

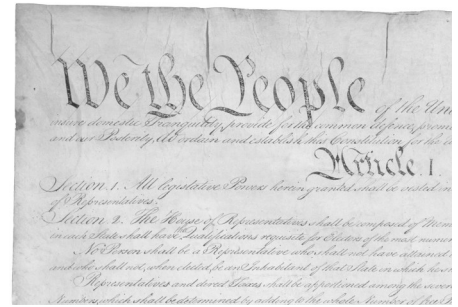
# Manifest Destiny

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Awesome Nation Seeks Growth Opportunity

Imagine you've just created a brand new nation. It's a nation based on freedom and equality, where citizens control the government and are free to make the best of life. It's obviously the greatest nation on earth, even though it's young. And small. But just think: If this great nation grew, more people would get to live this way. It could be a giant land of freedom and equality! No doubt about it... This nation was meant to get a *lot* bigger.

Welcome to the concept of **manifest destiny**—the idea that America was meant to grow so democracy and freedom could spread.



*The U.S. Constitution created a new kind of government—one governed by "we the people"!*



*An 1834 book about slavery in the U.S. shows African American children serving food to a white family.*

## We're All About Those Rights

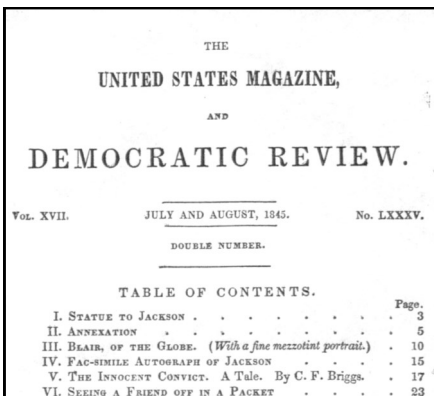
When the American colonists declared independence from Great Britain, they were determined to be free from abusive British rule. They demanded liberty and equality, which they saw as naturally belonging to all citizens. For them, *equality* meant every citizen had the same rights, instead of a few "noble" families having special privileges that "common" people did not. *Liberty* meant citizens had the freedom to govern themselves and to do what they wanted with their lives. The United States was the first nation ever built around these principles. More than that, Americans didn't just think they offered a better way of life—they believed they were creating a nation that fulfilled a divine purpose.

## Destined to Grow?

From its very first days, America began to expand. At the end of the Revolutionary War in 1783, the British gave America control of enough extra land that America doubled in size right away. There was never any question that Americans would settle this land. It wasn't long before the United States stumbled on a chance to buy some extra territory from France. For an amazing low price, in 1803 America doubled its size again! Now the U.S. spread half way across the continent. For a few decades after this, growth basically stopped. But by the 1840s, more and more American settlers were moving west, and many United States leaders were itching to get their hands on more territory.



*In 1803, Napoleon Bonaparte sold the U.S. the tract of land known as the Louisiana Purchase.*



*O'Sullivan's article "Annexation" included the first use of "manifest destiny."*

## Manifest Destiny

It was during this time that newspaperman John O'Sullivan first used the phrase "manifest destiny." O'Sullivan was fed up with a long debate about Texas becoming part of the United States. While Congress dragged its feet, other countries were trying to make deals with Texas. O'Sullivan said these other nations had the goal of "limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence..."

"Manifest" means obvious. "Destiny" means a future that has already been determined by a divine source. O'Sullivan was saying America was being stopped from doing what it was obviously destined to do: take over the continent.

# Manifest Destiny

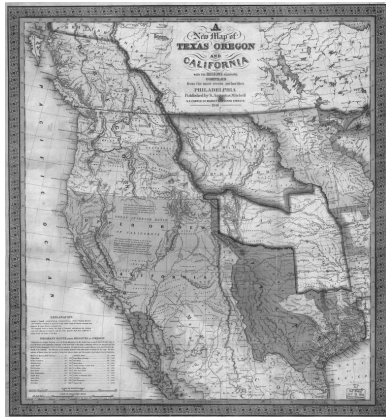
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## About That Whole “Taking Over” Thing...

It sounds pretty bad. But O’Sullivan didn’t believe the U.S. should just attack its neighbors, take their land, and be done with it. He believed that taking over would happen naturally as Americans settled new areas. O’Sullivan expected that American settlers would move into places that Mexico owned—say, for example, California—and build new communities based on American principles. The settlers would want to keep what they built, so they would demand independence from Mexico. Because Mexico’s government was too disorganized and distant to resist, O’Sullivan believed the settlers would succeed. But that’s not quite how it happened.



*American settlers began moving west even before the United States owned the land.*



*1846 map showing Texas.*

## Expanding Expectations

Up to this point, the U.S. had only added new territory by negotiating with European countries that controlled land nearby. One exception was Texas: There, American settlers had won independence from Mexico in 1836 and asked to become part of the United States. (This was probably what O’Sullivan imagined would happen elsewhere, too.) Texas became a state in 1845. By then, the American hunger for more territory had grown pretty intense. So had tensions between the U.S. and Mexico, who owned most of the land between the U.S. and the Pacific Ocean. President James Polk had his eye on this land when he took office in 1844, and he was determined to get it for America.

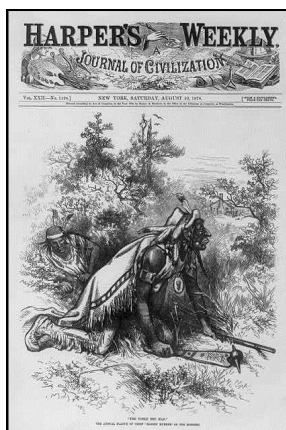
## Okay, Maybe We Do Mean Taking Over

When the U.S. annexed Texas, Mexico was furious. The Mexican government felt that the U.S. had violated Mexico’s borders and taken its land. Even so, President Polk tried to buy additional land from Mexico, but Mexico wouldn’t sell. So Polk took advantage of the tension and started a war. The United States won. Mexico gave up what is now the southwestern United States—and many Mexicans living in that area lost their land to American settlers. At about the same time, America worked out a deal with Great Britain to get Oregon Territory, now the northwestern United States. By the end of the 1840s, the United States stretched from coast to coast. American settlers began pouring into the new western frontier.



*1897 drawing shows Uncle Sam waiting for Cuba, Hawaii, Canada, and central America to fall. Florida, Louisiana, Texas, California, and Alaska are already in the basket.*

*1878 magazine cover shows Indians near a settler’s cabin, planning to commit “bloody murder.”*



## A Not-So-Civilized Attitude

Americans rolled into the west believing they were bringing civilization to an untamed land. But thousands of Native Americans already lived on that land in civilizations that had existed for centuries. Most Americans of the 1800s couldn’t appreciate that. They saw Native Americans as “uncivilized”—little better than wild animals. To make room for “civilization,” the U.S. kept moving native tribes out of the way to smaller and smaller areas. Native Americans either lost access to their traditional lands or saw those lands destroyed by mining, logging, and over-hunting. As America’s “manifest destiny” played out, the Native American way of life quickly disappeared.

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# Manifest Destiny

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**E. American Progress.** This painting by John Gast was done in 1872. It is called "American Progress." Study the image and answer the questions.



1. Circle each kind of transportation you see the settlers using.
2. Put a box around the group of miners.
3. Draw an arrow pointing to the farmers.
4. Find the Native Americans. What does it look like they are doing?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Think of two words to describe the Native Americans' emotions. Explain how you can tell:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Find any wild animals. What do they have in common with the way the Native Americans are portrayed in this painting?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Look at the woman in the sky. What is her role in this scene? Add a speech bubble and have her explain what she is doing.
8. Add one thing to the painting that *modern* Americans would build or do if they were settling today!

Emotion	How can you tell?

