

Western Historical Association

Land Grabbing

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[Resume](#)

Brief Description

This lesson plan uses a variety of teaching methods to portray the idea of Land Grabbing in the American West. It intertwines a variety of genres along with crossing curriculum. The main ideas in this lesson include assimilation, stereotypes, Westward expansion and Native Americans. To teach these concepts a vocabulary graph is used along with a board game, student drawings, a journal entry and a foldable review guide. This lesson plan includes primary documents and maps. A teacher may format this lesson easily for English Language Learners, younger ages and different achievements levels. It also provides a variety of assessments throughout the lesson.

Land Grabbing

(Westward expansion after the Civil War)

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Grade Level: 9-12

Content: Western American History

Unit: The American West after the Civil War

Time: 110-120 minutes

Benchmarks (Utah State of Education Core Standards)

Standard 1 – Students will interpret the role of geography in shaping United States history.

Objective 1 – Determine how geography affected the development of the United States.

Standard 3 – Students will understand the changes caused by European exploration in the Americas.

Objective 1 – Explore life among the various American Indian nations prior to European exploration of the New World.

Objective 2 – Analyze the reasons for European exploration.

Objective 3 – Assess the impact of European exploration on American Indian nations.

Standard 4 – Students will analyze European colonization and settlement of North America.

Objective 1 – Explain where and why European countries colonized North America.

Standard 10 – Students will understand the development of the American West following the Civil War.

Objective 1 – Analyze the factors that brought people west.

Objective 2 – Analyze the settlement of the American West.

Objective 3 – Investigate the conflict among various groups involved in the settlement of the West.

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson students will be able to:

1. Identify reasons for westward expansion
2. Analyze the concepts of assimilation and stereotypes in relation to the American West
3. Explain reasons for near destruction of Native American societies in the American West

Setup/Preparation

Engage:

Each student should receive a “Land Grabbing” packet. Within the packet should contain everything the student needs for this lesson. The teacher should create grouping cards and prepare an interactive review on the culture and ideologies of citizens after the Civil War. Information to complete these cards can be found in [LandGrabEngage1](#) and [LandGrabEngage2](#). The graphic organizer which will be used can be found in [LandGrabEngage3](#).

Explore:

For this portion of the lesson the teacher should prepare the “Land Grabbing” game board. The teacher should also have tokens and game pieces to use. The teacher should also prepare the

“Situation Cards” which will be used for the game. This information can be found in [LandGrabExplore1](#). The worksheet involved in the game can be found in [LandGrabExplore2](#). The teacher can use a United States Map as the game board. The teacher can label the board for the students, or provide them with an atlas to find the areas themselves.

Explain:

The students will need to revisit their graphic organizers from the Engage portion of the lesson. Each student will also need to have a copy of [LandGrabExplain1](#).

Elaborate:

Students will need [LandGrabElaborate1](#).

Evaluate:

Six pieces of paper will be needed to create a flip book.

Safety

Teacher should remind students that wild behavior may harm the well being of other students and should be avoided.

Prerequisite Knowledge/Skills for students

Students should have an understanding of the effects of the Civil War on the United States. They should understand the political boundaries of the country. Students should also be aware of the culture and ideologies of citizens after the Civil War.

Procedure

Engage:

[LandGrabEngage1](#)

[LandGrabEngage2](#)

[LandGrabEngage3](#)

7-10 minutes. To start the lesson, the teacher should review previous information regarding the culture and ideologies of citizens after the Civil War. The teacher should review how people were displaced and how the government encouraged the citizens to move west. After the short review each student should receive a card containing a symbol and a list of words on the back. The symbol on the front will be used to group the students. The teacher can pass out the card randomly or stack the cards so students with different abilities are in the same group. On the back of each card will be a list of words. The list of words will be used to complete the graphic organizer. Each card in every group will have a different list of words. Each student should read the words out loud in their groups and discuss where the word belongs in the chart. When the group is finished categorizing their words, they should discuss and list other words which relate to the chart. This activity accesses prior knowledge and gets the students engaged in the upcoming lesson. Further in the lesson the students will refer back to this graphic organizer.

Evaluate: The teacher can assess student understanding by observing the completed chart and group participation.

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to evaluate reasons for westward expansion. This lesson will also show you the near destruction of Native Americans and their culture during this time.

- Can anyone tell me what they know about the American West after the Civil War?
- Why did Americans move westward? What natural resources were available?
- What is going on in the west at this time?

Explore:

[LandGrabExplore1](#)

[LandGrabExplore2](#)

15-20 minutes. Students should remain in their groups (5-6 students) for this portion of the lesson. Within their groups, students should have teams. Depending on group size, some students may need to play on their own. The teachers should once again quickly review the culture and ideologies of citizens after the Civil War. Many people in the country were displaced or poor as a result of the conflict. Therefore, people sought alternative options for their lifestyles. Some chose to move west. In this game, the students will work together to make decisions people of the time period would have made. It will involve some primary sources and pictures related to events in history. The game will be played by picking a “Situation” card. Each team will start with 20 tokens. The team will have to make decisions and purchases using their tokens. Each “Situation” card should be read out loud so everyone in the group can hear. After the review, each team will pick a card labeled “Situation 1” and continue the game through “Situation 5.”

Situation 1: Situation 1 determines which character the team will play. There are three characters involved in “Land Grabbing”: Farmer, Cowboy or Miner.

Situation 2: Situation 2 involves moving west.

Situation 3: Situation 3 requires the teams to purchase materials related to their line of work.

Situation 4: Situation 4 the teams will experience results based on their decisions.

Situation 5: Situation 5 asks the students to make a decision based on their characters condition.

Each situation involved in this game has decisions involved with it. Students will learn in this manner because they are simulating activities and ideas people of the time went through. The students will be required to think and make decisions.

Evaluate: Teachers can assess student learning based on participation and classroom discussion.

Explain:

[LandGrabExplain1](#)

3-5 minutes. After the game the students in each group will return to their original graphic organizer from the Engage portion of the lesson. The students will revisit the terms and discuss if any of the terms should be placed into a different column in the chart. After they revisit their graphic organizer, the students should return to their seats and the teacher should review the terms in the graphic organizer.

10-15 minutes. The teacher should ask the students reaction to the game “Land Grabbing.” After the students discuss the game, the teacher should ask the students to draw a picture of their character. The students should draw a picture of what they thought their character looked like, what they wore and list their behavior. Once the students are finished with their drawing, they should turn to a neighbor who had a different character in the game. The students should give a brief summary of their characters situations in the game and explain their drawing. The teacher will then ask the students to raise their hand if they drew a woman, Native American, Mexican or African American. The teacher then will have an interactive lecture on the dynamics of the American west. The concepts of assimilation and stereotypes should be discussed at this point. To finish this portion of the lesson a map of Native American population before and after westward expansion will be shown.

Evaluate: Teacher can assess student learning based on completed picture and participation in interactive lecture.

Elaborate:

[LandGrabElaborate1](#)

10-15 minutes. After the concepts of assimilation and stereotypes are introduced the teacher should ask the students to read a quote by Henry Ward Beecher and analyze the picture with it. The students should write what the quote and picture means to them. The teacher and students should discuss what the meaning of the quote is and what the picture represents. At this point the teacher should have an interactive lecture about the treatment of Native Americans during westward expansion. The teacher should also talk about Native American Boarding Schools and how Native American children were assimilated into European American culture. For homework, the students should write a journal entry as if they were a Native American student in a boarding school. The teacher should provide examples of real Native American children writing.

Evaluate: Teacher can assess student learning based on reaction to quote and picture and participation in interactive lecture. The individual writing can also be evaluated for understanding.

Closure:

Students should draw conclusions about the American westward expansion after the Civil War.

- Why did people move west after the Civil War?
- What resources were available and what occupations did people choose?
- Describe the concepts of stereotype and assimilation?
- What were the population dynamics of the American West?
- How did Americans attempt to assimilate Native Americans into their culture?
- Can you see assimilation in other parts of history or in current events today?

Evaluate:

Final evaluation will be a flip book including key words, ideas and examples. The flip book will consist of six different pages:

- Pg 1: The American West after the Civil War
- Pg 2: Native Americans

- Pg 3: Miners
- Pg 4: Ranchers
- Pg 5: Farmers
- Pg 6: Assimilation and Stereotypes

Students should use information from the entire lesson to create this flip book. The flip book should serve as a study guide for students and a way to organize what they learned in a manner which suits them best.

Time Restraints

If a teacher does not have enough time to complete the activity, the students could complete the *LandGrabExpalin1* portion of the lesson as homework. Another option is to not do the “Land Grabbing” game and use an interactive lecture instead.

If a teacher wants to make this lesson longer, the students can complete the journal entry in the Elaborate portion of the lesson during class. The teacher could also provide more examples in the Elaborate portion of the lesson about the destruction of Native Americans and their culture.

Evaluation and Rationale

This lesson plan uses a variety of teaching methods designed to help multiple types of learners. For example, according to Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence theory, learning occurs when content is presented in a way which appeals to a student’s interests and strengths. It also increases involvement and quality of learning. By using a variety of instructional methods, this lesson may appeal to many different learners. This lesson also presents a variety of genres: pamphlet, journal entry, drawing, modeling, mapping, graphic organizers, demonstration, descriptive paragraph, definitions, conversation and trivia facts. The students are improving life skills as they apply previous knowledge to the content while making inferences based on evidence. Comparing and contrasting is also used. Students will be using maps, recording and reporting results and group work. They also have the opportunity to re-categorize and fix their mistakes while using a graphic organizer. This lesson crosses curriculum to the subjects of Language Arts, English, Math, Geography, Geology, Government, Art and Economics.

Learning Styles and Accommodations

When presenting this lesson, there are a variety of instructional methods which can be accommodated to help different learners. The teacher must remember to use appropriate wait time and follow up questions such as: “How do you know,” “Do you agree or disagree,” “Tell me more,” “Give an example,” etc. The teacher should also provide instructions visually and verbally to help students stay on task and to clear up any misconceptions.

For students with special needs, this lesson can be modified to help them stay on task with the rest of the class. For instance, instead of having a student with special needs take notes, the notes can be provided in a way which suits them best. An example of this may be providing them notes in outline format or providing a tape recorder to record the lecture.

For advanced students, the teacher can present them with critical thinking and analytical questions revolving the abstract concepts in this lesson. Rather than providing them more work, encourage the students to think deeper about how culture is involved in the westward expansion.

Following Lesson

The following lesson should contain information on large corporations and the economic expansion of the nation. The teacher should connect information from the game “Land Grabbing,” into the following lesson. At the end of the game “Land Grabbing” large corporation start to take over businesses and lifestyles.

Teachers Notes

1. Review
2. Pass out cards
3. Graphic Organizer
4. Purpose
5. “Land Grabbing” game
6. Return to Graphic Organizer
7. Reaction and Picture
8. Dynamics of American West
9. Quote
10. Native American Lecture
11. Journal Entry
12. Flip Book
13. Closure

Resources

- Abbot, Carl and David A. Johnson. *Pacific Historical Review*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2008.
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- Basso, Matthew. *Across the Great Divide: Culture of Manhood in the American West*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Fear-Segal, Jacqueline. *White Man's Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.
- Hollitz, John. *Thinking through the Past: A Critical Thinking Approach to U.S. History, Volume II: Since 1865*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.
- Krenn, Michael L. *The Color of Empire: Race and American Foreign Relations*. Virginia: Potomac Books, Inc., 2006.
- Leckie, Shirly A. and Nancy J. Parezo. *Their Own Frontier: Women Intellectuals Re-Visioning the American West*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.
- Limerick, Patricia Nelson. *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken past of the American West*. New York: Norton and Company, 1988.
- National Conference on Public History. *The Public Historian*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2007.
- Smoak, Gregory E. *Ghost Dances and Identity: prophetic religion and Indian ethnogenesis in the nineteenth century*. Berkley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Taylor, Quintard, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West 1528-1990*. London: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 1998.
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