

Northwest History Consortium

Was Manifest Destiny Just?

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8th Grade

National Standard

Era 2: Colonization and Settlement (1585 – 1763) / Standards 1 & 2

Standard 1: Why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies, and how Europeans struggled for control of North America and the Caribbean

Standard 2: How political, religious, and social institutions emerged in the English colonies

BACKGROUND

The term “Manifest Destiny” was coined in the mid 1840’s by John L. O’Sullivan. O’Sullivan was basically promoting the expansion of the United States and felt that this expansion was more than a want—it was our fate.

The expansion of the United States, however, did not start in the 1840’s. Our nation’s first great acquisition of land happened in 1803 when the Louisiana Territory was added under Jefferson.

SCENARIO

It is now 2009, and radical unrelated groups in New Mexico, Oregon, and Florida are making national news with their demonstrations about how the land they stand on was illegally gained by the U.S. government.

The president has created an advisory panel to look into how the U.S. acquired five “chunks” of land including the Louisiana Territory, Florida, Texas, Oregon Territory, and the Mexican Cession.

TASK(S)

Your group has been hired to research and analyze each of the five large land acquisitions and report to the president in less than one week (before he has to report to the American people about this issue). He wants a full report.

Consider why each section of land was “needed” as well as how we acquired the land and if the actions of the United States were just.

The president has mentioned he is interested in knowing ALL sides of the argument; he does not just want a summary supporting the prior United States actions. This means if there are two parties involved in the acquisition of land, represent and support the argument the U.S. would make, as well as the other party(s) involved in your report. Citing sources from the period would bolster your point!

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RESOURCES

Internet

"Freedom: A History of US. Additional Resources. Webisode 3, Segment 8." PBS.Org. 1995 – 2010. Arlington, VA. 24 March 24, 2010 <<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/teachers/pdfs/segment3-8.pdf>>.

Image: "Signing of Louisiana Purchase." Napoleonic Society.Com. 24 March 2010 <<http://www.napoleonicsociety.com/images/LouisianaPurchase.jpg>>.

Lincoln, Abraham. "Abraham Lincoln's 'Spot' Resolutions (Dec. 22, 1847)" from *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, v. 1, edited by Roy P. Basler, 1953. Animated Atlas.Com. 2002 – 2010. Santa Monica, CA. 24 March 2010 <<http://www.animatedatlas.com/mexwar/lincoln1.html>>.

"Manifest Destiny." Digital History (University of Houston). 2006 – 2010. Houston, TX: 24 March 2010 <<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/us17.cfm>>.

ASSESSMENT

Group Grade: Summary

50 pts: The summary is well written. It clearly states how the different sides (at least two) of the acquisition would have looked at the exchange. It shows knowledge of why the United States was after this particular piece of land, the means that were used to acquire the land, and whether or not the actions of the U.S. were just and why. Numerous sources were used and cited to come up with information.

40 pts: The summaries are alright. Your group understands the many sides of the acquisition, but it is not totally clear in your writing. It shows knowledge of why the United States was after this particular piece of land, the means that were used to acquire the land, whether or not the actions of the U.S. were just, and limited information on why or why it wasn't just. A few sources were used (and cited).

30 pts: The summaries are incomplete. You show one side of the argument for most of the acquisitions. You have trouble explaining why the U.S. wanted the sections of land, as well as how they came to acquire them.

20 pts: You try, but it's obvious you didn't show much effort.

Daily Grade:

50 pts: You are actively engaged in helping your group progress. If you've been assigned a role, you're on top of it and relaying your findings to your group. It is evident that you're using your time wisely and stretching yourself.

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40 pts: You are on task for the most part. You are focused on your role and are not as willing to work towards your group's goal. It is clear that you can do better.

30 pts: You have trouble staying focused. You're not interacting with your group much. You've taken complete control of the group work and are not allowing collaboration.

20 pts: You're occasionally trying to help, but you are more focused on things besides the project at hand.

REFERENCES/CITATIONS

"History Standards for Grades 5-12 United States." UCLA National Center for History in the Schools. 2005. Los Angeles, CA. 21 May 2009 <<http://nchs.ucla.edu/standards/us-standards5>>.

Jensen, Nels. "Was Manifest Destiny Just?" NWESD Organization. 2008. Anacortes, WA. 24 March 2010 <http://www.nwesd.org/1510101216191755740/lib/1510101216191755740/2.1_ManifestDestiny.Jensen.8.pdf>.