**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:**

| Westward expansion: Do the benefits of territorial expansion outweigh the costs? |

**PROCEDURES:**

1. Read the Manifest Destiny intro and answer the multiple choice questions (15 min)
2. Translate the Donner Party journal entries (20 min)
3. Read “What’s a 49er” (5 min)
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the Donner Party and the Gold Rush by choosing between creating bumper stickers or creating a newspaper article (20 min)

**WORK TO BE RETURNED:**

1. Manifest Destiny questions
2. Donner Party journal translations
3. Bumper stickers or newspaper article

**RESOURCES:**

| InspirEd Educators, Inc. |
| History.com |

**TIME ALLOCATED:**

One 60 minute lesson.
In the 1800’s the American people came to believe that their country was meant to extend its borders across the North American continent. Many, including the nation’s leaders, felt it was their mission to extend our “boundaries of freedom” to others seen as “incapable” of governing themselves.

There were also other reasons for America to expand. The population was growing rapidly due to high birth rates and immigration, and land was needed to accommodate the increasing numbers of people. Many looked to the West for new opportunities to own land and improve their lives. Developing roads, railroads, and western ports made the trip faster and easier, and the discovery of gold offered added incentives to those seeking fame and fortune.

The main problem with America’s expansion lay in the fact that other countries already owned the western lands. The British controlled the Oregon Territory, despite the many Americans who had settled there. Mexico, having won its independence from Spain, gained control of Texas and lands west. Though the US annexed Texas in 1845, Mexico refused to recognize that annexation and intended to retain control over the rest of its territory as well.

In order to be able to expand the US was going to have to gain control of both countries’ western lands. Towards that end rhetoric about America’s “Manifest Destiny” became common in political speeches through the first half of the 19th century.

Which of these groups of people was the author most likely referring to being viewed as “incapable” of governing themselves?

A. Europeans    C. South Americans
B. Canadians    D. Native Americans

“Manifest Destiny” could be described as a kind of

A. Territory    C. Government
B. Philosophy    D. Transportation

By the middle of the 19th century Great Britain was to Oregon as Mexico was to

A. Spain    B. Texas    C. America    D. California

The word “rhetoric” in the last paragraph most nearly means

A. Talk    B. Hatred    C. Love    D. Control
**Manifest Destiny Trails Reference Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motives for moving West</th>
<th>Oregon Trail</th>
<th>California Trail</th>
<th>Santa Fe Trail</th>
<th>Old Spanish Trail</th>
<th>Mormon Trail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity, land</td>
<td>Gold, fame and fortune</td>
<td>Trade, access to Mexican territory</td>
<td>Trade to Los Angeles</td>
<td>Religious freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What hardships did they face?</td>
<td>Indian attacks, disease, starvation, wagon accidents</td>
<td>Drowning/ wagon accidents, starvation</td>
<td>Indian attacks, natural hazards</td>
<td>One of the most difficult trails</td>
<td>Persecuted once they were settled</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legacy (positive or negative)**

- Oregon Trail: + Created routes for others to move west
  - Claimed Native lands
  - Brought diseases
- California Trail: + 49er’s, gold rush
- Santa Fe Trail: + Cattle ranching in the west
- Old Spanish Trail: + Connected Santa Fe trail to Los Angeles
- Mormon Trail: + Created community
The Donner Party

A group of 87 travellers on the California trail were on their way to Sacramento under the leadership of George Donner when they became stranded in a blizzard in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Read and translate the following diary entries to understand the hardships westward travelers faced and discover what happened to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Journal Entry</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Tuesday, April 14, 1846**  
“Never can I forget the morning when we bade farewell to kindred and friends. The Donners were there, having driven in the evening before with their families, so that we might get an early start. Grandma Keyes was carried out of the house and placed in the wagon on a large feather bed, propped up with pillows. Her sons implored her to remain and end her days with them, but she could not be separated from her only daughter. We were surrounded by loved ones, and there stood my little schoolmates who had come down to kiss me goodbye. My father with tears in his eyes tried to smile as one friend after another grasped his hand in a last farewell. Mama was overcome with grief. At last the drivers cracked their whips, the oxen moved slowly forward and the long journey had begun.”  
**Translation**  
Tuesday, April 14, 1846  
(example)  
I remember the morning when we left on our journey to the West. Members of the wagon train had come to our house the night before so we could leave early in the morning. My grandmother came with us even though she was very old. Her sons wanted her to stay, but she wanted to be with her daughter. I had to say goodbye to my friends and family and even my parents were crying as we pulled away. |
| **Thursday, July 16, 1846**  
“Russel and his party, by hard travelling, reached Fort Bridger two or three days before the others… At that place they were met by Mr. Hastings from California, who came out to conduct them in by the new route, by the foot of Salt Lake, discovered by Captain Fremont, which is said to be two hundred miles nearer than the old one by Fort Hall. The distance to California was said to be six hundred and fifty miles, through a fine farming country, with plenty of grass for the cattle. Companies of from one to a dozen wagons…are continually arriving and several have already started on, with Hastings at their head, who would conduct them to near where the road joins the old route...”  
**Translation**  
Monday, November 9, 1846  
“We now have killed most part of our cattle having to stay here until next Spring and live on poor beef without bread or salt. It snowed during the space of eight days with little intermission, after our arrival here, each family built some kind of house, and killed their cattle, as they could not live; the ground being covered with snow; There was no salt among the little stores of provisions now left, but the meat did not spoil as it soon got frozen and so remained until it was consumed.”  
**Translation**  
Saturday, January 30, 1847  
“Martha’s jaw swelled with a tooth ache; hungry times in camp, plenty hides but the folks will not eat them with a tolerable good appetite, Thanks be to Almighty God, Amen. Mrs. Murphy said here yesterday that though she would eat him, I don’t think that she has done so yet, it is distressing. The Donners told folks that they commence to eat the dead people 4 days ago.” |

What did the travellers do in order to survive the blizzard?
On January 24, 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill on the American River in Northern California. After James W. Marshall, who’d been overseeing the sawmill’s construction, found the gold nuggets he and his boss, John Sutter, attempted to keep the discovery a secret. However, word soon spread and by 1849 thousands of prospectors, who became known as 49ers, were flocking to Coloma, California, site of Sutter’s Mill, and the surrounding region, hoping to strike it rich.

A century after the Gold Rush, the 49ers were memorialized when San Francisco’s first major league professional sports franchise, a football team, was named. The team, which started out as part of the All-America Football Conference (AAFC), a rival to the National Football League (NFL), played its first regular-season game in September 1946. When the AAFC folded three years later, the 49ers joined the NFL in 1950. In 1995, the San Francisco 49ers became the first NFL team to win five Super Bowls.

Choose one of the following activities (Bumper Stickers or Newspaper Article)

A. Bumper Stickers - Create 1 bumper sticker about the Donner party and 1 bumper sticker about the gold rush. Bumper stickers are primarily images (copied from the internet or drawn) with a brief explanation of how your image represents what you read above.

The Donner Party

Explanation: __________________________________________________________

The Gold Rush

Explanation: __________________________________________________________
B. Newspaper Article - Create a newspaper article about what happened to the Donner Party (80-100 words) and 2 advertisements for materials needed for the Gold Rush (1-2 sentences and one image).

WILD WEST NEWS
San Francisco, California

DONNER PARTY MISSING

CLASSIFIEDS
Items for Sale

Shovel for sale: metal shovel needed to move the California soil. Will greatly help dig for gold buried by the river beds. $10 or best offer.