

U.S. History: 1865 to the Present

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STANDARD USII.2A – HOW TECHNOLOGY HELPED SETTLERS ADAPT TO THE WEST

The student will use maps, globes, photographs, pictures, or tables for

- a) explaining how technology allowed settlers to adapt to the physical features and climate of the West

CHALLENGES OF THE WESTERN ENVIRONMENT:

- The **Great Plains** were flat, dry, and had few trees.
- Hot summers, cold winters, and little rainfall made farming difficult.

Because of new technologies, people saw the Great Plains not as a “**treeless wasteland**” but as a vast area to be settled.

TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTATIONS:

- **Steel Plows** – Cut through tough sod.
- **Windmills** – Pumped underground water for crops and animals.
- **Barbed Wire** – Fenced land without using wood.
- **Sod Houses** – Built from grass and dirt when wood wasn’t available.
- **Dry Farming** – Used moisture deep in the soil to grow crops.

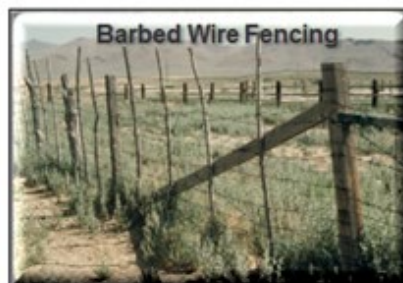
GEOGRAPHY AND EXPANSION

How Geography Shaped Movement:

- Mountains and deserts **slowed travel**.
- **Fertile plains** attracted farmers.
- Rivers and railroads influenced settlement patterns.



Inventions & Adaptations



STANDARD USII.1B – MOTIVATIONS FOR MOVING WEST

- b) identifying the motivations for westward expansion;

✦ WHY PEOPLE MOVED WEST:

- **Land Ownership:** The **Homestead Act** gave free land to settlers.
- **Economic Opportunity:** People wanted to farm, mine, or start businesses.
- **Adventure & Freedom:** Many wanted a fresh start or a chance to explore.
- **Transcontinental Railroad:** Made travel faster and easier.
- **Immigration:** The West offered jobs and land to immigrants.



STANDARD USII.1c – IMPACT OF LAWS, POLICIES, AND TREATIES

- c) examining the impact of policies, legislation, and treaties associated with growth of the nation;

🏛️ KEY LAWS AND INCENTIVES:

- **Homestead Act (1862)** – Gave 160 acres of land to anyone who would farm it for 5 years.
- Land and money given to **railroad** companies to encourage expansion.
- Laws tried to force Indigenous people to farm by **dividing tribal lands**.

🚂 TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD:

- Connected the East and West coasts.
- Built by Irish, Chinese immigrants, freed African Americans, and Civil War veterans.
- Helped move people, goods, and military faster across the country.



STANDARD USII.1D – EFFECT OF GROWTH ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

🏠 NEGATIVE IMPACTS:

- **Forced removal** from ancestral lands.
- **Broken treaties** by the U.S. government.
- **Conflicts and violence** (e.g., Battle of Little Bighorn, Wounded Knee).
- **Decline of buffalo** herds—essential to Plains tribes.
- **Assimilation policies** tried to erase Indigenous culture.
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🦋 RESILIENCE AND SURVIVAL:

- Despite hardship, Indigenous communities have:
 - **Preserved languages and traditions.**
 - Continued **tribal identity and sovereignty.**
 - Passed down history and culture to future generations.

