

## **Part 2 – Documents.**

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The documents below present two different points of view about U.S. westward expansion by modern-day historians. Read the documents and analyze them using the graphic organizer on the following page in preparation for an essay in part 3.

### **Document A:**

#### **"A Go-Ahead Nation," Robert W. Johanssen**

People in the United States had a reputation that they were in awe of nothing and nothing could stand in their way.... There were no limits to what an individual, society, and the nation itself could achieve....

The 1830s and '40s were really the kind of **coming of age** of the United States, for the American people and their institutions. There were **drastic** changes in political ways, economic development, and the growth in industrial establishment in this country with technological advances that made individual lives easier than they had ever been before....

Territorial expansion was but one element in their idea of progress. Journalist, John L. O'Sullivan called it "Manifest Destiny." .... People over and over were talking about democracy as the best form of government – that it was adapted to the happiness of mankind and was God's plan for mankind. The kind of republican government that United States had was **providentially** provided since we were the favored nation of God. So, with a spirit of **reform**, you don't just stand still – you bring the blessing of self-government to as broad an area as possible, extending the area of freedom.

### **Document B**

#### **"The Power of an Idea," Miguel Ángel González Quiroga**

It is dangerous to underestimate the power of an idea. Especially one which captures the imagination of a people. Manifest Destiny was such an idea. To extend American democracy to the rest of the [North American] continent was... a way to justify... an **insatiable ambition** for land.... It is difficult to argue against democracy and its extension to the farthest reaches of the continent although historians have pointed out that extending the area of freedom also signified extending the area of slavery.

The assertion of the superiority of the American race and the related **denigration** of Mexico is another element of Manifest Destiny. Walt Whitman stated: "What has miserable, inefficient Mexico –with her superstition, her **burlesque** upon freedom, her actual **tyranny** by the few over the many—what has she to do with the great mission of peopling the new world with a noble race? Be it ours, to achieve that mission!"

Those of us who admire Whitman as the greatest of American poets cannot but be disappointed at this stand on the war.

Manifest Destiny was a graceful way to justify something **unjustifiable** [unforgivable]....

### **Vocabulary**

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coming of age: growing up

drastic: big

providentially: from God

reform: change

insatiable ambition: very strong desire (insatiable = can't be satisfied)

denigration: unfair criticism or attack

burlesque: imitation

tyranny: dictatorship

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

	<b>Document A</b>	<b>Document B</b>
Does this historian see westward expansion in a <u>positive or negative way</u> ?		
What is <u>one reason</u> the historian gives for his point of view? <i>Provide a quote from the document to support your response.</i>		
What is <u>a second reason</u> the historian gives for his point of view? <i>Provide a quote from the document to support your response.</i>		
What events from America's westward expansion support this historian's point of view?		

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### **Part 3 – Essay.**

On separate paper, write an essay of at least four paragraphs in response to the following question:

***Was the westward expansion of the United States a righteous fulfillment of a “manifest destiny,” or an example of “unjustifiable conquest”?***

Your essay should be based on the documents above and on your knowledge of America's westward expansion. In your essay be sure to do the following:

1. Describe some of the main events in the westward expansion of the United States.
2. Explain how historians might give different answers to the essay question. Be sure to refer to Documents A and B.
3. Present and justify your own answer to the essay question. Be sure to support your response with examples from real events in the westward expansion of the U.S.

## **Step By Step Instructions for the Essay**

### **Introduction**

- Provide information about the big picture historical context (the westward expansion of the United States).
- Thesis: the last sentence in your introduction is your thesis, which asserts your main position and is a direct answer to the assignment question.

### **Body paragraph 1**

- State the claim of this paragraph. (Your agreement with the first reason given by one of the historians for his point of view.)
- Explain the claim and provide quotes from the document that support it. Introduce the document in your own words; give a direct quote, and source information.
- Explain the quotes, using details/examples that you have learned from history.
- End the paragraph by explaining why you agree with this claim or transition to the next paragraph.

**Body paragraph 2**

- State the claim of this paragraph. (Your agreement with the second reason given by one of the historians for his point of view.)
- Explain the claim and give quotes from the document that support it. Introduce the document in your own words; give a direct quote, and source information.
- Explain the quotes, using details/examples that you have learned from history.
- End the paragraph by explaining why you agree with this claim or transition to the next paragraph.

**Body paragraph 3**

- State a counterclaim, otherwise known as a claim that opposes your position (An opinion from whichever man you did NOT choose. You can use one of the two reasons given by this historian.)
- Explain the claim and give quotes from the document that support it. Introduce the document in your own words; give a direct quote, and source information.
- State your rebuttal of this counterclaim. (Explain why you oppose this idea.)

- Explain your rebuttal and give quotes from the document that support it. Introduce the document in your own words; give a direct quote, and source information.
- Explain the quotes, using details/examples that you have learned from history.
- End the paragraph by explaining why you disagree with the counterclaim or transition to the next paragraph.

## **Conclusion**

Restate your thesis, not in the same words, with perhaps a new view of the subject/broader issues/ new connections/ or further explanation of the importance of your thesis.

## Argumentative Essay Organizer - Debating US History

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**QUESTION**

*Was the westward expansion of the United States a righteous fulfillment of a “manifest destiny,” or an example of “unjustifiable conquest”?*

**POSITION  
OR THESIS****ARGUMENT** that supports your thesis**CLAIM #1**

*Supporting evidence relating to historian’s first reason:*

**CLAIM #2**

*Supporting evidence relating to historian’s second reason:*

**COUNTER-ARGUMENT** (what the opposing side might say)

OPPOSING CLAIM, explained (choose 1 reason given by this historian)

Rebuttal (why you disagree with the counter-argument)

**CONCLUSION**

Restate your THESIS