provided they improved the land.**

**Answer:** C) Homestead Act

The Homestead Act allowed any adult citizen to claim 160 acres of surveyed government land, accelerating the migration of families to the West.

**3. The 'Exodusters' were African Americans who migrated from the post-Reconstruction South to Kansas in search of economic opportunity and political freedom.**

**Answer:** A) True

The Exoduster movement was the first general migration of black people following the Civil War, specifically targeting the Great Plains.

**4. Which technological innovation was most responsible for ending the era of the 'Open Range' in the American West?**

**Answer:** B) Barbed Wire

Joseph Glidden's invention of barbed wire allowed farmers to fence off their property, making the long cattle drives of the open range era impossible.

**5. The \_\_\_\_\_, completed in 1853, was a strip of land in present-day Arizona and New Mexico purchased to facilitate a southern transcontinental railroad route.**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Answer:** B) Gadsden Purchase

The Gadsden Purchase was the final major land acquisition in the contiguous United States, intended to provide a flat route for railroads.

**6. The discovery of the Comstock Lode in Nevada primarily produced massive amounts of gold, sparking the initial 1849 migration.**

**Answer:** B) False

The Comstock Lode was the first major silver discovery in the U.S. and occurred in 1859, a decade after the 1849 California Gold Rush.

**7. Which conflict in 1864 involved a massacre of Cheyenne and Arapaho people by U.S. volunteer militia, signaling an escalation in the Indian Wars?**

**Answer:** A) Sand Creek Massacre

The Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado saw the destruction of a peaceful village, highlighting the brutal tensions between settlers and Indigenous nations.

**8. The 1862 \_\_\_\_\_ established 'land-grant' colleges to provide instruction in agriculture and the 'mechanic arts' to support western development.**

**Answer:** C) Morrill Act

The Morrill Land-Grant Acts gave states federal land to sell, using the profits to fund universities that would modernize western farming.

**9. The 'Frontier Thesis,' proposed by Frederick Jackson Turner, argued that the American identity was forged by the experience of westward expansion.**

**Answer:** A) True

Turner's thesis suggested that the challenge of the frontier promoted democracy and individualism in American culture.

**10. Which immigrant group provided the bulk of the labor for the Central Pacific Railroad as it built eastward from California?**

**Answer:** C) Chinese immigrants

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Thousands of Chinese laborers endured dangerous conditions to blast tunnels through the Sierra Nevada mountains for the railroad.