Lesson Plan

**Title of Lesson:** Westward Expansion and Manifest Destiny

**Grade Level:** 8th

**Length of Lesson:** 5 Days plus 3 additional Days for D.B.Q mini-lesson (“Was The United States Justified in Going To War With Mexico?”

**Objectives:**

1. Explain why large numbers of settlers headed for the Oregon country.
2. Identify how the idea of Manifest Destiny contributed to the nation’s growth.
4. Describe how Texas achieved independence from Mexico and later became a state.
5. Explain why Americans began to settle in the Southwest.
6. Describe how the U.S. acquired New Mexico and California.
7. Understand how the hopes of getting rich quick drew thousands of people to California.
8. Describe how the search for religious freedom led to the settlement of Utah.

**Task:**

Students were to complete various tasks (panning for gold, note-taking, worksheets, and D.B.Q.) to better understand the reasons for westward expansion and the causes and outcome of the Mexican American War.

**Process:**

*Day One:* Students were to pan for gold to begin the unit. From there, we had the students work on vocabulary (regular students created a dialogue using the terms; advanced classes were to create a product that showed they understood and could comprehend the vocabulary.

*Day Two:* Notes using Inspiration and D.B.Q. worksheet on the Oregon Trail.

*Day Three:* Notes using PowerPoint and D.B.T.B on Manifest Destiny.

*Day Four:* Notes using Inspiration and D.B.Q. worksheet on the Rush to California.
The Rush to California

In January 1848 James Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in California. Although Sutter tried to prevent the news from spreading, it wasn’t long before the “gold rush” to California began!

On March 15, 1848, a short article appeared in The Californian, a San Francisco newspaper. It was the first news of the gold discovery that would change the nation.

Gold Mine Found. In the newly made raceway of the Saw Mill recently erected by Captain Sutter on the American fork, gold has been found in considerable quantities. One person bought thirty dollars worth to new Helvetica, gathered there in a short time. California, no doubt, is rich in mineral wealth, great chance here for scientific capitalists. Gold has been found in almost every part of the country.

1. Analyze the above article. Guess why the newspaper minimized the discovery.

2. Research to find out what and where New Helvetica was.

3. How might the settlement of the West be different if gold had not been discovered?

4. Research the origin of the California Gold Rush. Who was John Marshall?
The Oregon Trail

The Louisiana Purchase opened up a huge area for westward expansion. The trip west was too long and too dangerous for any family to experience alone; therefore, wagon trains were formed. The first large migration occurred in 1843 when more than 900 emigrants set out on the difficult journey along the Oregon Trail. At over 2,000 miles, the Oregon Trail was the longest overland route. It began in Independence, Missouri, and went all the way to Oregon City, Oregon.

Below is the engraving *Emigrants Crossing the Plains*, by H. B. Hall, Jr., 1869. Study the picture carefully.

1. What adjectives would you use to describe the people in the painting?

2. Describe the condition of the animals.

3. Estimate the number of wagons in the train.

4. Who is riding in the covered wagon?

5. Guess why some people were walking.

6. Select a person in the painting and tell about the journey from his or her point of view.

---

*Document of External Origin*
The miners used a variety of tools to dig out and separate the gold from the sand and gravel. Because gold is heavier than sand, when the mixture is washed and the water drained away, the gold remained at the bottom. The Currier and Ives lithograph above depicts several methods the miners used to find gold. Examine it closely.

1. Research the tools and other equipment by the forty-niners. Create a glossary defining the terms.

2. Find an example of a cradle and a long tom in the painting. Explain how they were used in the pursuit of gold.
Don't break the bank!

You have $3.00. Each word is worth 10 cents.