

**The Intermountain West:  
An Environmental History of its People, Places, History and Cultures**

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*With support from*

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**RATIONALE:**

*The Intermountain West: An Environmental History of its People, Places, History and Cultures* is a teaching unit plan designed to give secondary students of United States history an understanding of the shaping force the environment has on the American character and, furthermore, to help students in the Intermountain West see themselves as part of a diverse cultural and physical landscape. The unit is derived from constructivist and social learning theories.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

The teaching unit can be extended to a 5 week intensive study, or restricted to a more intense, shorter lived unit of study. The end goal of the project is the creation of an interactive website using a map of the Intermountain West as the home page. Links on the map will be established by students to connect to the results of their research. The links can be identified as cultural, economic, social, historic and political or however the implementer prefers to focus his or her students' attention.

Elements of the teaching unit include several scaffolding activities, but can be used in isolation if preferred. These elements are: mapping and identification of geographic composition of the Intermountain West; study of individuals of note in the Intermountain West; research of routes into, through and within the Intermountain West; literature, arts and music of the Intermountain West; peoples of the Intermountain West; rivers and canals of the Intermountain West and the changing biology of the Intermountain West.

Students will initiate their study through an introduction to environmental history, as a study of the ways in which humans have interacted with, shaped, and been shaped by their physical environments in the past. Students will then engage in individualized research of a topic, individual or event related to an environmental aspect of the Intermountain West. The students' individualized research will need to have, as a central premise, the position that the Intermountain West's environment, too, has a history which has been shaped by human beings. Students' research will need to show the connection between the human history of the region and the role the physical world has played in that history

Having completed their research, students will create PowerPoint presentations. Students will classify their research as being related to a person, place or event. Students will then identify and locate the major environmental features implicit in their individualized research, and will select the appropriate locations for the hyperlink to their projects.

Depending on the time allotted to the study, the teacher can involve the students in web creation or can appoint an editorial board to create the class web page using the map as the organizing feature.

Ideally, websites created by groups of students could be hosted by a centralized agency to ease access; however, search engines can also provide the unifying agency, so long as teachers use common language when posting the results. "An Interactive Map of the Intermountain West" is suggested as a subtitle.

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**Unit Objectives**

**Guiding Questions:**

1. How do the environmental aspects of the Intermountain West shape our present and past art, literature, history and culture?
2. What made people in the past living in the Intermountain West unique and what makes them unique today?
3. How has the environment changed as a result of people's activity in the Intermountain West?

**Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to identify the geographic features of the region.
2. Students will be able to identify the cultural groups that have resided and that reside in the region.
3. Students will be able to identify specific routes that connect the region to the surrounding regions.
4. Students will be able to identify corridors within the region.
5. Students will be able to connect themselves metaphorically to a specific physical feature within the region, through poetry or prose.
6. Students will engage in the creation of an interactive webpage.
7. Students will engage in research using regional resources, such as state and local libraries, institutes and museums and national resources, such as the Library of Commerce and National Archives.
8. Students will develop original theses and will engage in historical research to support these theses.
9. Students will create projects revealing the results of their research.
10. Students will document their research using MLA format.

**Activities:**

1. Individualized research and reading
2. Developing thesis statements
3. Writing research proposals
4. Writing poetry and prose
5. Graphing results of research
6. Public speaking
7. Web designing (FrontPage is a possibility)
8. Cooperative learning
9. Journal writing, reflecting and exchanging ideas
10. Creative criticism

**The Intermountain West:  
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Boise School District and Idaho Standards Addressed by the Study**

**Instructional Objective**

**Standard Reference Number**

1305.01 Acquire critical thinking and analytical skills. <b>Note:</b> This instructional objective, its associated instructional objectives, and the performance objectives in this section apply throughout the course.	130501
Associated Instructional Objectives:	
Develop and interpret different kinds of maps, globes, graphs, charts, databases and models.	6-12.USH1.2.1.1
Evaluate and interpret points-of-view using primary and secondary sources.	130501a
Chronologically organize significant events and people in United States history into major eras and themes to identify and explain historical relationships.	130501b
1305.02 Understand the cultural and ecological interactions among previously unconnected peoples resulting from early European exploration and colonization.	130502
Identify significant countries (and individuals) and their roles and motives in the European exploration of the Americas.	6-12.USH1.1.5.2
Analyze and describe the interactions between native peoples and the European explorers.	6-12.USH1.1.5.3
1305.02a Illustrate how an artifact symbolizes and reflects a particular culture and/or time period.	9-12.I.1.1.3
1305.03 Explain colonial immigration, population growth, and the consequences of each.	130503
1305.04 Identify how religious, social, political, and economic factors shaped settlement patterns in the 17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> centuries in North America.	130504
Compare and contrast works or ideas from at least two cultures, historical periods, or geographical areas.	9-12.I.2.1.2
Analyze ways in which the physical environment affected political and economic development.	6-12.USH1.2.2.2

1305.06a Demonstrate the ways in which the arts and humanities reflect events.	9-12.I.1.1.1.
1305.06b Interpret how a literary/artistic work relates to the history and/or culture from which it originated.	9-12.I.3.2.2
1305.06c Analyze an artifact or idea and debate its meaning in the context of its societal values.	9-12.I.2.2.1
1305.09 Evaluate issues in which fundamental values and principles are in conflict, such as between liberty and equality, individual interests and the common good, and majority rule and minority protections.	6-12.USH1.4.1.3
Identify fundamental values and principles as expressed in basic documents such as the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and the United States Constitution.	6-12.USH1.4.1.2
Analyze the common traits, beliefs, and characteristics that unite the United States as a nation and a society.	6-12.USH1.1.1.3
Describe ways in which citizens participated in early American public life.	6-12.USH1.4.3.2
1305.12 Discuss the causes and effects of various conflicts in American history such as the American Revolution, Civil War and Reconstruction.	6-12.USH1.1.1.4
Explain the significance of principal policies and events in the United States' relations with the world, such as the War of 1812, Monroe Doctrine, and Mexican and Spanish American Wars.	6-12.USH1.5.1.1
Evaluate the major foreign policy positions that have characterized the United States' relations with the world, such as isolationism and imperialism.	6-12.USH1.5.1.2
Discuss the use of the national interest as a criterion for shaping foreign policy.	6-12.USH1.5.1.3
Understand the development of the Supreme Court's power and its significance during the early nineteenth century.	130512
1305.13 Explain the factors that contributed to the rise of industrialization in the 19th century.	9-12.USH2.1.4.1
Describe the emergence and evolution of a market economy.	6-12.USH1.3.2.1

<p>Explain how the development of various modes of transportation increased economic prosperity and promoted national unity.</p>	<p>6-12.USH1.1.4.2</p>
<p>Explain the consequences of scientific and technological inventions and changes on the social and economic lives of the people in the development the United States.</p>	<p>6-12.USH1.1.4.1</p>
<p>Explain ways in which people responded to their physical environment in the early national history of the United States.</p>	
<p>Trace federal policies and treaties such as removal, reservations, and allotment throughout history that have impacted contemporary American Indians.</p>	<p>6-12.USH1.1.3.1</p>

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

## **The Intermountain West: An Environmental History of its People, Places, History and Cultures**

You will be engaging in a research and creative process related to learning about the environmental history of the Intermountain West, its places, people, history and cultures. By the end of your study will have done the following:

- ❖ Identified the geographic elements of the region in which you live
- ❖ Researched an aspect of the region that appeals to your particular interests
- ❖ Develop a thesis explaining the connection between your research topic and the environment, including how your topic changed the environment.
- ❖ Created a PowerPoint presentation of your research
- ❖ Created an MLA annotated bibliography
- ❖ Made a link on a webpage to your project
- ❖ Read a novel, collection of short stories or poetry related to the Intermountain West
- ❖ Written a novel (☺), short story or poem related to the Intermountain West

### **Steps:**

- 1) Select a novel, collection of short stories or poetry and complete the reading contract
- 2) Read your selection by the set dates and engage in book group discussions
- 3) Study the geography of the Intermountain West and be able to label a physical map with the principal elements of the region
- 4) Select a topic of personal interest to you
- 5) Develop a thesis statement using the provided guides
- 6) Research your topic, using a combination of primary and secondary sources
- 7) Research your topic, using a state or local institution
- 8) Create your PowerPoint project
- 9) Publish your project to the webpage, creating a hyperlink on the map of the Intermountain West
- 10) Write a poem in which you connect yourself to a specific place in the region
- 11) Publish your poem to the class's Intermountain West Journal.



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Period \_\_\_\_\_

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**Reading Contract**

I understand that I am responsible for reading, to completion, a novel related to the Intermountain West. I understand that reading the novel will earn me 100 possible points.

My novel/short story collection/ poetry collection will be selected by \_\_\_\_\_.

**I will read the following:** \_\_\_\_\_ (Title)

Written by: \_\_\_\_\_ (Author)

Published by: \_\_\_\_\_ (Publisher)

Year published and place: \_\_\_\_\_

**My reading selection is a (circle one):**

Novel                      Collection of Short Stories                      Collection of Poems

**My selection has \_\_\_\_\_ pages.** Since I will read it over a period of 4 weeks, **I will read around \_\_\_\_\_ pages per week.** (Total # pages/ 4 weeks = pages per week).

By Week 1 \_\_\_\_\_(date), I will have read to page \_\_\_\_  Teacher's initial

By Week 2 \_\_\_\_\_(date), I will have read to page \_\_\_\_  Teacher's initial

By Week 3 \_\_\_\_\_(date), I will have read to page \_\_\_\_  Teacher's initial

By Week 4 \_\_\_\_\_(date), I will have read to page \_\_\_\_  Teacher's initial

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Your signature*

Date reading completed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Period \_\_\_\_\_

**The Intermountain West:  
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Geographic Elements**

Source: Patterson, Tom. Physical Map of the Coterminous United States.  
<http://www.shadedrelief.com/physical/pages/about.html>



Label the following geographic elements on the above map:

Columbia River  
Columbia River Plateau  
Snake River and Snake River Plain  
Great Basin  
Great Salt Lake  
Great Salt Lake Desert  
Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cascade Range  
Sawtooth Range  
Rocky Mountains  
Payette River  
Teton Mountain Range  
Salmon River

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Period \_\_\_\_\_

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**Possible Research Topics**

***REMEMBER!!! Whatever topic you choose must connect to the environment and must show how the environment affected, or was affected by, your topic***

**People**

Any person from Idaho history, including...

- Harry Orchard (hired by labor leaders to assassinate Idaho Governor Steunenberg / prosecuted by famous lawyer Clarence Darrow) **and mining**
- Polly Bemis (Chinese American woman whose story was told in the book and movie "Thousand Pieces of Gold") **and river travel or mining**
- Frank Church (Idaho senator famous for his opposition to the Vietnam War) **and wilderness**
- Joe Albertson **and transportation networks**
- Jack Simplot **and potato farming**
- Harry Morrison (M-K company - built Grand Coulee dam) **and dams**
- William E. Borah - Republican U.S. senator from Idaho for 33 years, best known for his major role at the end of World War I (1918) in preventing the United States from joining the League of Nations **and ???**
- Mrs. Walt Disney - She is from Lewiston, owned a TV station in Lewiston. Good article about her and her connection to Idaho when she died (last couple of years) **and ???**
- Bruce Willis - Purchased Hailey, Idaho businesses; residence in Blaine County; he makes movies, too **and mountain resort development**
- Mary Hallock Foote - Boise artist and author from late 1800's; book Angle of Repose is about her, and her husband, who built the **New York Canal**. Their abandoned house is still up by Lucky Peak; her lithographs are on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Boise Public Library.
- John Colter **and Yellowstone or mountain men**
- Old Toby, of Lewis and Clark fame **and the Bitterroots**
- Chief Joseph **and the Battle of White Bird**
- George Armstrong Custer, Philip Sheridan, George Wright
- Sacajawea **and the Lochsa**
- Marie Dorion **and the Blue Mountains**
- The Sheepeater Wars **and the Salmon River**
- Wild Bill Hickok ( James Butler Hickok)
- Buffalo Bill ( William Frederick Cody)

- Nat Love
- Kit Carson
- Marcus and Narcissa Whitman **and the Oregon Trail**
- **Seger Seven** and other Oregon Trail pioneers

### **People involved in land or animals in the Intermountain West**

- Maurice Hornocker - Hornocker Wildlife Institute; international acclaim for study of wild cats. Several periodical articles, including National Geographic
- John Muir (naturalist, first president of The Sierra Club)
- John Wesley Powell (first explored many regions of west, including Grand Canyon)
- Morley Nelson – instrumental in founding World Center for Birds of Prey Natural Area

### **People involved in sports in the Intermountain West**

- Picabo Street
- Stacey Dragila (Olympic medalist)
- Mahre brothers (skiers)
- Gretchen Fraser - first to win a gold medal for US in winter Olympics?
- Kristen Cooper - Olympic Medal winner
- Tom Whittaker - climbed Everest, only has use of one foot

### **Intermountain West music:**

- Doug Martsch - founder of Boise band Built To Spill
- Rosalie Sorrels – International folklorist living in Idaho City
- Curtis Stiegers - Capital High School graduate; New York jazz musician; he has had a song on the top 40; he sang one of the songs in Whitney Houston's "Bodyguard." He has a record contract with a major company, I just do not remember who - it use to be Arista. His mother still lives in Boise and is involved in the theater and arts. Curtis and his wife visit Boise often. His wife is a ballerina and choreographer based in New York.
- Gene Harris - International acclaimed jazz musician. He made Boise his home. Died about one year ago. BSU hosts the Gene Harris Jazz Festival.
- Tim Tillotson - Also Boise school graduate; jazz band is based in New York; highly acclaimed, but I am not as familiar with his background.
- Lionel Hampton - University of Idaho hosts his jazz festival annually. Why does he have the festival in Idaho?

### **Cultural Groups**

- Basques in the High Desert: shepherding, arbor glyphs
- Shoshone: Lemhi, Tukaduka

- Bannock
- Nez Perce
- Paiute
- Ute
- Flathead
- Cayuse
- Coeur d'Alene
- Kootenai
- Latah
- Chinese: early mining
- English (Cornish): miners to the West, Mormons to the East
- Czechs
- Dutch
- Gypsies
- Finnish: Silver Valley and Long Valley
- French and French-Canadian
- Germans and German-Russians
- Mexican and other Hispanic
- Poles and Slovaks: Sawtooth Mountain Range
- Portuguese: Lincoln and Gooding Counties
- Scandinavians
- Swiss
- Welsh: miners, Mormons and railroad workers

### **General Areas of Interest**

- Canal building
- Dam building
- Mining
- Idaho in films (Nelly Shipman)
- Railroads
- Timber Barons
- Trees of Idaho and logging
- WPA projects
- Idaho Nuclear Energy and Engineering Laboratory
- Snake River Alliance
- Fire fighting

### **Western Literature and art**

- Hamlin Garland
- Vardis Fisher
- Bret Harte
- Helen Hunt Jackson
- Frederic Remington
- Charles Marion Russell
- Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)
- Sherman Alexie

- Terry Tempest Williams
- William Studebaker
- Wallace Stegner
- Marilynne Robinson
- Mary Claremont Blew
- William Kittredge
- Ron McFarland
- Carol Ryrie Brink (1895-1981)
- Norman McLean
- Aldo Leopold
- George Perkins Marsh
- Rachel Carson
- Steingraeber (Living Downstream)
- Nancy Lord
- Michael Cohen
- John Muir
- Edward Abbey
- Michael Dorris
- Janet Hale Campbell
- Molly Gloss
- Ed Edmo
- Ezra Pound
- Ernest Hemingway

**Religion:**

- Joseph Smith
- Brigham Young
- John D. Lee
- Wovoka

**TOPICS ABOUND!**

**Check with your teacher before selecting!**

***REMEMBER!!! Whatever topic you choose must connect to the environment and must show how the environment affected, or was affected by, your topic***

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**Annotated Bibliography**

**1. Evaluate/Annotate the sources.**

While you may have done some preliminary evaluation when choosing your sources, now is the time to really examine each one.

**There are two forms of annotations you might compose, *descriptive* and *critical*:**

- A *descriptive* annotation, not surprisingly, *describes* the source: what it is (book, website, etc.), who created it, how long it is, what it contains:

**Zinn, H. (1997). *A People's History of the United States*. New York: New Press.**

**This book covers American history from the point of view of various underrepresented groups. It contains a large amount of firsthand information and some interesting illustrations.**

- A *critical* annotation evaluates the source and explains why a particular source is valuable in relation to the topic of the bibliography. The libraries' Evaluating Research Materials page (<http://library.albany.edu/usered/evalsup/main.html>) has some excellent tips and tutorials to assist you in this process.

**Zinn, H. (1997). *A People's History of the United States*. New York: New Press.**

**In this book the history of the United States is seen from the viewpoint of people who were not necessarily beneficiaries of American democracy. The book concentrates on the experiences of slaves, American Indians, women, and other disenfranchised groups and how they were affected by the major events in American history. It also includes excerpts from primary sources that show many of the country's most famous individuals as members of an elite upper class rather than as idealized heroes. Zinn emphasizes in the introduction that his intent is not to demonize figures such as revolutionary leaders, but to portray them in a more realistic light, as people who, while contributing to the development of the United States, were influenced by the prejudices of their time. As a source of information that is usually**

**not included in history books, *A People's History of the United States* is invaluable to the study of American History.**

While brief descriptive annotations are useful, critical annotations enable the reader of the bibliography to make an informed choice about which source to use. Critical annotations also show that you have a good understanding of the strong and weak points of each source, and that you have spent some time choosing the best sources for your topic. If you are doing this for a class assignment, your instructor will specify if you need to write critical or descriptive annotations.

**2. Organize the annotated bibliography according to the proper format**



Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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Period \_\_\_\_\_

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Guiding Questions**

**In order to identify an event related to the Intermountain West, you might want to use the internet to search using the following guiding questions:**

**➤ What is your general area of interest?**

**Example: architecture, medicine, political science, women's issues abolition, religion (Methodists, LDS, Transcendentalists...), African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, artists, writers, etc.**

**I am interested in finding out more about**

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

**➤ Who are important people involved in my areas of interest in the Intermountain West? (I recommend that you identify several...)**

**The following were important:**

**General Area of Interest**

**Specific area**

a. \_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

b. \_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

c. \_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

**➤ Why was it or why was he/she/it important? (Choose your top 3)**

a. \_\_\_\_\_ was important because \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ was important because \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_ was important because \_\_\_\_\_

➤ What contentious event was he/she/it involved in?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ was involved in a conflict between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ was involved in a conflict between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_ was involved in a conflict between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

➤ How did the environment affect he/she/it?

➤ OR... How did he/she/it affect the environment?



a. \_\_\_\_\_ (region of the Intermountain West or he/she/it) was changed by \_\_\_\_\_ (region of the Intermountain West or he/she/it) because \_\_\_\_\_.

b. \_\_\_\_\_ (region of the Intermountain West or he/she/it) was changed by \_\_\_\_\_ (region of the Intermountain West or he/she/it) because \_\_\_\_\_.

c. \_\_\_\_\_ (region of the Intermountain West or he/she/it) was changed by \_\_\_\_\_ (region of the Intermountain West or he/she/it) because \_\_\_\_\_.

I have decided to research \_\_\_\_\_ and find out about the relationship between \_\_\_\_\_ and the Intermountain West and how \_\_\_\_\_ affected/ was affected by the environment/culture/settlement/development of the Intermountain West.

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**Writing the Thesis Statement**

***How do I formulate a thesis?***

There are four questions to be answered and turned in to your teacher for grading. These questions, which will help you formulate your thesis, can be answered by following these four steps:

**Step 1. Choosing a topic**

***What is the broad topic that you have chosen?***

Please choose your topic using the following criteria:

1. Related to Intermountain West
2. Person or event was critical to some aspect of the environment, culture, settlement or development of the Intermountain West.

***For example:*** The Civil War

***Person or event:*** Gold mining in the West

***Time Period:*** \_\_\_\_\_

***Person:*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Steps 2. and 3. Researching and narrowing your topic**

***What is the way in which the topic will be limited given the five-page requirement? In other words, on what aspect will you be focusing in your paper?***

Once you selected your topic your research should begin. Seek out books, magazines, encyclopedias and Internet sites that address your topic. When you find a book on your topic it may help to skim through the table of contents to give you a brief overview of the topic and more importantly to determine which points you want to cover in your paper. Be sure that the topic that you are covering is not too narrow or too broad for a five-page paper. Make a list of at least three main subtopics that will be covered in your paper. All subtopics should relate to your main person. Each subtopic should also be clearly distinct from the others. The division of the topic should be balanced between the three subtopics so that equal attention is paid to each. Write your three main subtopics on the lines below.

***For example:***

- Three subtopics:
1. What funded the Civil War?
  2. Who controlled the gold mines in the Intermountain West?

3. How was the Intermountain West changed by the Civil War?

**YOUR three subtopics:** 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Explain the main points that you plan to illustrate or prove to the reader. These will become the overall message of your research project.**

**For example:**

**Overall message of the paper:**

The Civil War, like any war, was expensive and needed to be funded by some source. Europe did not take sides in the War and, therefore, could not be counted on for loans or alliances. Gold was discovered in the Intermountain West prior to the Civil War and control of the gold became critical for Northern and Southern success. The mining that developed in the Intermountain West transformed the West as it introduced big business approaches to mineral extraction, replacing the individual miner of the past.

**Overall message of YOUR paper:**

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#### **Step 4. Writing your thesis statement**

**What is your thesis?**

First of all, a thesis is to an essay what a topic sentence is to a paragraph. In other words, the thesis is the controlling idea of an essay. A good thesis should clearly convey to the reader the focus of your paper without being too broad or too specific. Your thesis statement should state your main topic and encompass the main points that you addressed in questions two and three.

**Points to remember in writing your thesis:**

- \_ The thesis statement should be a complete sentence.
- \_ The thesis should be stated in the third person.(No I, you, your, we, our,)
- \_ The thesis should not be stated in an obvious manner (Do not begin “In this report I will write about...”)
- \_ The thesis must appear in the introductory paragraph.
- \_ It is also important to note that your thesis may change as you do more research on your topic. Make sure that your final thesis corresponds with the focus of your paper.

\_ Your thesis must show the connection between your topic and the environment.

**Sample Thesis:** While most of the battles of the Civil War were fought back East, control of the resources in the Intermountain West was critical for the North's victory.

**YOUR thesis:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**REMEMBER: A THESIS CAN CHANGE AS YOU DO YOUR RESEARCH!**