

UNIT 6 UNITED STATES HISTORY LESSON 1

Summary

- In this lesson, students will read pages 48–59 of Chapter 3, "The New Republic: A Country on the Move," in their Readers. They will examine the impact of American expansion on Native American civilizations.

Social Studies Background

In the decades following the Revolutionary War, Americans continued to wrestle with many issues. One of those was the question of westward expansion.

When the British controlled the Colonies, they had prohibited settlers from moving west of the Appalachian Mountains, primarily to maintain peace with Native American tribes. Now that obstacle was removed. And in 1803, President Thomas Jefferson purchased a mass of land in the central part of North America for \$15 million from the French. Known as the Louisiana Purchase, it more than doubled the size of the new nation.

This was a great triumph for Jefferson, and it opened the gates for American settlers to move west. Native Americans resisted in many ways, including aligning themselves with the British during the War of 1812. A British victory, they hoped, would stop the westward expansion.

When Americans won that war, Native Americans were faced with two options: assimilate and adopt the ways of white Americans or resist and fight to save their own cultures. In the end, neither resistance nor assimilation prevented the mass destruction of Native American communities.

ENGAGE

Encourage students to flip through the assigned pages and turn and talk with a partner to discuss what they see. Invite students to ask questions or share what they already know about American westward expansion.

EXPLORE

Instruct students to examine the map and read the text on page 56 of their Readers. **Ask:** *What does this map show?* (who controls areas in North America) Challenge students to identify who is being overlooked (Native Americans) and what a map like this means for their civilizations.

EXPLAIN

Point out to students that as Americans began to establish their new government they also sought to expand the country's size. **Ask:** *How did Thomas Jefferson make this possible?* (He bought the Louisiana Purchase, which then doubled the size of the country.) Have students turn and talk as they discuss reasons why westward expansion prompted many Native American tribes to ally with the British during the War of 1812. Encourage students to discuss the options left for Native Americans after America won that war (assimilate or resist) and reasons why neither option led to a good outcome for them in the coming years. Finally, have students reflect upon the treatment of Native Americans to determine whether or not it conflicts with American values of courage, independence, expansion, and freedom that prevailed at that time.

ELABORATE

Use the National Geographic lesson plan "Westward Expansion Through Maps" (www.nationalgeographic.org/media/westward-expansion-through-maps/) to challenge students to use maps to consider multiple perspectives on westward expansion.

EVALUATE

Have students complete the **Content Assessment** for this lesson. Encourage them to share and compare their results in small groups.

CONTENT ASSESSMENT: Westward Expansion and Native Americans

Read these quotes from great Native Americans. Then answer the questions.

<p><i>"When a writing was made for the Cherokee, then...the Cherokee would be of equal understanding with the white man." —Sequoyah</i></p>	<p><i>"These lands are ours. No one has a right to remove us.... The Great Spirit above has appointed this place for us." —Tecumseh</i></p>
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How do these quotes reflect the reality of American expansion on Native American cultures?

Based on what you've learned, do you think America's westward expansion conflicted with American values at the time? Why or why not?
