



# Westward, ho!

Target audience – U.S. History, grade 10

Time required – 15 minutes

## Activity

During the mid-1800s, the American population followed the country's Manifest Destiny; as land was acquired, westward migration toward the Pacific occurred.

## C3 Standards

**D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.**  
**D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.**

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to explain the reasons for the westward emigration of the American population during the 1800s.
- Students will be able to compare the major trails.

Map URL: <http://esriurl.com/historygeoinquiry4>

## Ask

### Why would Easterners decide to move west during the 1800s?

- In the Details pane, click the Content button.
- Turn the US Land Acquisitions layer off and back on.
- Click some of the acquisition areas in the map. How was the United States changing between 1800 and 1853? *[Land acquisitions occurred through various means; there was a westward expansion of the U.S.]*
- Turn off the US Land Acquisitions layer.
- Click the Travelers layer, and read the statements.
- ? What reasons were given for wanting to move westward? *[Religion (missionary work and freedom from persecution), exploring and mapping, pursuing the Manifest Destiny, seeking land for farming and logging, pursuing economic opportunities (fur trade, gold, businesses, ports to Asia), and less population.]*

## Acquire

### Where were the starting points and destinations for wagon trains?

- Turn on the Trails and Launching Locations layers. Name two cities where trails began. *[Trails began in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Independence, Missouri.]*
- Turn on the Destinations layer.
- ? Which trail would you take to farm in Willamette Valley in Oregon Territory? *[Oregon.]*
- ? Which trail would you take to Salt Lake City? *[Mormon.]*
- ? Which trail would you take to gold and silver mines? *[California.]*
- ? Which trails followed the same route through land purchased from Louisiana? *[Oregon, Mormon, and California.]*
- ? Which trails became networks of connected trails? *[Santa Fe and Old Spanish.]*

## Explore

### How long would the trip take?

- ? Speculate about which trail was the longest. *[Oregon Trail and trails into California were the longest.]*
- Measure the distances of the two trails considered the longest. *[See the Tooltips boxes for help.]*
- ? What were the distances of the two longest trails? *[The Oregon Trail was 2,000 miles; the California Trail was ~1,950 miles.]*
- ? A wagon train traveled approximately 15 miles per day. Calculate how long it would take emigrants to travel before reaching their destinations. *[The Oregon Trail took 133 days, or 4-5 months; the California Trail took 130 days, or 4.5 months.]*

more ►

## Analyze

### Why were networks of trails established?

- Use the Kearney, NE bookmark to zoom to the Oregon and Mormon trails.
- ? Identify how these routes corresponded to terrain features. [*Settlers traveled on flat land, near water, through valleys, and around higher elevations.*]
- Zoom to the Old Spanish Trail bookmark.
- ? Why did this “trail” develop multiple routes? [*It was shorter, there was closure of routes, and there were various modes of travel.*]
- ? How did the location of the Butterfield Overland Mail Trail differ from other trails? [*It was farther south, with a flatter terrain and no snow.*]

## Act

### How did land acquisition affect westward migration?

- Until 1820, the West was regarded as land between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River.
- Write a paragraph about why the additions of new territory west of the Mississippi caused migration westward. Include the trails and destinations, and reasons why emigrants traveled on them.

### MEASURE

- Click the Measure tool.
- Select Distance, and then choose the unit of measurement.
- Click once to start measuring, click once to change direction, and double-click to stop measuring.

### BOOKMARKS

- At the top of the map, click Bookmarks.
- Choose a bookmark; the map will take you there.

## Next Steps

**DID YOU KNOW?** ArcGIS Online is a mapping platform freely available to U.S. public, private, and home schools as a part of the White House ConnectED Initiative. A school subscription provides additional security, privacy, and content features. Learn more about ArcGIS Online and how to get a school subscription at <http://connected.esri.com>.

### THEN TRY THIS...

- Add other routes west, such as the Pony Express, railroads, Route 66, and Interstates 70 and 80. Use the Proximity tool (Analysis) to examine whether early trails became the basis for future transportation routes.
- Add climate and vegetation data to assess the accurateness of early emigrant statements about conditions in the new locations, and to determine the best time to start the trip to avoid getting stranded in winter snows.

## TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from these texts.

- *The Americans* by McDougal Littell — Chapter 9
- *America: Pathways to the Present* by Prentice Hall — Chapter 10