THE GOOD AND BAD OF WESTWARD EXPANSION

The nation grew in many ways during the first half of the 19th century. In many ways this growth represented the increasing strength of the new nation. But this growth was not without its problems for the young country and often presented more problems than solutions.

**Procedure**

1. To have students consider both the need for and possible problems of growth, have them imagine they are going to expand into the classroom next door. Specifically, have them consider

HOW might do this?

WHO would be involved, on both sides of the wall?

WHAT are their objectives and WHAT would be the reservations of those on the other side of the wall?

WHERE exactly are they going? How might they find this out?

WHY do they want to take over the next classroom?

WHEN do they plan to do this?

1. Now put them in the minds of the young nation. Have them consider these same questions.
2. Show them the Territorial Acquisitions Map and have them complete Part I of the Student Sheet. You may divide them into groups and have each group do one of the geographic regions or have each student do all of the groups. For back ground information on each area, you may start with your textbook. Additional information may be found at the websites listed in the Materials Needed section. They may present their findings on a chart, power point, paper, graph or other visual medium.
3. Discuss their results. For a more in depth lesson on the Louisiana Purchase, you may complete Lesson 4 of this Curriculum Guide.
4. Introduce the concept of Manifest Destiny to your students. How did this fit in with the founding vision of the country? Why might not all groups within the country have felt it was important to gain land to the Pacific? Had these groups been part of the nation’s founding goals and dreams? Have them complete Part II of the Student Sheet as a class.

**Time Allocation:**

Part I: Will vary, depending if you divide the task into parts or not

Part II: 30 minutes

**Materials Needed**

[Territorial Acquisitions 1783-1853 Map](http://maps.bpl.org/details_12366/?maid=523) (http://maps.bpl.org/details\_12366/?maid=523)

[Westward Movement Information](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/westwardmovement.html) (http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/subjects/westwardmovement.html)

[Mexican American War](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/mexicanamericanwar1.htm) Information (http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/mexicanamericanwar1.htm)

[Louisiana Purchase](http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/louisianapurchase.html) Information

(http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/louisianapurchase.html)

**Assessment Criteria**

Did students learn about the physical expansion of the United States in the period from 1800 to 1850?

Did students consider the positive aspects of this growth?

Did students consider the problems associated with this growth?

**Enrichment Activities**

1. To gain a fuller picture of Westward expansion have students explore [the 1859 railroad map](http://maps.bpl.org/details_14344/?srch_query=civil+war&srch_fields=all&srch_style=exact&srch_fa=save), http://maps.bpl.org/details\_14344/?srch\_query=civil+war&srch\_fields=all&srch\_style=exact&srch\_fa=save.

What are some of the differences between the North and South? Which part of the country was more developed in terms of transportation?

1. To further explore different views on Westward Expansion, have students use the Identities from the Civil War Exhibition, located at the back of this booklet. How would they have defined Manifest Destiny? Perhaps have them debate the Louisiana Purchase or the Mexican War.
2. Consider another graphic representation of the nation’s growth, [Uncle Sam’s Family Tree.](http://maps.bpl.org/details_12971/?srch_query=uncle+sam%27s+family+tree&srch_fields=all&srch_style=exact&srch_fa=save), <http://maps.bpl.org/details_12971/?srch_query=uncle+sam%27s+family+tree&srch_fields=all&srch_style=exact&srch_fa=save>

How does this show the nation’s growth? Have students present their own family, school or town history in a similar manner.

1. Look at , [the planned route of the Pacific Railroad, http://maps.bpl.org/details\_14371/?srch\_query=civil+war&srch\_fields=all&srch\_style=exact&srch\_fa=save.](http://maps.bpl.org/details_14371/?srch_query=civil+war&srch_fields=all&srch_style=exact&srch_fa=save) Which parts of the country would be benefitting from the arrival of the railroad? Would all benefit equally? How do you think these decisions were made?

**Common Core Curriculum Standards**

English/Language Arts: Anchor Standards: CCSR for Reading

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/7/) Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words

English/Language Arts: History and Social Studies

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.7](http://www.corestandards.org/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.

America tripled the size of the country between 1800 and 1850. To do so meant taking land away from the people living there as well as making treaties with the countries that owned the land.

**Part I**

Look at the Map your teacher gives you. There were four primary areas acquired during that time:

LOUISIANA

TEXAS

MEXICO

OREGON

In your group, you will need to answer some basic questions below for your geographic area:

WHY did they want to take over this land?

WHEN did they take this area?

HOW was this area taken?

WHO was involved, both in terms of taking the land and who was on it already?

WHAT were the goals of those who wanted the land and WHAT were the reasons those already on it were upset?

WHERE exactly were they going? How might they have found this out?

**Part II**

Was Westward Expansion good for everyone? Now that you have learned about the four areas in your smaller groups, come together as a class and fill out the following chart:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | GAINS | LOSSES |
| SLAVES |  |  |
| NATIVE AMERICANS |  |  |
| IMMIGRANTS |  |  |
| FARMERS |  |  |

***Territorial Acquisitions 1783-1853***

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