

cobblestone

HOMESTEAD ACT OF 1862

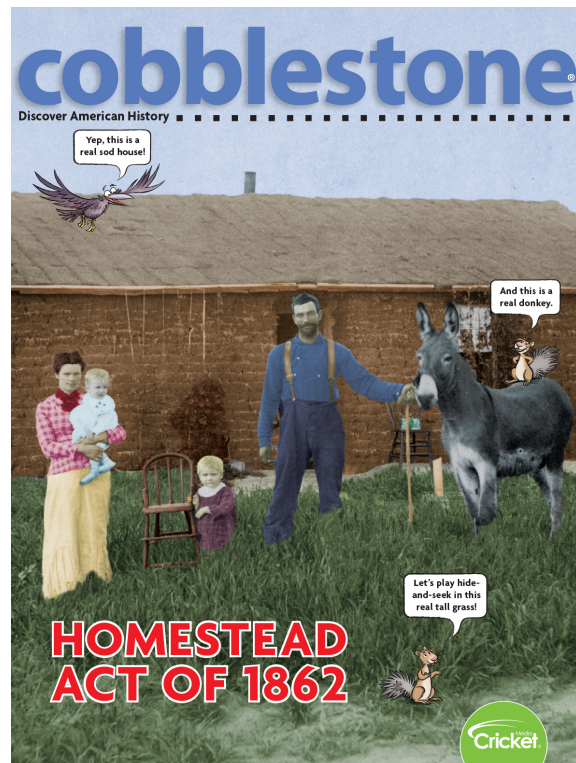
In this issue, students examine the process of the settlement of western lands in American history, including the challenges experienced by those settlers and some of the conflicts that this settlement led to.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How did the Homestead Act of 1862 have both positive and negative impacts on society?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the history of westward settlement.
- Students will classify a series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.
- Students will analyze the purposes and consequences of public policies.
- Students will explain how laws change society.
- Students will use details from a text to create a timeline.
- Students will conduct research to create a map.
- Students will use details from a text to write historical fiction.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core Social Studies skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

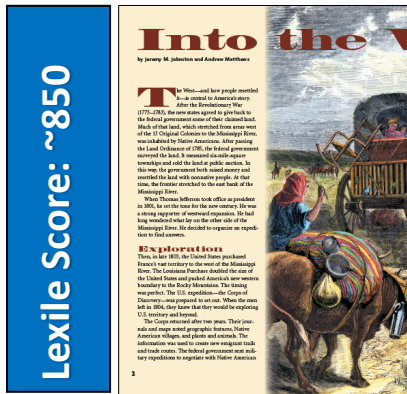
- **Into the West**
Expository Nonfiction, ~850L
- **Lincoln Leads the Way**
Expository Nonfiction, ~850L
- **What About the Native Americans?**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1050L

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Into the West

pp. 2–3, Expository Nonfiction

Explore the history of westward settlement of Americans from the late 1700s to the late 1900s, including how this settlement led to conflicts.



ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did the Homestead Act of 1862 have both positive and negative impacts on society?

Show students a physical map of the United States. Point out the Appalachian Mountain range and explain that prior to independence from Great Britain, settlement west of these mountains was prohibited. Ask students to hypothesize why it was prohibited and what the consequences of winning independence from Great Britain were for the peoples already living in lands west of this mountain range.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Review the vocabulary words and definitions with students. Then ask students to make predictions about the topic of the text using the vocabulary words. If necessary, help students guess the topic by revealing the title of the article. Remind students to check their predictions and look for the vocabulary words as they read.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the history of westward settlement.
- Students will classify a series of historical events and developments as examples of change and/or continuity.
- Students will use details from a text to create a timeline.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **frontier** (p. 2) the limit of settled land beyond which lies wilderness
- **emigrant** (p. 2) a person who leaves a region or country to settle in another one
- **homesteader** (p. 3) a person who settles and grows crops on land given by the government

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

1. How did land west of the Appalachian Mountains become federally owned land?
2. Why did westward settlement lead to conflict between peoples?
3. How did the Homestead Act encourage people and families to settle the frontier?

SKILL FOCUS: Classify Events

INSTRUCT: Tell students that events and developments in history can be classified as either examples of change or continuity. As an example of change, point out that wars often have turning points, when an event leads to a significant historical change. Then point out that when similar actions by an individual or group are repeated over time, this is an example of historical continuity. Explain that the article mentions several examples of both historical change and historical continuity.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to find at least two examples of historical change and two examples of historical continuity in the article. Have pairs share and discuss their findings with other pairs. Check group discussions to ensure accuracy.

EXTEND

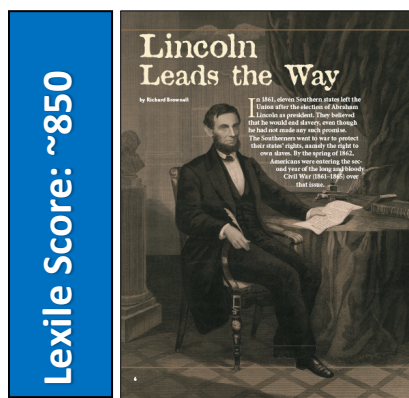
Social Studies Ask students to review the article for details about the settlement of the American West. Then have them create an annotated timeline with at least six entries.

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Lincoln Leads the Way

pp. 6–10, Expository Nonfiction

Discover President Lincoln's role in promoting the settlement of the American West.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the history of westward settlement.
- Students will analyze the purposes and consequences of public policies.
- Students will conduct research to create a map.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **transcontinental (p. 7)** going across a continent
- **agriculture (p. 8)** the science or practice of farming, including growing crops and raising animals
- **settle (p. 8)** to move to a place and make it your home

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did the Homestead Act of 1862 have both positive and negative impacts on society?

Explain to students that public policies are laws, rules, or other acts by government officials that address public issues. Inform students that the settlement of the West was an issue during early American history that the government became involved in. Have students hypothesize what type of policies the government might have enacted to encourage westward settlement and provide support for those who settled there.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Review the vocabulary words and definitions. Then have students work in small groups to write a single sentence that uses all three vocabulary words correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Then remind them to look for these words as they read the article.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

1. What were the responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture?
2. How was the work of the Department of Agriculture related to the Homestead Act?
3. What were the effects of the Pacific Railroad Act on westward settlement?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Policies

INSTRUCT: Explain that public policies include government-created laws and other actions that aim to benefit part or all of a country's population. Point out that the article discusses five acts that President Lincoln signed into law. Also explain that each of those laws had a specific purpose as well as certain consequences.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to review the article and identify at least four public policies supported or developed by President Lincoln. Instruct students to identify the purposes and consequences (social, political, and/or economic) of each policy.

EXTEND

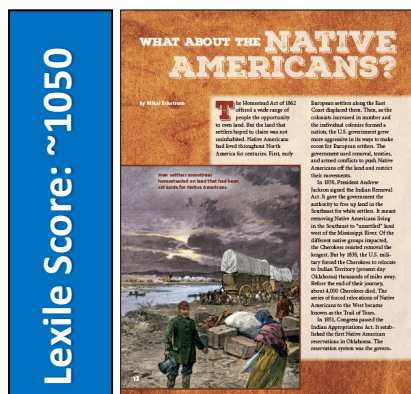
Social Studies Have students use the article to research settlements that arose in the U.S. due to the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad. Instruct students to create a map that includes the following:

- the path of the Transcontinental Railroad
- the location of settlements that arose as a result of the railroad
- annotations explaining when each settlement was founded, why, and who settled there
- a map scale and compass rose

What About the Native Americans?

pp. 12–15, Expository Nonfiction

Discover how U.S. government policies concerning westward settlement led to conflict between Native American groups and settlers and how the government worked to reduce the amount of land owned by Native Americans.



RESOURCES

- How Laws Change Society

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a nonfiction article.
- Students will learn about the history of westward settlement.
- Students will explain how laws change society.
- Students will use details from a text to write historical fiction.

KEY VOCABULARY

- reservations (p. 12)** areas of land in the U.S. that are kept separate as places for Native Americans to live
- negotiations (p. 13)** formal discussions between people who are trying to reach an agreement
- tribal (p. 14)** relating to a group or community of people with similar ancestors, customs, and traditions

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How did the Homestead Act of 1862 have both positive and negative impacts on society?

Explain that westward settlement was a process that took place over roughly two hundred years, between the late 1600s and late 1800s. Ask students to explain what they know about the ways that Native Americans were impacted by westward settlement.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Review the vocabulary words and definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the story.

- Despite _____ that led to the creation of _____, nonnative peoples continued to settle on Native American land.
- The _____ nature of Native American societies made it difficult for them to survive the division of land on _____ into individual plots.

READ & DISCUSS

Have students read the article with a partner. Then use these prompts for discussion:

- What was the purpose of the Indian Removal Act? What were the consequences of its implementation?
- How did negotiations for treaties often leave Native Americans disadvantaged?
- How did the Dawes Act weaken Native American culture and lead to further land loss for native peoples?

SKILL FOCUS: Explain Change

INSTRUCT: Explain to students that laws can change a society by affecting the way its people are allowed to live. Next, explain that many laws were passed throughout American history that led to changes in Native American societies. Distribute the *How Laws Change Society* organizer.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to find details in the article about laws passed in the 1800s and 1900s and how these laws affected the way people in Native American societies lived. Then invite students to discuss how Native American societies traditionally interacted with the land and how reservations make this type of interaction difficult.

EXTEND

Social Studies Have students write a short story from the perspective of a Native American individual living during the time of the Homestead Act. Have students work in pairs to brainstorm the conflicts their main characters will face. Encourage students to use descriptive details to develop their stories and make them interesting.

How Laws Change Society The article describes six laws passed by the U.S. government and how these laws changed Native American societies. Refer to the article to complete the chart below.

Name and Date of Law	Why was the law created?	How did the law change Native American societies?

Summarize On the back of this paper, write a few sentences to summarize how different laws passed by the U.S. government affected Native American societies over time.