Westward Expansion

Introduction to Westward Expansion

The Louisiana Purchase

In 1803, Thomas Jefferson bought a huge portion of land west of the Mississippi. He bought this land from France. The new territory was called the Louisiana Purchase. It more than doubled the size of the United States! The Louisiana Purchase cost 15 million dollars total. That amounts to about 4 cents an acre. The land included 828,000 square miles of new land.

Now Americans would be responsible for exploring and settling much of this huge continent. The age of Westward Expansion was about to start.

Manifest Destiny

By the 1840’s, Americans envisioned a nation that spread “from sea to shining sea.” They felt that it was their duty to spread out across the land. The belief in young democracy was so strong that Americans wanted to spread it across the entire continent. To them, exploring and cultivating new territory was the destiny of the young country and its citizens. Soon, the phrase “Manifest Destiny” was echoing in newspapers and political speeches. The West was the embodiment of American optimism. Many American adventurers would go west to seek their fortunes.

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1. acre – a unit of area used to measure land
2. envision – to imagine
3. cultivate - to grow crops
4. destiny - something a person or group is meant to be or do
5. embodiment – the physical form of something
1. The Louisiana Territory was purchased from:
   a. France.
   b. Spain.
   c. Switzerland.
   d. Mexico.

2. What is this passage mainly about?
   a. The Louisiana Purchase
   b. Manifest Destiny
   c. The Wild West
   d. The Growing United States

3. The exclamation points in the first paragraph tell you that
   a. the writer of this passage was excited.
   b. the writer of this passage had a question.
   c. the writer of this passage was making a statement.
   d. the writer of this passage was sad.

4. According to this passage, what “was the destiny of the young country and its citizens”?
   a. The destiny was to buy more land from other countries.
   b. The destiny was to make a lot of political speeches.
   c. The destiny was to spread “from sea to shining sea.”
   d. The destiny was to be happy with the land that America already had.

5. From what famous song does the line “from sea to shining sea” come from?
   a. "America the Beautiful"
   b. "Star-Spangled Banner"
   c. "Grand Old Flag"
   d. "White Hills of Dover"
6. How did the Louisiana Purchase lead to the belief in Manifest Destiny?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

7. Why do you think people would have wanted to move to an area of the country they had never been to start a new life?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

Many American adventurers would go west ________ they could seek their fortune there.

a. but  

b. although  

c. so  

d. once

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

In the 1840’s, Americans set out to explore the new territory, bought by Thomas Jefferson, because they were looking for new opportunities.

Who? Americans

(did) What? ______________________________________________________

Why? ___________________________________________________________

When? __________________________________________________________

10. **Vocabulary Word**: envision: to imagine.

   Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: ________________________________

   ___________________________________________________________________
Passage Reading Level: Lexile 750

Featured Text Structure: Descriptive – the writer explains, defines or illustrates a concept or topic

Passage Summary: After Thomas Jefferson bought the land known as the Louisiana Purchase the United States nearly double in size. Americans ventured west to explore the land and seek new opportunities.

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Answers: Westward Expansion – Introduction to Westward Expansion
6. How did the Louisiana Purchase lead to the belief in Manifest Destiny?

**Suggested answer:** Answers will vary but students could state that without the Louisiana Purchase, there would not have been land in the West where Americans could move. The Louisiana Purchase made western expansion and belief in Manifest Destiny possible.

7. Why do you think people would have wanted to move to an area of the country they had never been to start a new life?

**Suggested answer:** People might have wanted to move out West for new opportunities such as jobs, owning land, looking for gold, or scientific research.

8. Many American adventurers would go west ________ they could seek their fortune there.

   a. but  
   b. although  
   c. so  
   d. once

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

   In the 1840’s, Americans set out to explore the new territory, bought by Thomas Jefferson, because they were looking for new opportunities.

   **Who?** Americans  
   **(did) What?** set out to explore the new territory  
   **Why?** they were looking for new opportunities  
   **When?** 1840’s

10. **Vocabulary Word:** envision: to imagine.

    Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: answers may vary.