

Lesson Title: Manifest Destiny (An Ideal or Justification)

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Grade Level: 10th grade

Teaching Traditional American History Program

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Mike Lair, Project Director

Lesson Overview: The lesson gives an overall look at the guiding forces that drove early American after the Revolutionary War. All student will receive handouts of historians views on the term "Manifest Destiny". The student will learn the land purchases of the US that determined the fate of Native Americans as well Mexico and the Europeans Powers. They will also learn how the purchases of land led to migration to the west for many different reasons, but the number 1 reason was to better themselves.

Objectives: After completing this lesson the student will be able to :

- * Understand the land purchases during the 1800's
- * Understand the expansion of the west with no purchases, takeovers
- * Explain how the term "Manifest Destiny" influenced the move westward
- * Evaluate the effects on the Native Americans

Material: the following material will be needed for these lessons:

Handout 1- A Conversation With David Pletcher of Indiana University. [An Ideal or a Justification.](#)

Handout [2-John L.O'Sullivan on Manifest Destiny, 1839](#)

Handout 3- Manifest Destiny- Don Mabry of the Historical Text Archives

Lecture Notes will be given the first part of the class, day 1.

Students will discuss the concept of Manifest Destiny and analyze how it influence the American Frontier

Class Time: 2 classes of 51 minutes. Day 1 will be lecture and time to start reading the assigned handouts. Day 2 will be discussion and evaluation.

Teacher Input: At the beginning of the first day the student will take the following notes to better understand the readings. These notes were comprised of several sources that will help the students relate with the ideology of Manifest Destiny.

1) An Ideal or a Justification

A) Manifest Destiny- it was an expression of the ideal of the American people.

1) The Ideal was that the US was a chosen people

2) The people had a mission- to control this continent

3) They had the best society, best economy and best form of government

4) They felt they were superior over Native Americans and Africans

5) They sincerely felt that the other people of the world needed them to achieve a better life.

2) Govern by God

A) Manifest Destiny was a conviction that God intended North America to be under the control of Americans.

B) Anglo -Saxon supremacy

C) It is pointed out the our national declaration, and we proclaim to the millions of other lands, that "the gates of hell"- the powers of aristocracy and monarchy- "shall not prevail against it".

D) The concept was to be governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood.

3) Expansion to the West- Purchases, wars, and treaties set the stage

- A) Monroe Doctrine
- B) The Mexican Wars
- C) The Oregon Dispute
- D) The Gadsden Purchase
- E) The Louisiana Purchase
- F) Indian Treaties

4) Effects of the Native Americans

A) The meeting with the Indians were described as "the meeting point between savagery and civilization"

B) Manifest Destiny ideology could not treat the Indians with equality

- 1) The white men took their land
- 2) Killed the buffalo which was most of their livelihoods
- 3) Put them on reservations
- 4) Tried to change their spiritual beliefs
- 5) Tried to Americanize all the Indians

The fate of the Native Americans will be studied in much more detail later.

Activities: The students will be discussing the reasons the American people would put themselves above the rest of the world. Each student will be ask to write a short paragraph on their feelings about the concept of Manifest Destiny. The input by the students will be discussed at end of the first hour. The readings will be homework with more discussion the next day with an evaluation to end the 2 hour lesson.

Questions for review: The answer will vary because they will be more subjective then objective. Each answer will be written in constructive response form.

- 1) In your opinion, was the concept of Manifest Destiny an Ideal or a Justification?
- 2) In your opinion, the fact that most Americans were from the European countries, why was there a feeling of superiority?
- 3) Has students in American school in 2005. Do you approve of the way the frontier was taken? Please explain how it might have effected you.

Scoring: Each question will be worth 10 points each (30 points possible)

10 points- Correct content and written in correct constructive response

5 points- Correct content but incomplete sentences

2 points- Made an effort to answer but was not correct content

Closure: These lessons will be a spring board to the Native Indians. Students will continually refer back to the Manifest Destiny issue. The concept is hard to understand and referring back to it will help the students grow to understand that a philosophy of a nation sets the ground work for it's actions.