

Name: _____

Creating a Transcontinental Railroad

Opener Braindump: Examine the painting “Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way.” This federal government commissioned this painting for the US Capitol building, meaning they paid the artist to paint it so they could put it on display for the American public. Think back to when we studied Manifest Destiny, the belief that America was specially chosen and destined by God to spread West across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. Then, complete the “braindump” about the painting.



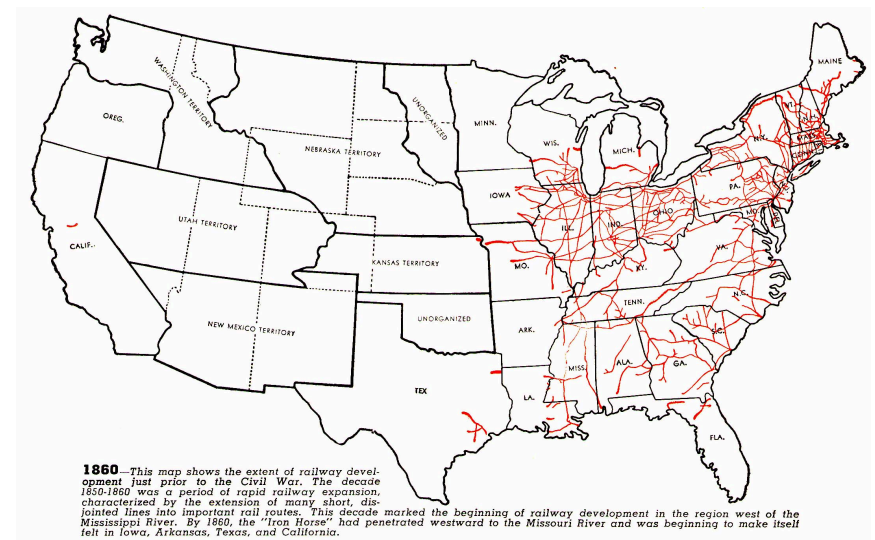
Analyze & Infer: Think about the people, objects, animals and activities shown in the painting. What do you think is the message of the painting? What did the artist want people to think or feel when they saw it? How is it related to Manifest Destiny and westward expansion?

Map Analysis:

Below: Land Being used by Americans in 1860



Below: Railroads in 1860



1. Before the Civil War (1861), many settlers traveled to California and Oregon, but they did not settle much of the land in between (known as the Great Plains). Why do you think the government wanted people to settle those areas? What opportunities would the West provide? (think back to the painting)
2. How could the government encourage settlers to move to these regions? How could the government encourage people and companies to develop and settle these areas?

3. What were the three main economic activities/settler groups in the West? (make sure you understand each one)
 - a. Mining:
 - b. Cowboys & ranchers:
 - c. Farmers & Settlers:

Part 1: As we watch the clips from [The West: "The Grandest Enterprise Under God."](#) consider the following questions:

1. **Why did Americans want to build a railroad in the West after the Civil War?**
2. **The narrator says "the West would be transformed" by the railroad. How would the railroad change the West? (What effects does the narrator mention?)**
3. **The transcontinental railroad is often called "the Internet of the 19th century. Why do you think it is called that?**
4. **Explain the following quote and how the government supported the building of the railroad.**
"It was only through the Government's help that anything this gargantuan [massive] in size could be accomplished, much as landing on the Moon. It was not rugged individualists who built the railroad, it was rugged corporations who formed and financed themselves as entities [groups]. It was the rugged federal government that came up with the federal loans, and the land grants, that enabled [allowed] it to be built..."-T. H. Watkins

Documents for Westward Expansion	How did the act help further westward expansion and Manifest Destiny? Use the documents and maps in your analysis
<u>Homestead Act</u>	
<u>Pacific Railway Act</u>	
<u>Railroad Advertisements/Land Grants</u>	

Chinese Immigrants & the Central Pacific Railroad (during video)	Irish, German & Mexican Immigrants (after the video)
<p>Why were Chinese immigrants hired?</p> <p>What were the work conditions like for Chinese workers?</p>	

Immigrants Build the Transcontinental Railroad

Building railroads was dangerous work, and many workers preferred to mine for gold or try to acquire homesteads and start farms in the West.

When white workers ignored the call for 5,000 workers, railroad companies turned to immigrant labor. Mostly German and Irish immigrants worked for the Union Pacific Railroad, while 80-90% of workers for the Central Pacific Railroad were Chinese. Chinese laborers were usually paid \$20-30 less per month than European workers.



Mexican-Americans and the Railroads

“Traqueros” working on the rails: A “traquero” was a Mexican or Mexican-American railroad worker. On August 3, 1881 workers completed a railroad between Mexico and United States, allowing easier transportation and immigration in the region. In the southwest, railroad companies hired more Mexicans than any other ethnic group. From 1870-1930, thousands of “traqueros” built and maintained railroads in the US



Part 4: Why was the joining of the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific Railroads at Promontory Point significant?

Closer: In the 1960s, the US Department of Defense created the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network to research and develop a worldwide network of communication and data between computers. This project laid the foundation for the development of the Internet. The Transcontinental Railroad has often been called the “Internet of the 19th century.” How were the development and impact of both similar?

