

Westward Expansion

Expansion and Reform
(1801–1861)



Expansion

Manifest destiny

Indian removal

Mexican-American War

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will know about the following aspects of migration to and within the United States in the first half of the 19th century:

- Immigration statistics to the United States
- Push and pull factors of immigration
- The concept of manifest destiny
- Challenges facing early pioneers
- Advances in transcontinental travel.



During the 19th century, millions of immigrants came to the U.S. in search of better lives. Use this graph to guess how many people emigrated from each country, then press the play buttons below each bar to reveal the actual figures.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Push and pull



When studying immigration trends, researchers consider two types of influencing factors: push and pull. A "push factor" describes the undesirable conditions in a person's home country that cause them to leave. A "pull factor" describes the desirable conditions in the country the person is moving to that drew them there. Can you separate the push and pull factors?

Press **start** to begin.

start





Reasons for immigrating

Advances in medicine and agriculture allowed people to live longer, resulting in overcrowding in Europe and the East Coast. Larger populations resulted in a scarcity of jobs and farmland in these areas.

The **Panic of 1837** and the following five-year depression further convinced many to leave their homes in search of better lives.

In 1848, the discovery of gold in California brought people west by the tens of thousands. The frenzy became known as the **California Gold Rush**.





Manifest destiny

Many Americans wanted the United States to grow.

Southerners wanted to extend their slave-based economy to gain power in the federal government. Northerners wanted Pacific ports to put them in contact with Asian markets.



Americans began to feel that their “**manifest destiny**” was to expand U.S. borders, spreading liberty, prosperity and American values across the continent.

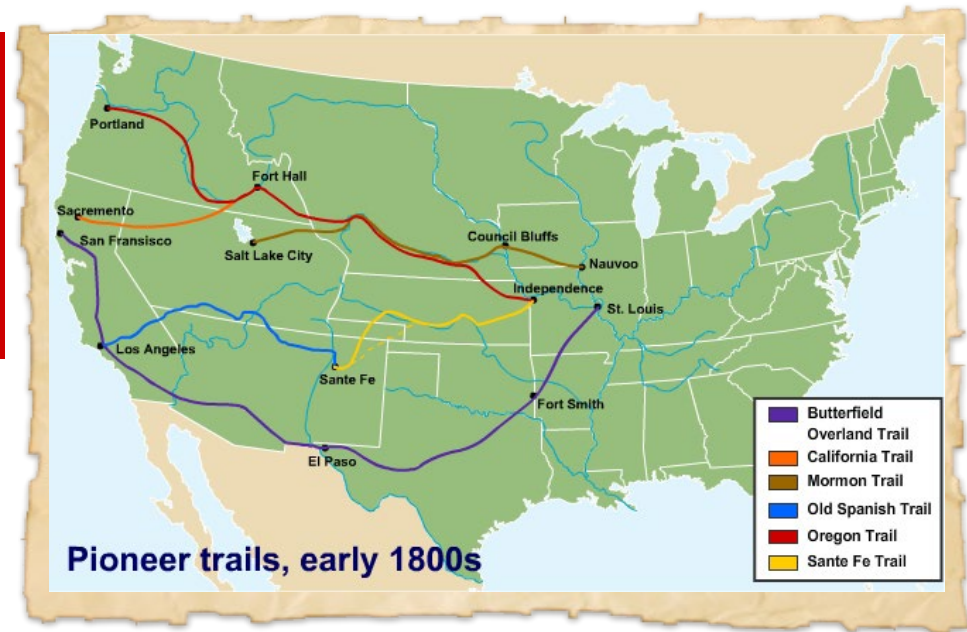
They believed this destiny was ordained by God.



As more trails were mapped across the west, thousands undertook the monotonous and often dangerous journey to the Pacific.

Most people traveled on foot alongside covered wagons that held their supplies and a few possessions.

Settlers and traders traveled in groups for safety. On the trail, accidents or illness often proved fatal.



Why did people often bypass the plains and risk crossing mountains and deserts?



As the United States spread westward across the continent, people needed new methods of communication. In the mid-19th century, American innovation produced several new, faster ways of communicating between the coasts.

Press on the objects to learn more.

Press **start** to begin.

start





The cost of the railroad



While building the transcontinental railroad, Union Pacific and Central Pacific paid their workers only \$1 a day to dig tunnels by hand and lay heavy tracks.



Meanwhile, they charged the government twice the cost of construction. Both companies failed to share their profits with stockholders.

However, they also revolutionized the country. Americans could now travel from coast to coast for \$40 in just ten days.

Did the benefits of the railroad make up for the bosses' actions?

