



Study Guide Online

Complete your Chapter 17 study guide in print or online.

Chapter Summary

Section 1 Mining and Railroads

- Gold and silver strikes in the West attracted many newcomers.
- Some mining towns became ghost towns after the metals were mined out.
- Immigrants came to the West from many countries to help build railroads.
- In 1869, a transcontinental railroad linked the East with the West.

Section 2 Native Americans Struggle to Survive

- Native Americans lost their lands, despite treaties aimed at protecting them.
- Native American nations were forced onto reservations.
- Native Americans fought for their way of life.
- The 1887 Dawes Act tried to promote new ways of living among Native Americans.

Section 3 The Cattle Kingdom

- Railroads provided a way for cattle ranchers to get their herds to distant markets.
- Unruly cattle towns helped to give rise to the myth of the Wild West.
- Economic depression, bad weather, and the fencing of crops brought the cattle boom to an end in the late 1800s.

Section 4 Farming in the West

- Free land for homesteaders helped to populate the Great Plains.
- Plains settlers faced a hard and isolated life.
- Disgruntled farmers and workers organized to demand reforms from government.
- The Populist Party shook up American politics in the 1890s.

Key Concepts

These notes will help you prepare for questions about key concepts.

The Western Frontier Disappears

Causes

- Gold and silver are discovered.
- A transcontinental railroad is built.
- The Homestead Act is passed.

Effects

- Mining towns rise and fall.
- More settlers, including immigrants, move west.
- Native American nations lose their lands.
- Wars break out between Native Americans and the U.S. Army.

Native Americans: A Chronology

- **1851** The Fort Laramie Treaty is signed.
- **1859** Miners discover gold at Pikes Peak, Colorado.
- **1864** The Sand Creek Massacre occurs in eastern Colorado.
- **1874** Gold is found in the Black Hills.
- **1876** Sioux and Cheyennes defeat Custer's forces at the Battle of Little Bighorn.
- **1887** Congress passes the Dawes Act.
- **1890** Nearly 200 Sioux die in the Battle of Wounded Knee.

Facts About Cowhands and Farmers

Cowhands

- Spanish and Mexican vaqueros passed on many skills.
- About one third of all western cowhands were Mexican.
- Cowhands worked long hours for low pay.

Farmers

- Farmers overcame great difficulties to survive on the Plains.
- Crop surpluses kept prices low.
- Farmers joined together to demand reforms.

Vocabulary Builder

Key Terms

Complete each of the following sentences so that the second part further explains the first part and clearly shows your understanding of the key term.

1. Plains Indians used travois in their travels; _____.
2. Farmers thought inflation would benefit farm prices; _____.
3. Vaqueros were important in cattle ranching; _____.
4. Railroads benefited from generous government subsidies; _____.

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

5. (a) **Describe** What difficulties did immigrants face in mining towns?
 (b) **Evaluate Information** How did immigrants help to develop the West?
6. (a) **List** What types of changes did the transcontinental railroad bring to the West?
 (b) **Draw Inferences** What were the effects of the building of railroads on Native Americans?
7. (a) **List** Describe three ways in which Native Americans made use of buffalo.
 (b) **Recall** Why did the buffalo begin to disappear from the Great Plains in the 1870s?
 (c) **Draw Conclusions** How did the disappearance of the buffalo change the lives of Native Americans?
8. (a) **Summarize** How did the U.S. government and settlers treat Native Americans?
 (b) **Detect Points of View** What do you think the Native American chief meant when he said after the Battle of Wounded Knee, "A people's dream died there"?
9. (a) **Recall** Who was Buffalo Bill Cody?
 (b) **Apply Information** Why do you think Americans characterize the West as "wild"?
10. (a) **Describe** What was life like for individuals who settled on the Great Plains?
 (b) **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think families risked moving west?

History Reading Skill

11. **Use Context Clues** Choose four key terms or other unfamiliar words from this chapter. Write sentences that define these words. Include at least one of each clue type: example, comparison or contrast, definition, or restatement.

Writing

12. **Choose one of the following issues discussed in this chapter:**
 - the rise and fall of the cattle kingdom;
 - the settlement of the West and disappearance of the frontier;
 - relations between Native Americans and the U.S. government.

State an opinion about the issue, and list several facts and reasons from the chapter to support your opinion.

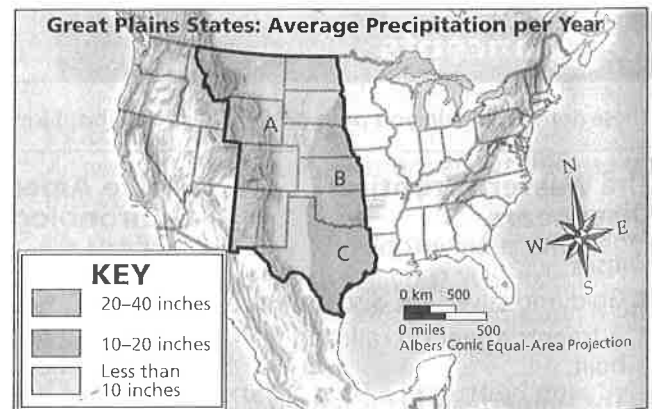
13. **Write a Narrative:**

Write one or two diary entries from the point of view of a family member who is moving west in the 1870s. Describe why your family is moving west and how you feel about it. Tell what you expect to see in the West and the type of life you think you will have.

Skills for Life

Interpret a Climate Map

Use the map below to answer the questions.



14. Study the key. What does the green color mean?
15. As you move east to west across the Great Plains states, how does the amount of precipitation change?
16. How do you think the amount of rain in the Great Plains states affects farming there?

Test Yourself

1. Which of the following turned Virginia City, Nevada, into a boomtown?

- A transcontinental railroad
- B Comstock Lode
- C Fort Laramie Treaty
- D Oklahoma Land Rush

Refer to the quotation below to answer Question 2.

“Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, . . . free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to think and talk and act for myself. . . .”

—Chief Joseph of the Nez Percés, 1879

2. Chief Joseph referred to which situation?

- A Battle of Little Bighorn
- B passage of the Homestead Act
- C building of the Transcontinental Railroad
- D confinement of Nez Percés to a reservation

Refer to the photograph below to answer Question 3.



3. The photograph best reflects which of the following?

- A gold rush of 1849
- B Fort Laramie Treaty
- C Populist movement
- D Homestead Act

Document Based Questions

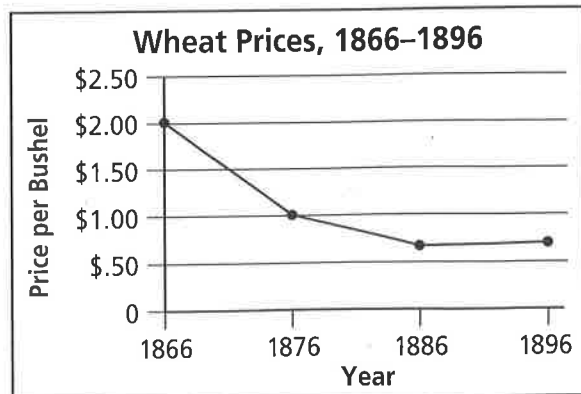
Task: Look at Documents 1 and 2, and answer their accompanying questions. Then, use the documents and your knowledge of history to complete this writing assignment:

Write an essay about the economic crisis facing farmers in the 1890s.

Document 1: Mary Elizabeth Lease gave this speech in 1890. *What hardship does Lease say farmers are suffering? What does she say is the cause?*

“After all our years of toil . . . and hardships upon the Western frontier, monopoly is taking our homes from us by an infamous system of mortgage foreclosure. . . . How did it happen? The government, at the bid of Wall Street, repudiated its contracts with the people. . . . As Senator Stewart [of Nevada] puts it, ‘For twenty years the market value of the dollar has gone up and the market value of labor has gone down, till today the American laborer . . . asks which is the worst—the black slavery that has gone or the white slavery that has come?’”

Document 2: The more farmers harvested, the less they earned. *How does this graph help to explain the farmers’ problem?*



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States*