

The Costs and Benefits of Change: Railroads and the American West

Lesson Questions

How were railroads both productive and destructive as they changed the American West?

Lesson Task: In this lesson students investigate the positive and negative impact that railroads had on the development of the West. A central goal is for students to wrestle with the idea that change is complex. While many often benefit from technological advances, there are often segments of the population, in this case the Plains Indians, who are hurt by the very changes bringing growth. Students do not need to take a position on this change, but should be encouraged to see the issue from multiple perspectives, and can certainly share their perspectives.

An additional goal of this lesson is to support students in reading and analyzing maps and tables. Students will have to connect these graphic documents to the texts they are reading as they deepen their historical understandings.

As students read and analyze the documents, their notes will be organized by:

- The benefits of the railroads
- The costs of the railroads

NAEP Era: 6. The development of modern America (1865 to 1920)

Focal Skill: Identifying main ideas and details

Number of Documents: 5

Number of Days: 6–8

Common Core Standards

- CC reading standard (primary): RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources
- CC reading standard (secondary): RH.6-8.7 Integrate visual information (e.g. in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts
- CC reading standard (secondary): RH.6-8.9 Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic
- CC writing standard: WHST.6-8.2 Write informative/explanatory texts

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Suggested time: 1 session]

OVERVIEW 2

- Objectives
- Instructional Sequence

THE HOOK 4

- Purpose & Process
- Transition to Context-Setting

CONTEXT 5

- Overview
- Four Context Slides
 - Purpose & Process
- Slide Review
- Transition to Documents

[Suggested time: 4 sessions]

DOCUMENTS 11

- Documents Overview
- Document 1: Developing and Settling in the American West
 - Purpose, Process, Discussion
- Document 2: Agricultural Impact of the Railroads
 - Purpose, Process, Discussion
- Document 3: Economic Impact of the Railroads
 - Purpose, Process, Discussion
- Document 4: The Iron Horse and the Buffalo
 - Purpose, Process, Discussion
- Document 5: Railroad Routes and American Indian Lands in the West, 1870-1890
 - Purpose, Process, Discussion

[Suggested time: ½ session]

CONNECT 26

- Purpose
- Cross-Document Discussion
 - Re-engage students in historical inquiry
 - Compare big ideas and details across documents
 - Help students articulate own thinking

[Suggested time: 1–2 sessions]

WRITING 28

- Teachers' Roles During Writing
- Preparing Students to Write
- Writing Outline
- Set Level of Writing Support
- Sample Student Essay
- Writing Rubric

OVERVIEW

[Suggested time: 5 minutes]

Content Objectives

Students will understand that the development of railroads across the American West included many benefits for the United States, but brought many difficulties to Plains Indians and their way of life.

Benefits of the railroads for the United States included increased crop and cattle production, which led to economic growth, and huge profits for railroad companies

Costs of the railroads for Plains Indians included depopulation of the buffalo and loss of territory, leading to a destruction of their way of life

Historical Thinking Objectives

- Close Reading
- Contextualization
- Corroboration

Skill Objectives

- *(Reading)* Identifying main ideas and details; integrating visual information (tables and maps) with text
- *(Writing)* Using evidence to support main ideas

Instructional Sequence

Before you begin the lesson you should share a brief agenda with students:

HOOK	Together, we will look at two conflicting views about the expansion of railroads into the West.
CONTEXT	We'll then review some background information about what the West was like before the transcontinental railroad and why the government wanted to expand rail travel into the West.
DOCUMENTS	On your own, you will examine five primary and secondary source documents that look at the costs and benefits railroads brought to the West.
CONNECT	We'll discuss the documents and how they connect to each other and the lesson question.
WRITE	You'll write a four-paragraph essay in which you will explain how railroads changed the American West and what the costs and benefits of these changes were.

Lesson Background

The United States saw an extraordinary level of growth in the first half of the 19th century. The nation's acreage nearly quadrupled from 1800-1850, and the population rose from 5.3 million in 1800 to 23.2 million in 1850. The economic growth in major industrial cities was equally impressive. But further

economic and demographic expansion was stifled by the nation's older transportation systems. Canals and turnpikes were unable to adequately and efficiently connect these larger swaths of land to a growing population. By the time of the Civil War, it became apparent that the development of new forms of transportation was a national necessity. Train transportation—first commercially available in the United States in 1830—was a far more efficient method of moving people and cargo, and soon became the dominant form of transportation in the northeastern United States. In the newly acquired vast region of lands collectively called the American West, the development of a massive railroad system would become a driving force for change.

In 1862, the U.S. government passed two pieces of legislation that would have an enormous impact on the landscape of the American West. The first was the Homestead Act, which gave any adult in the United States who had not rebelled against the U.S. government the ability to own acreage in unappropriated federal lands in the West. Millions of Americans moved westward, building homes, farms, towns, and businesses in areas where none had existed previously. The second piece of legislation was the Pacific Railway Act, which provided government support for the building of a transcontinental railroad system. The Act appropriated hundreds of thousands of acres of land in the American West for the purpose of building and sustaining railroad development. It also chartered a new company, The Union Pacific Railroad, as the primary body charged with the development of the railroad. These two pieces of legislation allowed for an unparalleled level of internal improvements. But there was one glaring omission: the government failed to recognize the fact that large portions of this “unappropriated” land was under the control of numerous American Indian tribes and nations who lived in the American West.

Nevertheless, construction began on the transcontinental railroad in 1863. The eastern terminus for the line was in Omaha, Nebraska, where it connected to a series of rail lines throughout the United States. Over the next six years, the railway would move westward over 1,500 miles, the line meandering across valleys and through mountain ranges. The eastern portion met the western line in Utah in 1869. Once completed, the transcontinental railroad helped usher in a new era for the American West.

While the U.S. government, railroad companies, and some white settlers benefitted greatly from development in the American West, many others saw the changes brought about by the railroad as extremely destructive. American Indian nations such as the Sioux in the Great Plains and Apache in the Southwest, and numerous American Indian tribes, claimed rightful land ownership to portions of the American West that were being used to develop the railroads. Furthermore, white encroachment onto these lands was destroying American Indian ways of life, exemplified by the near extinction of the American buffalo by white settlers. The buffalo was an integral component of Plains Indians livelihoods: destruction of the herd meant destruction of American Indian territory and culture. American Indians fought back against the migration of white America into the American West, and a series of battles and military campaigns continued throughout the region for decades. By 1890, however, American Indians had lost almost all of their land rights and were moved both by treaty and by force onto reservations.

The growth of the railroad in the American West was undoubtedly a force for change. But the level with which this change was considered positive or negative varied greatly between different groups of people.

Student Background Knowledge

Students should understand that:

- A train (also known as a locomotive) is a type of transportation that can carry a large amount of materials over a long distance on tracks known as railroads. Railroad transportation was invented in the early 19th century.
- The American West is a region of the United States normally described as any land west of the Mississippi River.

- American Indian tribes and nations (including the Sioux, Navajo, Apache, and many others), as well as Mexicans and the Spanish, all occupied large portions of the American West before the U.S. citizens began migrating to the region.

THE HOOK

[Suggested time: 10 minutes]

Two Sides of the Story

Purpose

To engage students with an open-ended question that will engender some debate.

To introduce the lesson inquiry.

- The quotes present two vastly different perspectives on the growth of the railroads. The goal here is that through reading and debating these quotes, students will both appreciate the complexity of this question (there is not a “right” answer) as well as surface the need to learn more about the costs and benefits railroads brought to the West.

Two Sides of the Story

“The growth of the United States west... is due to railways. If railways had not been invented... civilization would have crept slowly on... over the immense spaces that lie between the Appalachian ranges and the Pacific Ocean; and what we now style the Great West would be... an unknown and unproductive wilderness.”

—Sidney Dillon, President of the Union Pacific Railroad



“The Great Father has made [railroads] stretching east and west. Those roads are the cause of all our troubles... The country where we live is overrun with whites. All our game is gone. This is the cause of the great trouble. My friends, help us; take pity on us.”

—Spotted Tail, chief spokesman of the Brulé Tetons American Indian Tribe



Process

Display the quotes and have students **read** them.

Ask students the **Think About It** question: Were railroads a force for positive or negative change?

As students begin to engage in the question, **ask** them:

- Who was Dillon? Why is knowing who he was important when we read this quote?
- Who was Spotted Tail? Where did the Brulé Tetons live?

You may want to **display** a map of the U.S. while you discuss these quotes.

Tap into prior knowledge students may bring with them: Does anyone know anything about the development of the transcontinental railroad?

Allow students a few minutes to debate the **Think About It** question using these two quotes and any background information they may have. The focus here should be on student thinking. You do not need to provide background historical context at this stage.

Ideally, you will have students express a range of answers to the **Think About It** question. Incomplete understandings are OK at this stage and the more debate the better. Be a devil’s advocate if you find all your students in agreement. Do not drive towards a resolution.

After the short discussion, **transition** to the lesson question. **Say** to students:

- These quotes show us that there were a range of perspectives on whether the growth of the railroads

was a positive or negative change in this country. In this lesson you will not be arguing for one or the other, but will be investigating both the costs and the benefits of the changes brought by the transcontinental railroad. Our central lesson question is: **How were railroads both productive and destructive as they changed the American West?**

TRANSITION TO CONTEXT-SETTING

Transition students to the Context slides by letting them know that they are now going to look in a little more detail at the historical context to better understand what the American West was like before the railroads were built.

Context slides are intended to serve as a support for a relatively quick “interactive lecture” with students. The goal is to both provide essential background information and engage students’ prior knowledge and thinking.

While you can certainly slow the process down according to your students’ needs, context is not intended to be a “deep dive” into slide images. Documents in the Context slides serve the role of illustrating content, sparking quick observations and reactions, and making abstract ideas more concrete.

CONTEXT

[Suggested time: 25–30 minutes—to be completed in the first session]

Context Overview

The purpose of these slides is to provide the background information that students need in order to fully understand the changes brought by the railroads.

The four Context slides focus on these ideas:

Transportation Before the Railroads— Shows average travel times around the U.S. prior to the railroads

U.S. Population Distribution in 1860— A map of population density showing how few white Americans were settled in the West at this time

Life in the American West— An image of a buffalo herd and information about the Plains Indians

The Transcontinental Railroad— Information on the construction of the transcontinental railroad and the development of the West

Slide 1: TRANSPORTATION BEFORE THE RAILROADS

Purpose

- To provide information about how slow travel times were around the country prior to the railroads.
 - Difficult and slow transportation was a major reason the West had not been settled and lacked economic development.

Suggested Process

Read through the slide table and text with students.

Transportation Before the Railroads

In the first half of the 19th century, Americans relied mostly on unpaved roadways and river systems for transportation. Traveling throughout the country was a long, difficult process.



View of the Erie Canal and roadway, 1829. Canals—man-made waterways—were an important type of transportation before the railroads.

Travel Times Between Select Cities, 1830

From	To	Time
New York	Boston	2 Days
New York	Atlanta	1 Week
Washington DC	New Orleans	2 Weeks
Washington DC	Chicago	3 Weeks

Have students **observe** the slide image.

Key Point: Let students know they will be reading two tables in the Lesson Documents. *You may want to practice with students explicitly how to read and get information from a table.*

Ask the **Think About It** question: Why would slow transportation be a problem for farmers from Chicago? For factory owners in New York?

As students discuss the slide question, **provide** the following background information, as necessary:

The Growth of the Nation

- The United States grew dramatically in size from 1800-1850, acquiring millions of acres of land.
- Population in the country rose from 5.3 million in 1800 to 23.2 million in 1850.
- The nation's Eastern industrial centers had grown so large that they had stripped the nearby environment of natural resources, forcing factories to venture further west for resources. If the nation were to continue (or even sustain) this level of economic growth, it needed to implement new transportation technologies.

Canals

- Before the railroads, canals were the most advanced form of transportation.
- One of the largest and most important canals built at this time was the Erie Canal. Completed in 1825, the canal connected the Hudson River (and the economic and industrial powerhouse of New York City) with the Great Lakes region.
- The Erie Canal cut travel time between Buffalo, NY and New York City by nearly a quarter. Nevertheless, the cost and time associated with building a canal and the relatively few number of cities it could connect, did not make canals a viable option for a national transportation system.
- The chart in this slide measures times in 1830, at the height of canal usage in the United States.

Slow Transportation

- The inability of people and cargo to efficiently travel stunted the growth of economic and industrial centers west of the Mississippi River.
- Western travel was so cumbersome that there was no official timetable for travel to the West. A trip from New York City to San Francisco, for instance, could take anywhere from four weeks to two months, depending on weather conditions and other factors.

A Solution in Trains

- **Key point:** Railroads were in use in the Northeastern portion of the United States for over 30 years before the building of the transcontinental railroad.
- The locomotive was invented in England in 1804, and the first locomotive built for commercial use in the United States was the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.
 - Built in 1830, the B&O railroad connected New York with cities as far west as Chicago and St. Louis in its prime.
 - The line connected people and natural resources like coal and lumber to regions previously unable to trade with one another. The economic boom in this region led legislators to begin arguing for a national rail system that would connect the east coast with California.

Slide 2: U.S. POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN 1860

Purpose

- To give students an understanding of the demographic landscape of the United States prior to the development of railroads in the American West.
 - Even though the country was large in size, population grew where economic activity could happen—along canals, river systems and coastlines.

Suggested Process

Read through the slide text and map with students.

Key Point: Let students know that they will be reading maps in the documents.

- You may want to **practice** with students explicitly how to read and get information from a map and its key.

Ask students the **Think About It** question: Why would most of the nation's income and economy be based in the East in 1860?

Provide the following background information, as needed:

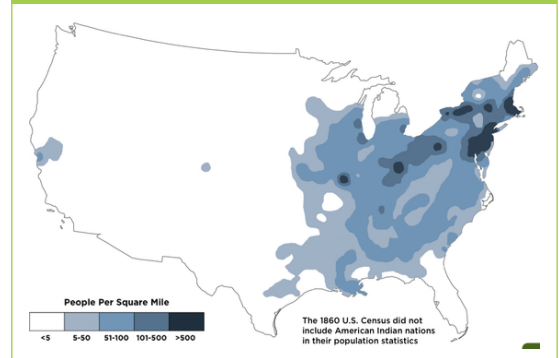
Understanding the map

- This map is misleading regarding the population in the American West. While it looks as if there are very few people living in the western portion of the American West, the 1860 census did not count American Indians, except for those who had “renounced tribal rule.”

Urbanization

- Major urban areas were almost exclusively located in the northeast.
 - The Northeast corridor (including Washington DC, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York) was the most populous, while Boston and its surrounding area also had a high population density.
 - There were the beginnings of other major industrial centers as well, including regions affected by the Erie Canal in upper New York State (Albany, Syracuse, Buffalo, etc.) and the Great Lakes region (Chicago, Milwaukee, etc). This is an example of how earlier modes of transportation affected previously sparsely populated areas of the country.
- Railroads in the northeast led to the growth of cities such as Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and St. Louis.
- Southern cities were less densely populated than Northern cities, due in part to the industrial nature of northern cities (which made close proximity to factories and trade centers necessary). Consequently, very few rail lines were built in the South before the Civil War.
- The American West was almost completely unpopulated by white settlers prior to the Civil War. One notable exception was the San Francisco Bay area in California, which had an earlier influx of people in the 1850s due to the 1848 Gold Rush.

U.S. Population Distribution in 1860



- After the Civil War, Americans (including some newly freed slaves) began looking further westward for cheap land to build a home.

Slide 3: LIFE IN THE AMERICAN WEST

Purpose

- To introduce students to the cultural and physical landscape of the American West before the advent of the railroads.

Suggested Process

Read through the slide text with students.

Have students **observe** the image.

Ask students the **Think About It** question: Who and what populated the American West before the arrival of the transcontinental railroad?

As students discuss, **provide** additional background information as needed:

- While the West was well populated by numerous American Indian tribes, and teeming with animals and other natural resources, white America saw much of the region as an untamed and barren wilderness that was open to settlement.
- By the mid-19th century, American Indian nations (including the Cherokee, Crow, Cheyenne, Apache, Lakota, Nez Perce, and Sioux) had built numerous diverse and complex societies throughout the American West.
 - Many of these tribes—including those in the Great Plains regions—remained hunter-gatherers: cultures that did not use large-scale agricultural techniques and instead moved with the change of the seasons and the availability of staple foodstuffs.
- Central to the life of many Plains Indians was the buffalo, used for food, clothing, and tool-making. American Indians would move their settlements with the migration of massive herds of buffalo that freely roamed the Great Plains.
- Before the railroads, it is estimated that 60 million buffalo inhabited the region. There were so many buffalo that, according to an eyewitness travelling on the Santa Fe Trail in 1839, one single herd could cover an area of at least 1,350 square miles. It took the man three days to travel through one herd.
- All of the major American Indian tribes that lived in the American West had formed treaties with the United States that detailed the lands that they could claim ownership over. These tribes had both ancestral and legal rights over large portions of the American West.
- These treaties, however, conflicted with the white American ideology of Manifest Destiny. Manifest Destiny was the belief that white Americans were chosen to conquer and control the entire continent, and that every step west was a step closer to fulfilling the country's destiny.
 - This mentality excused any environmental, cultural, or ethical issues that occurred in the process of westward migration.

Life in the American West

Many Americans viewed the West as an unpopulated wilderness. But large parts of the American West were claimed by American Indian nations, who lived and hunted game animals on the land.



A herd of buffalo, 1860. Before the railroads cut through the landscape, there were an estimated 60 million buffalo roaming the American West.

Slide 4: THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

Purpose

- To provide students information about the transcontinental railroad, and how it helped to develop the American West.

Suggested Process

Read through the slide text and table with students.

Ask students the **Think About It** question: How did the U.S. government encourage and support the development of the American West?

As students discuss, **provide** additional background information, as needed:

The Pacific Railway Act

- President Lincoln signed the Pacific Railway Act in 1862, which provided federal support to build the railroad.
- The U.S. government also named a single company—the Union Pacific Railroad—as the primary body responsible for the railroad. As part of the Act, Congress gave Union Pacific vast areas of land for free (in the form of land grants) in order to lay track and collect materials for the 1,500-mile route.

Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad

- The transcontinental railroad spanned from Omaha, Nebraska (where it connected to other east coast lines) to Sacramento, California, and took six years to complete.
- At its peak, the Union Pacific was able to lay eight miles of railroad track per day.
- The image was taken on May 10, 1869 in Promontory Summit, Utah. This was considered the ceremonial completion of the transcontinental railroad, connecting the rails of the Central Pacific Railroad to the Union Pacific Railroad.
- In less than a week—and for only \$65—passengers could cross the continent on a single mode of transportation. The same trip via boat and/or stagecoach would have taken at least a month and cost well over \$100.

Continued Development of the Rail System

- Multiple railways connected southwestern California to Texas.
- The Northern Pacific Railway from Chicago to Seattle was completed in 1882.
- The Great Northern Railway from St. Paul to Seattle was completed in 1893.
- Canadian transcontinental railroads were also completed in the late 19th century. Combined, these systems greatly increased traffic of cargo and people throughout the American West.

Settlement and Conflict in the West

- The Homestead Act of 1862 gave western land at little or no cost to any adult who had not rebelled against the U.S. government.

The Transcontinental Railroad



Workers celebrating the completion of the transcontinental railroad in Promontory Summit, Utah in 1869

The U.S. government used railroads to encourage development in the American West by:

- * distributing millions of acres of land to the Union Pacific Railroad company to build and maintain its tracks
- * passing the Homestead Act, which gave land to U.S. citizens who promised to relocate in the West
- * sending the Army to battle American Indian tribes who claimed ownership over large portions of the West

- During the 1860s and 1870s, the federal government began building forts and stationing soldiers in the Great Plains of the American West to protect the increasing numbers of white settlers, prospectors, and railroad builders seeking their fortune there.
 - They were stationed to protect white settlers from attacks by American Indian tribes: tribes that had both ancestral and legal ownership of portions of the American West.
- In the early 19th century, a series of wars and legal battles between the United States and several American Indian nations forced American Indians westward into the Great Plains. There they were either forced onto reservations, settled in unclaimed lands, or acculturated into earlier Great Plains tribes and nations.

Slide 5: CONTEXT REVIEW: RAILROADS IN THE AMERICAN WEST

Purpose

To summarize the essential information from the Context that students will need for contextualizing the costs and benefits brought by the railroads to the American West.

Process

Look at the image on this slide.

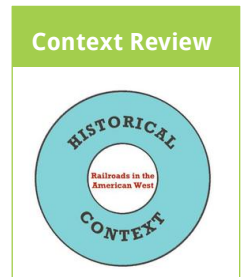
Tell students that they will use some of the information they've just learned or reviewed to answer the lesson question.

They will now spend a few moments to *review and take some notes*.

Guide students in remembering the most important information to answer the two **Take Notes on Context** questions:

- What was the West like before the development of the railroads? Add 2 details to your notes.
- Why did the U.S. government want to build a transcontinental railroad?

If necessary, click back to past slides to jog students' memories. Allow students to **discuss** their answers at table groups or with a partner. Each student, however, should **record** his/her own notes.



TRANSITION TO DOCUMENTS

After reviewing the Context slides say to students:

You will now read five documents on your own. This is the next step in the lesson, and the contextual information we just discussed will help you to better understand the costs and benefits the development of railroads brought to the West.

This is also a good time to remind students of the lesson question: **How were railroads both productive and destructive as they changed the American West?**

DOCUMENTS

[Suggested time: 3-4 sessions]

Documents: Overview

Students read and analyze five documents in this lesson. Two are secondary sources, two are tables with statistical data, and one is a comparison of two maps.

Documents and student notes will be organized into the following categories:

- Benefits of the railroads
- Costs of the railroads

Benefits of the Railroads

Developing and Settling in the American West, secondary source

Central information: Written by historians, it discusses the economic benefits brought by the growth of railroads to farmers, businessmen, and the railroad companies.

Economic Impact of the Railroads, a table

Central information: Shows economic growth in the western states as well as the economic growth of the Union Pacific Railroad Company from 1872 to 1879. It is notable that while the income of western states nearly doubled during this time, the Union Pacific Railroad Company nearly tripled in growth.

Agricultural Impact of the Railroads, a table

Central information: Shows the growth of three major crops in California from 1872 to 1879.

Costs of the Railroads

The Iron Horse and the Buffalo, secondary source

Central information: Written by historians, it discusses the impact of the railroads on the extermination of the buffalo, and the devastation this extermination had on the Plains Indians.

Railroad Routes and American Indian Lands in the West 1870-1890, maps

Central information: Two maps that show the relationship between the growth of the railroads and the dramatic loss of American Indian territories.

The central reading skills are to identify the central ideas or information in primary and secondary sources and to integrate visual information (tables and maps) with text.

Note: Students can work on these documents independently while you circulate and support their work. (See PD Doc on supporting students during document work.)

Document 1: DEVELOPING AND SETTLING IN THE AMERICAN WEST

Purpose

To introduce students to some of the changes brought by the railroads and what the benefits of some of these changes were.

Key Reading Challenge

This is a longer document, so students may have difficulty determining the most important details and Big Ideas.

Secondary source - Benefits



Suggested Process

- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular details or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate. Discuss the document after students have read and answered the questions.
- As this is the first document of the lesson, we would suggest moving through the questions as students read the document, pausing to read and re-read as necessary.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

Document 1: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.



Purpose

Check for and deepen students'

- comprehension of the document
- grasp of the "Big Idea"—i.e., the benefits of the railroads

Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- *Zoom In* provides Source It, Read Closely, Gather Evidence, and Big Idea questions alongside this document. Depending on your class's needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” question, and use them to guide discussion.

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students’ responses to the “Big Idea” question:
 - According to this essay, how did the railroads bring economic growth to the country?
 - What is strong evidence from the document to support your answer? Answer using your own words.
- Identify student responses that reflect understanding of the Big Idea, and good use of supporting evidence, and those that reflect confusion or misunderstanding.
- Select and project a range of student responses to the summary questions. You can choose model responses as well as responses that need development as a way to spark student discussion. (See the PD document and video on “Discussion Phase 1: Formative Assessment of Student Comprehension of Individual Documents” for more support on using students’ responses to analyze their reading strengths and needs.)

Discuss the Source It Questions

Depending on the needs and experiences of your students, a **focus** for the Source It discussion might be the nature of a secondary source, and what the difference is between primary and secondary sources.

Discuss the Read Closely Questions

Ask: How was western land distributed at this time?

Help students to see that national, state and local governments gave vast amounts of land to the railroads. Smaller portions of land were also given to pioneers. Railroads sold or gave away land to settlers as well.

Tip: It may be useful to look at a map to help students get a sense of the size of the land that was distributed.

Ask follow up questions to highlight **key points**:

- Why do you think so much land was given to the railroad companies?
- Why might land have also been given to settlers?
- Why might railroad companies have offered cheap land to settlers?

Ask: How did railroads change the transportation of goods across the country?

Help students identify details in the text that address this question. In particular, have students focus on the reduced travel times and cost that railroads afforded.

Ask follow up questions to highlight **key points**. For example,

- How would these changes have helped farmers or businessmen?

Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

Ask students to share the details they highlighted for the first **Gather Evidence** question: How did the railroads earn so much profit?

Focus on key quotes, including:

- This free land...allowed railroad companies to reduce their costs.

- Once built, the railroads were the main method of transporting goods and people throughout the American West. With full control of the West's major form of transportation, railroad companies earned a large profit.

Ask students to share the details they highlighted for the second **Gather Evidence** question: How did the railroads support the development of farming in the West?

Focus on key quotes, including:

- Railroad companies offered cheap land to Americans and encouraged them to move west. From 1860 to 1890, over 2.5 million Americans migrated westward, turning thousands of acres of land into homesteads and settling towns.
- Most of these farmers depended on the railroad to ship the crops they harvested to faraway customers.
- Railroad companies made it possible for crops and products to travel across the country more quickly than they ever had before.

As students are discussing the text they highlighted **ask** them:

- Why did you choose this detail? What does it mean?
- Does anyone else agree? Disagree?
- Can anyone think of another way to explain this detail?
- Are there other details we should focus on here?
- What kind of change is this for the country? Beneficial or destructive? Why would you say that?

Prompt students to put any text they quote *in their own words*.

Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from noticing the specific details in the text to articulating the Big Idea: *According to this essay, how did the railroads bring economic growth to the country?*

There are many ways students could articulate the Big Idea. For example:

- Railroads brought economic growth to the country by opening the West to settlement. This increased the production of crops and railroads made it easier for people to sell crops all over the country and world, making the U.S. a richer and more powerful country.

Anticipate these difficulties that students will have getting to the Big Idea:

- They may focus too much on smaller details (*Railroads brought economic growth to the country by making travel time faster*)
- Or, they may articulate ideas quite generally, without staying connected enough to the document details (*Railroads brought economic growth to the country by making it easier for people to make money*)

Ask these questions to help students *identify and articulate the Big Idea*:

- Let's think back to the details we identified. What were the Big Ideas?
- How do these details connect to each other?

- Can you make that idea more specific?
- What do we mean by the “country’s economy”?
- How would more farms help the country’s wealth?
- Why did Bowles say that railroads determine, “the future of America as the first nation of the world in commerce”? What does that mean and how does that idea connect to other details we read?

The idea here is not to push students towards the “right” answer, as there are many possible ways to articulate the Big Idea, but to push them to **engage in a rich discussion with one another** in which they have to articulate their ideas and ground their thinking in the document.

Have students revise their notes. Allow students time to revise their notes after and/or during the discussion. Students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated the Big Idea.

Document 2: AGRICULTURAL IMPACT OF THE RAILROADS

Purpose

To provide students with another source of evidence for the impact of the railroads on the growth of agriculture.

To support students in developing skills in reading and understanding statistical data.

Key Reading Challenges

Middle school students may not have had a lot of experience reading statistical tables in the context of social studies. In addition to needing basic support with making sense of a table, students may need help with drawing larger historical understandings from the data.

Table – Agricultural Benefits of Railroads

Agricultural Growth in California In the Years After Completion of the Transcontinental Railroad			
Year	Bushels of Wheat	Bushels of Corn	Cattle
1872	887,790	7,883	15,468
1879	2,308,526	212,004	24,140

Suggested Process

- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular passages or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

Document 2: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.

Purpose

Check for and deepen students’

- comprehension of the document
- grasp of the “Big Idea”—i.e., the agricultural benefits of the railroads

Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- *Zoom In* provides Source It, Gather Evidence, Big Idea and Think About It questions and prompts alongside this document. Depending on your class's needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” question, and use them to guide discussion.

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students' responses to the “Big Idea” question:
 - How did railroads impact agricultural growth in California?
 - What is strong evidence from the document to support your answer? Answer using your own words.

Discuss the Source It Questions

A main goal of the Source It conversation should be to help students think about the time period represented by this table (1872-1879).

Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

Ask students to **share** the quotes they highlighted in response to the **Gather Evidence** question: How did agricultural production in California change between 1872 and 1879?

The key support students may need here is to **describe** the table details with precision. We anticipate that many students may describe what they see in vague terms. For example: *There were a lot more bushels.*

Questions to **ask** to deepen thinking include questions such as:

- How much more wheat was produced in California in 1879 than in 1872? How large an increase was this?

Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from noticing the specific details in the text to articulating the Big Idea: *How did railroads impact agricultural growth in California?*

There are many ways students could articulate the Big Idea. For example:

- The growth of railroads led to huge increases in crop and cattle production in California between 1872 and 1879.

Ask these questions to help students *identify and articulate the Big Idea*:

- Let's think back to the details we identified.
- What Big Ideas do these details represent?

- Can you make that idea more specific?

The idea here is not to push students towards the “right” answer, as there are many possible ways to articulate the Big Idea, but to push them to **engage in a rich discussion** with one another in which they have to articulate their ideas and ground their thinking in the document.

Discuss the Think About It Question

Ask: Why do you think railroads impacted crop and livestock production in California?

Help students to connect this table to what they read about in the previous document.

Have students revise their notes. Allow students time to revise their notes after and/or during the discussion. In particular, students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated the Big Idea.

Document 3: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE RAILROADS

Purpose

To provide students with another source of evidence for the economic impact of the railroads.

Key Reading Challenges

As with the previous document, the central challenge is reading and making sense of a table. This table is slightly more complex as it looks at data from both the western states in general as well as the specific income of the Pacific Railroad Company.

You may want to read this table with students and help them make explicit connections to the previous table on agricultural growth.

Table – Economic Benefits of the Railroads

Year	Income in western states due to the Union Pacific Railroad	Income of the Union Pacific Railroad
1872	\$7,810,000	\$3,670,000
1879	\$14,650,000	\$10,730,000

Suggested Process

- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular passages or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

Document 3: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.

Purpose

Check for and deepen students’

- comprehension of the document



- grasp of the “Big Idea”—i.e., economic benefits of the railroads

Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- *Zoom In* provides Source It, Gather Evidence, Big Idea and Think About It questions and prompts alongside this document. Depending on your class’s needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” questions, and use them to guide discussion.

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students’ responses to the “Big Idea” question:
 - How did building the railroads impact the economic growth of the West and the Union Pacific Railroad company?
 - What is strong evidence from the document to support your answer? Answer using your own words.

Discuss the Source It Questions

A main goal of the sourcing conversation should be to **help** students notice that this table covers the same time period as the previous table (1872-1879).

Discuss the Read Closely Questions

Although there are no Read Closely questions for this document, **support** students in close reading skills.

Ask questions, such as:

- What are some of the first things we should look at when we read a table? Why?
- What is the title of this table? What does this table tell us about what information we might learn?
- What do the columns of this table represent?
- What do the rows represent?
- How do we read this to gain information?
- What kind of change over time does this table show?
- How do you think this table connects to the previous table showing agricultural growth in California?
- What kind of income would the west have been earning?
- What did the railroad companies get their income from?

Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

Ask students to **share** the quotes they highlighted in response to the two **Gather Evidence** questions:

- How did income in western states change between 1872 and 1879?

- How did Union Pacific Railroads' income change between 1872 and 1879?

Again, **support** students in describing the table details with precision. We anticipate that many students may describe what they see in vague terms. For example: *The income changed a lot.*

Questions to **ask** to deepen thinking include:

- How much did the income actually grow?
- Let's think about what we have learned in math; what kind of growth is that? How would we calculate the percentage growth? (The income of western states grew at a rate of about 88% in 7 years while the Union Pacific Railroads' income grew at a rate of about 190% during the same time period—or, nearly double and nearly triple growth).
- Do you think that these are high or low rates of growth? How do the rates of growth compare?

Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from noticing the specific details in the text to articulating the Big Idea: *How did building the railroads impact the economic growth of the West and the Union Pacific Railroad company?*

There are many ways students could articulate the Big Idea. For example:

- The growth of railroads led to huge increases in crop and cattle production in California between 1872 and 1879.

Ask these questions to help students *identify and articulate the Big Idea*:

- Let's think back to the details we identified.
- What Big Ideas do those details represent?
- Can you make that idea more specific?

The idea here is not to push students towards the “right” answer, as there are many possible ways to articulate the Big Idea, but to push them to **engage in a rich discussion** with one another in which they have to articulate their ideas and ground their thinking in the document.

Discuss the Think About It Question

Ask: How might this table connect to the table on crop production??

Help students to connect this table to what they read about in the previous document.

Have students revise their notes. Allow students time to revise their notes after and/or during the discussion. In particular, students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated the Big Idea.

Document 4: THE IRON HORSE AND THE BUFFALO

Purpose

To introduce students to the idea that all of the changes brought by the railroads were not beneficial—some came at great cost to the landscape, ecosystem, and original inhabitants of the West.

Key Reading Challenges

A key understanding students should take away from this document is that the eradication of the buffalo was a deliberate goal of the railroad companies, one aimed squarely at the destruction of the Plains Indians. Students will have to infer why the railroad companies might have been invested in the removal of the Plains Indians—namely, more land available for settlers meant increased profits for the railroads, who would carry more goods and people throughout the country.

This idea is addressed in the “Think About It” question.

Secondary Source – Costs



Suggested Process

- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular passages or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

Document 4: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.



Purpose

Check for and deepen students’

- comprehension of the document
- grasp of the “Big Idea”—i.e., costs of the railroads for the Plains Indians

Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- *Zoom In* provides Source It, Read Closely, Gather Evidence, Big Idea and Think About It questions and prompts alongside this document. Depending on your class’s needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” questions, and use them to guide discussion.

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students’ responses to the “Big Idea” question:
 - How did the growth of railroads impact the Plains Indians?
 - What is strong evidence from the document to support your answer? Answer using your own words.

Discuss the Source It Questions

You may want to **remind** students that this is a secondary source document.

Discuss the Read Closely Questions

Ask: In what ways did the Plains Indians depend on the buffalo?

- Help students to **identify** the details in the text that answer this question. It will be important to support students in seeing that the buffalo were essential not only for sustenance, but were central to the religion and culture of the Plains Indians as well.

Additional close reading questions to **ask** include:

- Who participated in the buffalo hunts and why?
- What was done with the buffalo that whites hunted?

Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

Ask students to **share** the quotes they highlighted in response to the first **Gather Evidence** question: How did the railroads contribute to the extermination of the buffalo?

Focus on key quotes, including:

- Railroad companies organized buffalo hunts as vacations for eastern sportsmen.
- In just two years, from 1872 to 1874, hunters using high-powered rifles with telescopic scopes, some never leaving the comfort of their railroad cars, slaughtered 3,550,000 buffalo.
- Railroads also transported the buffalo carcasses back to eastern industrial centers, where their meat was sold in markets and factories turned their hides into leather and their bones into household items like glue and ink.

Encourage students to articulate these quotes *in their own words*.

Ask students to **share** the quotes they highlighted in response to the second **Gather Evidence** question: How did the extermination of the buffalo affect the Plains Indians?

Focus on key quotes, including:

- With the removal of the buffalo from the landscape of the American West, a central source of food, clothing, and shelter for Plains Indian tribes was destroyed.
- In 1874, General Sheridan explained that the buffalo hunters, who were responsible for the near extermination of the species, “have done more in the last two years, and will do more in the next year, to settle the vexed Indian question [removing tribes to reservations] than the entire regular army has done in the last thirty years.”

Encourage students to articulate these quotes *in their own words*.

As students are discussing their details, **ask** them:

- Why did you choose this detail? What does this mean?
- Does anyone else agree? Disagree?
- Can anyone think of another way to explain this detail?
- Are there other details we should focus on here?
- What kind of change is this for the country? Beneficial or destructive? Why would you say that?

Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from noticing the specific details in the text to articulating the Big Idea: How did the growth of railroads impact the Plains Indians? What is strong evidence from the document to support your answer?

There are many ways students could articulate the Big Idea. For example:

- The growth of railroads was devastating to the Plains Indians. By promoting buffalo hunting and supporting the sale of buffalo hides and meat, the railroad companies helped to destroy the Plains Indians' way of life.

Questions to **ask** to help students more clearly *identify and articulate* the Big Ideas include:

- Let's think back to the details we identified. What were the Big Ideas?
- How do these details connect to each other?
- Can you make that idea more specific?
- How was the extermination of the buffalo connected to the Plains Indians?
- What was the railroad's role in all of this?

As always, **support** students in engaging in a rich text-based discussion with one another.

Discuss the Think About It Questions

Ask: Why did railroad companies want to support the extermination of the buffalo?

See the notes in “**Key Reading Challenges.**”

Questions to **ask** to deepen thinking here include:

- Were the railroads organizing these hunting trips just for sport and leisure?
- Let's think about what the extermination of the buffalo led to. Why would the railroads have a stake in destroying the Plains Indians' way of life?
- What would the railroads get out of this?
- What did Sheridan mean when he said buffalo hunters, "have done more in the last two years, and will do more in the next year, to settle the vexed Indian question than the entire regular army has done in the last thirty years"?

Allow students time to **revise** their notes after and/or during the discussion. In particular, students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated their answers to the Big Idea questions.

Document 5: RAILROAD ROUTES AND AMERICAN INDIAN LANDS IN THE WEST 1870-1890

Purpose

To provide additional evidence about the negative impact of the railroads on the Plains Indians.

To support students in developing their map reading skills.

Key Reading Challenges

Middle school students may not have had a lot of experience reading maps to support bigger historical understandings. Typically, students in elementary school read maps to locate political and geographical features, so this use of maps may be new for them. In addition, students have to compare two maps in order to draw conclusions.

Suggested Process

- As students read independently, move around the room to diagnose difficulties and offer coaching. When you note several students struggling with particular passages or questions bring them to the attention of the class as appropriate.
- Use your Teacher Dashboard to scan and assess student responses to specific Document questions (such as the Big Idea question) once a majority of students have finished reading the document. This will prepare you for the class discussion.

Document 5: Class Discussion

It is critical for students to briefly discuss each document after they have read it.

Purpose

Check for and deepen students'

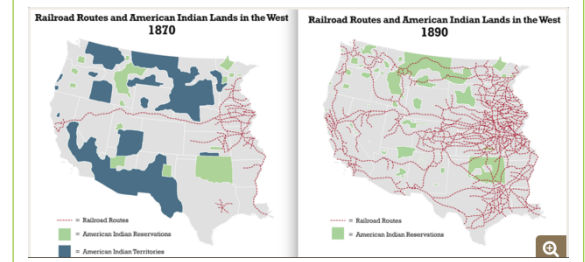
- comprehension of the document
- grasp of the "Big Idea"—i.e., costs of the railroads for the Plains Indians

Process

Engage students in discussing one or two key questions they have answered in the tool.

- Zoom In* provides Source It, Read Closely, Gather Evidence, Big Idea and Think About It questions and prompts alongside this document. Depending on your class's needs, you may choose to focus on certain question types over others.
- We strongly recommend using structures such as turn-and-talk and table group discussions as you engage students in these questions.
- Most important, be sure to follow up on student comments by *pressing for reasons and evidence*, and *for accountable talk*. Use the prompts for the extension questions below.

Maps – Costs of the railroads



FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Select student responses to the “Big Idea” questions, and use them to guide discussion.

- Ahead of time, use the Lesson Dashboard to quickly scan your students’ responses to the “Big Idea” question:
 - How did growth of the railroads impact American Indians in the West?
 - What is strong evidence from the document to support your answer? Answer using your own words.

Discuss the Source It Questions

A main goal of the Source It conversation should be to help students think about the **time period** these maps depict (1870 and 1890).

Discuss the Read Closely Questions

As students discuss the Read Closely questions you may want to **support** them in their basic map-reading skills. Questions might include:

- What are some of the first things we should look at when we read maps? Why?
- What are the titles of these maps? What do these titles tell us about the information we might learn from these maps?
- Where is the key? What does the key tell us?
- Why are there two maps here? How might we use both of these maps together?
- How did railroad routes in the United States change between 1870 and 1890?
- What is the difference between a territory and a reservation? Why is this difference important?

Discuss the Gather Evidence Questions

Ask students to **share** the details they tagged in response to the **Gather Evidence** question: How did American Indian lands change between 1870 and 1890?

The key **support** students may need here is to describe the map details with precision. We anticipate that many students may describe what they see in vague terms. For example, referring to colors (*there is more blue in the 1870 map*) or describing features in general terms (*there is less Indian land here*).

Questions to **ask** to deepen thinking include:

- What does that color represent?
- What year does that detail connect to?
- Why do you think there were more reservations in 1890?
- Is there another detail we should tag here?
- What are the biggest differences between these two maps?
- About how much land does it look like American Indians lost?

Discuss the Big Idea Questions

Students move at this stage from noticing the specific details in the map to articulating the Big Idea: *How did growth of the railroads impact American Indians in the West? What is strong evidence from the document to support your answer?*

One way to state the Big Idea would be:

- The growth of the railroads led to American Indian tribes in the West losing all of their territory. After the development of the railroads, more American Indians were forced to live on reservations and they lost more than half of their land.

Anticipate these difficulties that students will have getting to the Big Idea:

- They may focus too much on smaller details (*More railroads led to more reservations*)
- Or, they may articulate ideas quite generally, without staying connected enough to the document details (*Railroads were bad for American Indians*)

Questions to **ask** to help students more clearly *identify and articulate* the Big Ideas include:

- Let's think back to the details we identified.
- How do these details connect to each other?
- What Big Ideas do these details represent?
- Can you make that idea more specific?

As always, **support** students in engaging in a rich text-based discussion with one another.

Discuss the Think About It Questions

Ask: How do these maps connect to the essay on hunting the buffalo?

Help students to **connect** the essay to the maps.

Ask: What did we learn in the essay that helps us to better understand these maps?

Allow students time to **revise** their notes after and/or during the discussion. In particular, students may need to be prompted to revise how they have articulated their answers to the Big Idea questions.

CONNECT

[Suggested time: ½ session]

Purpose

Before students write in response to a historical question, they need opportunities to talk. They need to clarify their understanding of the documents and how they connect with the larger context and the question they are answering. Your job as a *Zoom In* teacher is to create these discourse opportunities.

Cross-Document Discussion

In this discussion the main goal is to help students synthesize their learning across documents and connect back to the Context and the larger historical questions under investigation. This supports the historical thinking skills of corroboration and contextualization.

Three major moves should happen here:

- Re-engage students in the historical inquiry
- Support students in comparing Big Ideas and details across documents
- Support students in articulating their own thinking, while listening and responding to their peers

A) Re-engage students in the historical inquiry

Begin by reminding students of the lesson questions and the larger historical context. Do an initial informal assessment of what “big picture” students have walked away with. **Say** to students:

- Before we look at the costs and benefits of the changes brought by the railroads, let’s remind ourselves of what the West was like before the transcontinental railroad was built.

Revisit the Context Review questions:

- What was the West like before the railroads?
- Why did the U.S. government want to build a transcontinental railroad?

Prompt groups to look at the Context slides and their notes. Let groups discuss and then share their responses.

B) Support students in comparing big ideas and details across documents

Display the Connect Tab.

Students will likely want to jump immediately to the costs and benefits of the changes (and their own opinions), but **prompt** students to discuss the first **Think About It** question:

- How did railroads change the American West?

Connect will display a t-chart labeled “The benefits of the railroads,” and “The costs of the railroads” that displays student notes on the Big Idea questions, and their supporting evidence. You can choose one student’s work to project to guide the discussion, or you can project notes you’ve “starred” while using the Teacher Dashboard to review students’ Big Idea notes.

An example of student work in the chart format is shown on the next page:

CONNECT	
<p>The benefits of the railroads</p> <p>Document: Developing and Settling the American West Big Idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railroads opened the West to settlement. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More people in the West helped to increased crop production. Then, the railroads helped them to sell their goods to many places. <p>Document: Agricultural Impact of the Railroads Big Idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railroads created agricultural growth in California. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railroads helped to increase crop and cattle production. <p>Document: Economic Impact of the Railroads Big Idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railroads increased economic growth of the West and the railroad companies. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The West's income doubled and the growth of Union Pacific Railroad tripled. 	<p>The costs of the railroads</p> <p>Document: The Iron Horse and the Buffalo Big Idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railroads hurt Indians' way of life because they destroyed the buffalo hers. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railroad companies organized buffalo hunts and sold the meat and hides back East. <p>Document: Railroad Routes and American Indian Lands in the West Big Idea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Railroads cost American Indians a lot of territory in the West. <p>Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many railroad routes went over Indian lands, so the U.S. government took those lands and Indians ended up on reservations.

The Connect tab will also display the key discussion questions:

- How did railroads change the American West?
- What were the costs of this change and what were the benefits?
- What do you think about these costs and benefits?

Engage students in the Connect questions.

We recommend that you give students time to discuss these questions with each other in small groups or turn-and-talks before engaging with them as a whole group.

Support students in generating a list of changes without categorizing them as “good” or “bad.” Encourage students to return to the documents and their notes. Changes that might emerge in the discussion include:

- Changes to transportation times
- Changes in population in the West
- Changes to the animals and the landscape
- Changes to how the land was used
- Changes to the economy of the West

- Changes to American Indian tribes' traditional ways of life

After students have identified some of the central changes, move on to thinking about the *costs and benefits* of these changes.

Again, **support** students in returning to the documents and engaging in these discussions with their peers.

Follow-up questions you could **ask** to deepen and extend thinking include:

- What support from the documents do you have for your thinking? Let's go look; what did it say here? What did this mean?
- Who benefitted? Who did not? Why might this be?

This part of the discussion is intended to support students in both synthesizing the documents and reflecting on their larger historical significance.

Give students time to **edit** their responses in *Zoom In* based on class discussion.

C) Support students in articulating their own thinking

Finally, be sure to allow students time to speak with each other about their own thinking. This can happen at any stage of the discussion through turn-and-talks or small group discussion. Questions to support this kind of thinking include:

- What do you think about these costs and benefits?
- What's important here?
- What are your thoughts and reactions?
- How does what we read in these documents connect back to what we looked at in the Hook? Has your thinking changed since we had that conversation?
- Does change always have cost and benefit throughout history? What are some other examples of major technological change we have looked at?

WRITING

[Suggested time: 1–2 sessions]

In this four-paragraph essay, students must describe how the railroads changed the American West in both productive and destructive ways.

Teacher's Roles During Writing

As students are writing, support them in these key ways according to their needs:

- Circulate and observe students' progress through the template or outline. Take some notes to help you think about mini-lessons in writing you may want to teach to the whole class.
- Conference individually with students on their writing. Support their development through asking probing questions:
 - You seem stuck; where might you find that information?

- If you don't remember what that quote means, where can you go?
- Tell me why you introduced that evidence that way? What more do you think the reader might want to know?
- Can you tell out-loud what the Big Idea is here? OK, how could you put that into writing?
- If you see patterns, pull together small groups of students for mini-lessons, or to review instructions.
- Support students in being peer editors.
- Help students move on to polished writing.

Preparing Students to Write

Tell students that the next stage of the lesson will be their writing. Remind them they will be writing a four-paragraph explanatory essay. The key elements of historical essay writing you will help them with are:

- Describing the historical context.
- Citing details from the documents to support their explanation of the costs and benefits railroads brought to the West.

Project the Essay Outline View. Use this to review the writing prompt and preview the essay structure with students. Review explicitly each part of the essay and the role it serves in developing an answer to the historical question. Making these elements of the essay explicit for students will help them to develop the skills to construct essays more independently down the road.

Essay Outline View

Prompt: Write a four-paragraph essay that answers the question: How were railroads both productive and destructive as they changed the American West?

Use historical context to describe what the West was like before the railroads and why the government wanted to build the transcontinental railroad. Cite details from the documents to support your discussion of the costs and benefits railroads brought to the West.

Paragraph-by-paragraph guidance: In your essay you must have the following sections:

- **An introduction in which you describe how railroads changed the West**
 - Provide a topic sentence that tells the reader the main subject you will be writing about.
 - Provide historical information about the American West before railroads came along.
 - Introduce your thesis.
- **A first body paragraph in which you describe the benefits of the railroads**
 - Provide a topic sentence that introduces the main topic of your paragraph.
 - Provide 1 detail from the secondary source and 1 detail from the tables.
 - > Introduce the source(s).
 - > Provide quotes and details from the documents.
 - > Explain how the evidence shows the ways the railroads benefitted the country.
- **A second body paragraph in which you describe the costs of the railroads**
 - Provide a topic sentence that introduces the main topic of your paragraph.
 - Provide 1 detail from the secondary source and 1 detail from the tables.

- > Introduce the source(s).
- > Provide quotes and details from the documents.
- > Explain how the evidence shows the ways the railroads were harmful.
- **A conclusion in which you summarize and extend your thinking**
 - Restate the thesis and your main ideas.
 - End strong! What are your thoughts and the costs and benefits of these changes?

Setting the Level of Writing Support

Using the Teacher Dashboard, you can set the level of students' writing support. (*Note:* Do this before they begin drafting their essays.) *Zoom In* offers two levels of writing support. *High Support* (the default) gives all students sentence-level tips, optional sentence-starters, and guidance in selecting and using evidence. As students show progress as historical writers – especially in using evidence from documents to support their ideas – teachers can set writing support for individual students to *Low Support*. The system will provide these students with paragraph-level tips only, meaning students will shape and support their essays substantially on their own.

Preparing Students to Write with Low Supports

If most of your students are writing with Low Supports (meaning with outline only, rather than the detailed Writing Template), you may wish to give them more up-front preparation to write their historical essays. The following outline may help.

Overview

- Let students know that the next stage of the lesson will be their writing.
- Remind them that they will be explaining why so few African Americans were registered to vote in Mississippi in the 1950s and early 1960s.
- Their final product will be a five-paragraph explanatory essay.

Introduction

- Remember, what is the purpose of your essay? Right, you are going to explain how the changes brought by the railroads were both productive and destructive.
- What do the sections of this essay need to be? [Review the overarching structure of the paragraphs.]
- What's going to go into this introduction?
- How will you start this essay?
- What background information will you need to provide? Your reader will need to know what the West was like before the transcontinental railroad so you know how the West changed.

Body Paragraphs 1 & 2

- OK, now that we have a sense of what needs to go into the introduction, let's think about the three body paragraphs.
- It makes the most sense to organize your paragraphs by the two sides we've been looking at: The costs and the benefits.
- In each paragraph you will need to use details from the documents to support your thinking.

Remember to introduce your source and to explain how your evidence connects back to the Big Idea you are writing about.

Conclusion

- Finally, let students know that they will end the essay with a conclusion in which they summarize the Big Ideas, extend their thinking, and conclude with their own ideas about these changes.

Allow students *time to ask questions* for clarification before they move on to independent writing.

Sample Student Essay

The railroads forever changed the American West. Before the railroads the population of the west was small. People had to travel by horse or by boat and it took a long time for people and goods to travel across the country. Much of the land out west was undeveloped by farmers and the plains were open spaces where many American Indian tribes and buffalo lived. The U.S. government built the transcontinental railroad because it wanted people to settle the west and make use of the resources out there. The railroads brought huge changes to the west. Some of the changes that the railroads brought were good for the country and some were destructive.

The railroads were productive because they played an important role in helping to develop the economy of the west. They did this by helping more farmers to move west and produce more crops and by bringing big profits to the railroad companies. According to historians, “From 1860 to 1890, over 2.5 million Americans migrated westward, turning thousands of acres of land into homesteads and settling towns. Most of these farmers depended on the railroad to ship the crops they harvested to faraway customers.” This means that the railroads helped farmers to sell their crops all over the country. Railroads led to even bigger profits for the railroad companies. According to a table showing economic growth from 1872 to 1879 the Union Pacific Railroad increased its profits as much as the whole country did. This shows that the railroad companies benefitted more than even the farmers did.

Even though the railroads helped to grow the country’s economy this did not mean that all the changes they brought were good. The railroads destroyed the way of life for the Plains Indians. According to historians, “Railroad companies organized buffalo hunts as vacations for eastern sportsmen. In just two years, from 1872 to 1874, hunters using high-powered rifles with telescopic scopes, some never leaving the comfort of their railroad cars, slaughtered 3,550,000 buffalo.” This led to the destruction of the Plains Indians because the tribes relied on the buffalo for food and hides. According to maps that show railroad routes and American Indian lands, during the period of time that the railroads were built the tribes lost all of their territories. This shows that with the growth of the railroads the Plains Indians were forced off of their lands.

Railroads were both productive and destructive as they changed the American West. Railroads helped the country to expand and develop, making the United States a wealthier country. On the other hand, they led to the destruction of the buffalo and wiped out the original people who lived in the west, the Plains Indians. Our country would not be the same without the railroads, but the cost was very high.

Assessing Student Writing with the Essay Rubric

For information on assessing student writing, see these resources:

- “Zoom In Essay Rubric” (PDF)
- “Assess Student Writing” (Video) <http://zoomin.edc.org/teachers/watch-videos>