

Manifest Destiny (Middle School)

U.S. Territorial Expansion

Sarah Brewer
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Grade Level	8th Grade	**Time Frame**	2 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts, Social Studies	**Duration**	100 minutes
Course	U.S. History		

Essential Question

How was the concept of Manifest Destiny used to motivate and justify U.S. territorial expansion? How did Manifest Destiny impact multiple groups of people differently?

Summary

In this middle school lesson, best facilitated at the beginning of a westward expansion unit, students analyze John Gast's painting American Progress, then read and analyze primary source documents to construct their own definition of Manifest Destiny. To deepen their understanding, students analyze primary and secondary source documents to determine why some people were opposed to Manifest Destiny. To further consider how Manifest Destiny impacted multiple groups of people differently, students identify push and pull factors that influenced migration and territorial expansion during the era of Manifest Destiny. To summarize the lesson, students create a Two-Voice Poem.

Snapshot

Engage

Students use the Quick Draw and Picture Deconstruction strategies to analyze John Gast's painting *American Progress*.

Explore

Students analyze primary sources to develop a definition of Manifest Destiny.

Explain

Students analyze maps and a historical letter to explain why different groups opposed Manifest Destiny.

Extend

Students consider push and pull factors related to Manifest Destiny.

Evaluate

Students create a Two-Voice poem that contrasts the perspectives of a person who supported Manifest Destiny and a person who opposed it.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages
CLR403: Draw simple logical conclusions in more challenging passages
IDT402: Identify a clear central idea or theme in somewhat challenging passages or their paragraphs
IDT403: Summarize key supporting ideas and details in somewhat challenging passages
SYN401: Draw logical conclusions using information from two literary narratives

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Writing (6-12)

I&A 302: Analyzing critical elements of an issue and differing perspectives on it. A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Establish a limited or tangential context for analysis -Provide analysis that is simplistic or somewhat unclear
ORG 301: A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -A score in this range indicates that the writer is able to: -Group most ideas logically -Use transitions between and within paragraphs to clarify some relationships among ideas

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies Practices (8th Grade))

8.8.1: Examine the concept and opposing perspectives toward Manifest Destiny as a motivation and justification for westward expansion.

Attachments

- American Progress Photo Deconstruction—Manifest Destiny.docx
- American Progress Photo Deconstruction—Manifest Destiny.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Manifest Destiny.pptx
- Manifest Destiny Disputed—Manifest Destiny.docx
- Manifest Destiny Disputed—Manifest Destiny.pdf
- Two-Voice Poem—Manifest Destiny.docx
- Two-Voice Poem—Manifest Destiny.pdf
- What is Manifest Destiny—Manifest Destiny.docx
- What is Manifest Destiny—Manifest Destiny.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- *American Progress* Photo Deconstruction (attached; one per student)
- What is Manifest Destiny? (attached; one per student)
- Manifest Destiny Disputed (attached; one per student)
- Two-Voice Poem (attached; one per student)
- Notebook paper or composition book (optional)
- Writing utensils

20 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Context

This lesson provides students with a broad foundational understanding of the concept of Manifest Destiny. It would best fit at the beginning of a westward expansion unit and then could be built upon throughout the unit, as there is much more to discuss in terms of how Manifest Destiny relates to specific events and situations that involve U.S. territorial expansion.

Begin by dividing students into groups of 3–4. Students work in these groups for most of the lesson. Use the attached **Lesson Slides** to guide the lesson. Start by displaying **slide 3**, showing the image below:



Distribute the attached ***American Progress* Photo Deconstruction** handout to each student. Using an adaptation of the Quick Draw strategy, give students three minutes to draw *American Progress* to the best of their ability, on the back of the handout, on a piece of notebook paper, or in their composition books. Remind students that their drawing does not have to be a beautiful work of art, but they should try to capture as many details of the image as possible. This strategy is meant to help students focus on the details of the image so they can make meaningful observations and inferences.

Once students have finished their drawings, introduce the Picture Deconstruction strategy and assign each group a number from one to five. For larger classes, you may have multiple groups with the same number; for smaller classes, you may have only four groups total.

Display **slide 4**, which shows the same image divided into quadrants labeled #1to #4. The painting's central figure is labeled #5. Groups assigned number one will analyze quadrant #1, groups assigned number two will analyze quadrant #2, and so on. If your class has five groups, let the fifth group analyze the central figure, the painting's date, and its title. If you only have four groups, invite all groups to also analyze the figure in the middle, along with the date and title of the image.

Give groups a few minutes to discuss and record what they see in the "Observations" column of the handout. Remind students that observations are simply what they see. They are not interpreting or inferring anything yet.

Next, call on each group to share something they observed for the portion of the painting they were assigned.

After each group has shared, ask students to now consider the image as a whole as well as the observations from their classmates. Give students 4–5 minutes to work within their groups to interpret what is happening in the image, what ideas or emotions the artist may have intended to convey, what the figure in the image represents, etc. Students should record these thoughts in the "Inferences" column on the handout.

Next, call on each group to share their inferences. Continue the discussion until students have addressed the painting's major themes.

Teacher's Note: Guiding Conversations

As you facilitate the class conversation about the image, use the following questions as needed to direct students' attention to specific details:

- Notice some parts of the painting are dark, and some are light. What might the lighter and darker areas of the painting suggest?
- How does the title, *American Progress*, relate to what's happening in the image?
- This image was created in 1872, after the United States claimed territory extending to the Pacific coast. How might that influence what the artist is trying to convey as well as how we interpret the image?
- Additionally, you may wish to use the Picturing History website which includes a full interpretation of the painting as a resource to support the class discussion.

Explain to students that the painting on slide 4 reflects a concept that they will be exploring for the remainder of the lesson called "Manifest Destiny." Review the essential questions on **slide 5** and the learning objectives on **slide 6**.

15 minutes

Explore

Display **slide 7**, showing students a map of the United States in 1810. Distribute the attached **What is Manifest Destiny?** handout to each student.

Tell students they will use three primary sources to create a definition of Manifest Destiny. Using the map on slide 7, review with students what the country looked like in 1810. Keeping the map in mind, direct students' attention to the first source on the handout, a quote from John Quincy Adams in 1811. Read the quote with the whole class. Then, give students two minutes in their groups to discuss what they think Adams is saying.

After two minutes, call on groups to share their thoughts. Once students have had a chance to share, explain that Adams argues that: "The entire North American continent is destined (meaning it is inevitable) to be populated by people from the United States, and that the U.S. should pursue expansion of its boundary to the Pacific Ocean."

Have students use the Stop and Jot strategy to write their own one- or two-sentence summary in the space provided on the handout. Going back to the 1810 map, it is worth noting that this was a somewhat bold claim to make in 1811, given the country's boundaries at that time—especially since relatively few U.S. settlers lived throughout much of the Louisiana Purchase, which was already home to numerous Native nations and other communities.

Next, have students work within their groups, again using Stop and Jot, to summarize the remaining two documents. Then, facilitate a whole-class discussion, calling on groups to share their responses with the whole class. Summarize student responses, clarifying any information during the discussion. Students may add to or change their summaries on their handout based on the class discussion.

Finally, display **slide 8** and ask students to brainstorm with their group how they would now define Manifest Destiny. What characteristics would need to be included in a definition of the concept? Give students about five minutes to work on their definition with their groups. Have students record their ideas in the "My Group's Brainstorms" section of the handout. Then, call on each group to share their responses. Record students' responses on the board or type their answers into slide 8 if desired.

Summarize the class discussion by displaying **slide 9**. If students are missing any key pieces of information, they should add them at this point and synthesize all information to create a final definition of Manifest Destiny in the "Class Response" section of the handout.

20 minutes

Explain

Now that students have a basic understanding of Manifest Destiny, explain to them that although many people (including those with considerable political power) supported expansion to the Pacific Ocean, many people opposed this ideology and the expansionist policies associated with it. Display **slide 10** and ask students to consider who might oppose the idea of Manifest Destiny. Provide a few minutes for students to discuss in their groups. Then, distribute the attached **Manifest Destiny Disputed** handout to each student.

With their groups, ask students to consider Document 1 on the handout, a map showing lands inhabited and governed by Native American nations during the 19th century. Ask students to use their knowledge of Manifest Destiny and their observations of the map to identify one reason people may have opposed the ideology. Have students record this reason in the “Document 1” column on the Opposition to Manifest Destiny chart. When students are ready, call on a few groups to share their responses. Encourage students to modify their responses based on the whole-class discussion if necessary.

Possible Student Response

Students might note that, "If the United States expanded to the Pacific Ocean, it would enter lands already inhabited by numerous Native American nations. Native American groups and some Americans might oppose Manifest Destiny because it will cause conflict between Native Americans and U.S. settlers and could threaten Native American land claims and way of life."

Ask students to look at Document 2—the map showing the U.S. in 1840. Ask students to discuss their observations. Given what students know about Manifest Destiny and based on their observations of this map, ask them to think of a reason some people might have been opposed to the idea of Manifest Destiny. Students should record this reason in the “Document 2” column of the Opposition to Manifest Destiny chart.

When students are ready, call on a few groups to share their responses. Again, encourage students to modify their responses based on the whole-class discussion if necessary.

Possible Student Response

Students might note that, "If the U.S. pursues a Manifest Destiny policy, they will have to claim territory governed by Mexico and inhabited by Mexican citizens, Indigenous peoples, and other communities. Mexico would likely oppose U.S. expansion into Mexican territory because it would threaten Mexico's control over its own land and people. Some Americans might oppose expanding into Mexican territory because it could be seen as an act of war against a foreign country."

Finally, ask students to look at Document 3, a letter from William E. Channing to US Senator Henry Clay. Given what students know about Manifest Destiny and based on their understanding of the text, ask them to think of a reason some people might have been opposed to the idea of Manifest Destiny. Have students underline textual evidence to support their responses. Students should record this reason in the “Document 3” column of the Opposition to Manifest Destiny chart.

When students are ready, call on a few groups to share their responses. As you discuss as a whole class, ask students to share and explain the words or phrases they underlined as textual evidence. Once again, encourage students to modify their responses based on the whole-class discussion if necessary.

Possible Student Responses

Students might note that the author argues the following:

- The U.S. is big enough already, and it doesn't need any more land.
- The land the U.S. is expanding into is being taken from other people, which is wrong.
- In pursuing Manifest Destiny, the actions of the U.S. would be morally wrong and criminal, taking land that belongs to Native Americans and Mexico.
- Taking land by force is not “progress.”

During the discussion of these three documents, as students share their responses, emphasize that Manifest Destiny was widely disputed. Inform students that, despite the opposition to Manifest Destiny, the United States government used this idea to justify policies that expanded U.S. territory.

Display **slide 11** and ask students to think back to the primary and secondary sources they reviewed in the previous sections of this lesson and then discuss the following question with their group: "How did the United States use the idea of Manifest Destiny to motivate and justify its expansion into land that was already occupied?" Give groups a few minutes to come up with a possible answer. Then, call on each group to share their thoughts with the whole class.

Possible Student Response

Some possible student responses include the following:

- Believing in the ideas of Manifest Destiny motivated the United States to support aggressive policies intended to extend U.S. territory to the Pacific coast.
- They justified their expansion by arguing that it was something inevitable (meant to happen no matter what).
- Supporters argued that expansion represented ‘progress’ and spread what they considered a superior culture and form of government.

15 minutes

Extend

Display **slide 12** and review the definitions of push and pull factors. Using the Friends Without Pens strategy, display **slide 13** and have students discuss with a partner examples of factors that might push people to leave one place or pull them toward another. Ask students to put away their writing utensils so they focus only on the discussion.

After providing a few minutes for discussion, have students record the push and pull factors they discussed on a piece of notebook paper or on the back of a handout.

Display **slide 14** and ask students to consider if any of the push and pull factors they wrote down influenced migration and expansion during the era of Manifest Destiny. Have students circle the factors they wrote down that would apply, and ask several students to share what they circled. As a class, develop a list of push and pull factors that applied during Manifest Destiny.

30 minutes

Evaluate

Tell students that although many Americans, including government officials, supported policies rooted in Manifest Destiny, people both within and outside the United States opposed actions justified by this ideology, including Native American removal and the U.S.-Mexican War.

Introduce the Two-Voice Poems strategy and distribute the attached **Two-Voice Poem** handout to each student. Invite students to create, either individually or as a group, a Two-Voice poem that represents the perspectives of one person who supported Manifest Destiny and one person who opposed it. If time allows, have students present their Two-Voice poems to the class.

Collect the completed Two-Voice Poem handouts as a summative assessment of students' understanding of the contrasting perspectives surrounding Manifest Destiny. Consider also collecting the What Is Manifest Destiny? and Manifest Destiny Disputed handouts to assess students' source analysis and development of ideas throughout the lesson.

Resources

- Gast, J. (1872). American progress. Chromolithograph published by George A. Crofutt. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fd/American_Progress_%28John_Gast_painting%29.jpg
- K20 Center (n.d.). Friends Without Pens. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/4438
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Photo or picture deconstruction. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/140
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Quick draw. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/51
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Stop and jot. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/168
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Two-Voice poems. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/133