

# Westward Expansion – Educator Guide

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The following activities and assessment ideas will help students address these guiding questions for this interactive.

- Why did people move west, and how does the timing of events relate to the date that territory entered the union?
- What were the impacts—environmental, economic, and human—of westward expansion?

## Middle School

### Reasons for Moving West

**Learning Objective:** Students will explore the diversity of reasons for westward expansion in the United States.

- Have students access the **Westward Expansion** interactive map (<http://mapmaker.annenberg.org/Fyszda6jOcfmy7ymM1AM/>) individually or in small groups, or project the map for a whole class activity. Click on the individual bookmarked maps in order and have students read the overview text by clicking the small “i” in the lower right corner of each bookmark. Then, have students read the information provided in the markers.
- Have students work in small groups of 3-4 students each. *Note:* Suggestions for increasing the effectiveness of group work can be found in the Annenberg Learner article “**Groups, Projects, and Presentations**” at <http://www.learner.org/libraries/socialstudies/issues/groups/index.html>
- Ask each group to select one of the topics/bookmarked maps and create a poster that describes and illustrates that reason for westward expansion. For example, if a group selects the Homestead Act of 1862, they might include photos or drawings of sod houses or pioneers, along with text boxes providing key facts about the Homestead Act and key people involved in the act or topic.
- Have students also include on their posters a map of the impacted region(s) and a timeline that shows the start of the events covered and the date(s) of statehood for the states in the impacted region(s). When done, have students display their posters around the classroom and have a “poster walk” so everyone can see other groups’ posters.
- Assessment:
  - Assess small group work through observation during the development of their posters.
  - Individual assessment: Ask students to create a timeline that includes the key events impacting westward expansion and the years for statehood in the impacted states. Then have each student review the posters again and select one—not the one they worked on—or one of the reasons not depicted in a poster (from the interactive map bookmarks) and write a short explanation of why that event was important in westward expansion.

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## Impacts of Westward Expansion

**Learning Objective:** Students will identify causes and impacts of westward expansion.

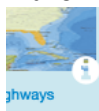
- Lead a discussion of the meaning of the word “impact”. Ask students where they have heard or used the word before. Ask students to provide examples of events and their impacts.
- Assign students to access the **Westward Expansion** interactive map (<http://mapmaker.annenberg.org/FyszdA6jOctfmy7ymM1AM/>) and read through the information in the sequence of bookmarked maps. If there are enough computers, have students do this individually, if not, they might also do this in pairs or small groups.
- Assessment: Have students draw two columns on a sheet of paper or Word document. Label one column “Cause” and the other “Impact.” Ask students to use the information in the interactive map to list at least two impact causes in the Cause column and then list an impact for each in the Impact column.

## High School

### Reasons for Westward Expansion

**Learning Objective:** Students will identify the push and pull factors that for westward migration in the U.S..

- Attach two large pieces of poster paper to the classroom wall and pass out a supply of sticky notes to students. Label one poster “Push Factors” and the other poster “Pull Factors”. Ask students to write causes for people leaving a place, one per sticky note. Ask them to create as many causes/sticky notes as possible and then add them to the Push poster. Then ask students to think about what draws people to a new place, and have them follow the same procedure with the sticky notes—this time putting their notes on the Pull poster.
- Ask students to think about the early days of our country—the time when people were starting to leave the East and move west. Give students colored sticky dots and ask them to go back to the Push and Pull posters and put a colored dot on every push or pull factor that they think may have been causes for westward migration.
- Have students access the **Westward Expansion** interactive map (<http://mapmaker.annenberg.org/FyszdA6jOctfmy7ymM1AM/>) individually or in small groups, or project the map for a whole class activity. Click on the individual bookmarked maps in order and have students read the overview text by clicking the small “i” in the lower right corner of each bookmark. Then, have students read the information provided in the markers on the maps.



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- Ask students to return once again to the Push and Pull posters and review what they had indicated as possible push and pull factors for westward migration. Have them add any factors they learned from the interactive that weren't already on the posters. (The interactive primarily describes pull factors, so you may wish to have students do some research on possible push factors prior to this step.)
- Assessment:
  - Class assessment: Evaluate group participation in the group work and discussions.
  - Individual assessment: Have students research one of the pull factors in westward expansion in the U.S. and write a short essay describing the factor and its impact on westward expansion, including any outcomes that are relevant.

## Impacts of Westward Expansion

**Learning Objective:** Students will research and report on impacts of westward expansion in U.S. history.

- Lead students in a discussion of the word “impact.” Ask them to share examples of an environmental impact, an economic/socioeconomic impact, or a human impact. Prompt by asking to respond to this or a similar question: “When have you seen one action or decision create an environmental/economic/human impact?” Responses might include examples from recent events, such as toxic waste polluting rivers, higher interest rates impacting car sales, or rises in crime increasing feelings of personal insecurity.
- Assign students to access the **Westward Expansion** interactive map (<http://mapmaker.annenberg.org/Fyszda6jOcfmy7ymM1AM/>) and read through the information in the sequence of bookmarked maps. If possible have students do this individually, but they might also do this in pairs or small groups, depending on computer availability.
- Ask students to note the impact information located in several of the bookmarked maps (Precious Minerals, the Great Plains, Impact of Expansion on U.S. Economy, and Impact on Native Americans.)
- Assessment: Have students select one of the impacts highlighted in the interactive. Have students write a research paper on the selected impact.
- Alternative assessment: Have students select one of the impacts and write a newspaper article from the viewpoint of someone living at the time.

## Connections to National Standards

**National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (National Council for the Social Studies)** - Middle school and high school

Theme #2: Time Continuity, and Change

Theme #3: People, Places, and Environments

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## **National History Standards (National Center for History in the Schools)**

U.S. History: Era 4: Standard 1C: The student understands the ideology of Manifest Destiny, the nation's expansion to the Northwest, and the Mexican-American War. Therefore, the student is able to:

Grades 5-12:

- Explain the economic, political, racial, and religious roots of Manifest Destiny and analyze how the concept influenced the westward expansion of the nation.

U.S. History: Era 4: Standard 2A: The student understands how the factory system and the transportation and market revolutions shaped regional patterns of economic development.

Therefore, the student is able to:

Grades 5-12:

- Explain how the major technological developments that revolutionized land and water transportation arose and analyze how they transformed the economy, created international markets, and affected the environment.

U.S. History: Era 4: Standard 2E: The student understands settlement of the West. Therefore, the student is able to:

- Explore the lure of the West and the reality of life on the frontier.
- Contrast the causes and character of the rapid settlement of California and Oregon in the late 1840s and 1850s.

Historical Thinking Standard 3: The student engages in historical analysis and interpretation. Therefore, the student is able to: Analyze cause-and-effect relationships bearing in mind multiple causation, including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental and the irrational.

## **National Geography Standards - Grades K-12**

Geography Standard 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information.

Geography Standard 3: How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

Geography Standard 6: How culture and experience influence people's perception of places and regions.

Geography Standard 12: The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

Geography Standard 17: How to apply geography to interpret the past.

## **Common Core State Standards—English Language Arts: Grades 6-12 Literacy in History/Social Studies**

- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7  
Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.7  
Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.