

## COLLECTION 03002

ERA 3: REVOLUTION AND THE NEW NATION (1754–1820s)

ERA 4: EXPANSION AND REFORM (1801-1861)

ERA 5: CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION (1850-1877)

ERA 6: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRIAL UNITED STATES (1870-1900)

# HOW THE FRONTIER SHAPED THE AMERICAN CHARACTER

## Compelling Questions

What is an American?

How did the frontier help create American identity?

How was democracy enhanced with The Westward Movement?

How have historians supported or refuted Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis?



The cowboy was the quintessential symbol of the American frontier.

## Question Focus Example

The frontier gave Americans their identity.

Westward settlement/expansion made Americans exceptional in the world.

## Teacher-to-Teacher

*Students could use the Billington article as an introduction to studying the New Nation, The West or as a part of a culminating activity either for a unit on The West or the year of study. There are connections to Winthrop's "city upon a hill" as well as Hoover's "rugged individualism". The article may need to be excerpted because of its length or it could be divided up among the students in a jigsaw approach. Students could identify the characteristics and research for examples, in history, that either support or refute Turner's thesis. The concept of American exceptionalism doesn't start with Turner, nor does it end there, and the relevance of the thesis today could be a great topic of discussion or structured debate.*

## Contents

- ❖ **Article:** *How The Frontier Shaped The American Character*
- ❖ **Document 1:** J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *What, then, is the American*
- ❖ **Document 2:** Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*
- ❖ **Document 3:** John L. O'Sullivan, *Manifest Destiny*
- ❖ **Document 4A-B:** Chalkley J. Hambleton, *A Gold Hunter's Experience*
- ❖ **Image 1:** John Gast, *American Progress*
- ❖ **Document 5:** Caroline M. Churchill, *Little Sheaves*
- ❖ **Document 6:** Benjamin Singleton, *Exodusters*
- ❖ **Image 2:** 4-Cent Postage Stamp, Commemorating the Homestead Act

# HOW THE FRONTIER SHAPED THE AMERICAN CHARACTER

## FILTERS AND INSTRUCTIONAL TASKS

### Filters

- ❖ **Era: Metahistory**
  - ◆ **Era 3:** Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)
  - ◆ **Era 4:** Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)
  - ◆ **Era 5:** Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)
  - ◆ **Era 6:** The Development of the Industrial United States (1870-1900)
- ❖ **Theme 1:** American Diversity
- ❖ **Theme 2:** American Identity
- ❖ **Theme 3:** Culture
- ❖ **Theme 4:** Demographic Changes
- ❖ **Theme 5:** Economic Transformations
- ❖ **Theme 6:** Environment
- ❖ **Theme 8:** Politics and Citizenship
- ❖ **Title:** “How The Frontier Shaped The American Character”
- ❖ **Author:** Ray Allen Billington
- ❖ **Issue:** April 1958 | Volume 9, Issue 3
- ❖ **Primary Sources:** Text, Images
- ❖ **C3:** Dimension 1, Dimension 3
- ❖ **CCSS:** Reading, Writing, Language, Speaking/Listening

### Instructional Tasks

- ❖ **Task 1.** Wrestle with an Argument: Close Reading of an Argumentative Text
- ❖ **Task 3.** Unpack the Points
- ❖ **Task 13.** Form/Content/Context
- ❖ **Task 18.** Sow, Sew, So What?
- ❖ **Task 22.** Structured Academic Controversy
- ❖ **Task 23:** Identifying Claim and Evidence
- ❖ **Task 24:** QFT (Question Focus Technique)
- ❖ **Task 25:** Document Sourcing

