

Grade 7 World History

Oak Meadow Coursebook

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UNIT I: Age of Empires

We begin our exploration of world history by looking back to a time when powerful leaders ruled over vast, ancient empires. Thousands of years ago, there were many civilizations with advanced systems of government and trade, beautiful architecture and art, and sophisticated social structures. As we look at some of the empires in Africa, Asia, India, and the Middle East, we start to see events, ideas, and innovations that continue to influence the world today.

At the end of every unit, you will be creating a small project of your choice. It can be about anything related to a topic covered in the unit. Look at the end of the unit for information about the project so you can be thinking about it over the next month.

Traditional African Instruments



(Image credit: Steve Evans)

The *kora* is a 21-string instrument of West Africa made of a calabash gourd and covered in cowhide. It is played in Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Gambia.

The *mbira* is a hand-held instrument made with brass plates placed inside a calabash for amplification. It is played with the thumbs and is an important cultural instrument

of the Shona people of Zimbabwe.



(Image credit: Alex Weeks)



(Image credit: U.S. Air Force/
Airman 1st class Lauren M.
Johnson)

The *djembe* is a drum played by hand in West Africa. It is shaped like a goblet, carved from a single piece of African hardwood, and fitted with an animal skin drumhead. African tradition holds that a drum carries three spirits: the spirit of the tree carved for the drum, the spirit of the animal whose skin becomes the drumhead, and the spirit of the person who made the drum.

Lesson



African Empires (1500 BCE–700 CE)

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Complete the reading selections.
- Study the geography of Africa.
- Show the geographical features of one African nation.
- Choose a creative activity related to ancient Africa.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Locate major geographical features of Africa on a map or globe.
- Identify natural features of one African nation.
- Demonstrate knowledge of one aspect of African history in creative form.

Reading

Read the following sections, which are found at the end of this lesson (see Reading Selections):

- Ancient Kingdoms of Africa
- Africa and Europe Establish Trade

As you read, keep a globe, atlas, or world map next to you and look up each area that you are reading about. This is an important part of every lesson! By looking at the geographical location of each region, you will gain a better understanding of how the environment and neighboring regions influenced each culture.

Before you begin reading, scan the assignments for this lesson and look at the length of the reading selections. This will give you an idea of how much work there is to do and help you plan your time accordingly. You may want to use a planner or the assignment checklist (found at the beginning of each lesson) to divide the work into manageable tasks so you can make steady progress.



Reflect and Discuss

When you think of Africa, what comes to mind? Think about it and then ask this question of one or two other people. Often, we have perceptions of a place that may or may not be accurate. When studying history, it's important to notice any preconceptions we have (ideas we have about something before we really know about it), and try to put them aside as we learn.

Assignments

When doing assignments for this course, you will often need to do additional research. As a starting point, you can find excellent online resources at oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links. Bookmark the page so you can easily return to it to find more resources for each lesson.

1. Using a globe, atlas, or world map, locate the continent of Africa and study its geographical features. Look for major rivers, lakes, mountain ranges, deserts, and other natural features. Note the bodies of water on different sides of the continent. Write a sentence about one thing that surprised you or one new thing that you learned.
2. Select one African nation and learn about its geographical features. Draw or find photos of at least two natural features, such as bays, mountains, rainforests, deserts, rivers, peninsulas, etc. Write captions for each illustration or photo explaining what the picture shows. If you use photographs, include citation information.
3. Choose one of the following creative activities:
 - a) Learn about recent excavations in Morocco, Ethiopia, or elsewhere in Africa and write a brief description of some of the evidence found related to the earliest human civilizations. Draw or include a photograph of one artifact or fossil.
 - b) Some ancient empires used pictographs to make written records. Write something in pictographs! Make sure to include a translation of your message.
 - c) Design an obelisk in honor of a civilization or a ruler (real or imaginary). You can draw a picture of your obelisk or make a model using clay or other materials. Write a brief description of the meaning of the decorations or inscriptions on your obelisk.
 - d) Learn about one of the ancient African kingdoms you read about: Kush, Punt, Phoenicians, Aksum, Mali, or Songhai. Write about or illustrate some aspect of this culture, such as the system of government, art, customs, religious beliefs, architecture, or monuments.
 - e) Read a firsthand account of sailors navigating around the Cape of Good Hope in the early days of exploration. Alternately, you might want to imagine yourself as an early sailor and write a journal of your trip around the Cape of Good Hope.

Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to keep track of how your skills are progressing. Include notes about what you need to work on. Please remember that these skills continue to develop over time, so you aren't expected to be able to do all of them yet. The main goal is to be aware of which skills you need to focus on.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Locate continents, peninsulas, and other landforms on a map or globe				
Identify relevant research sources				
Provide accurate and relevant information based on research				
Demonstrate knowledge of one aspect of life in ancient Africa				

For Enrolled Students

When you have completed this lesson, continue to lesson 2. You will submit your work for lessons 1 and 2 at the end of the next lesson.

If you have any questions about your work, the lesson assignments, or how to share your work, let your teacher know.

Reading Selections

Ancient Kingdoms of Africa

The African continent lies between the Atlantic and Indian Ocean. The equator runs through the center of the continent. Africa is the second-largest continent in size (after Asia), but by population, only Australia and Antarctica are smaller. Africa is a land rich in resources and these resources frequently brought Africa to the notice of other countries in both ancient and modern times.

Too often, our awareness of Africa stems from its relatively modern history, from the slave trade beginning in the 16th century and colonization by European countries trying to control its many resources, to more recent events including civil wars, drought, famine, and health crises. However, Africa has a long and storied history, which began with the evolution of humankind.

The oldest hominid fossils are found in Africa. In modern times, paleontologists have excavated in north and east Africa (in Morocco and Ethiopia), and there is general consensus among them that the earliest fossils that could be identified as human are to be found in those locations.

Great civilizations arose in Africa in ancient times, beginning with the kingdom of **Kush** (also spelled Cush), a Nubian kingdom established by 2000 BCE. Kush was situated along the lower

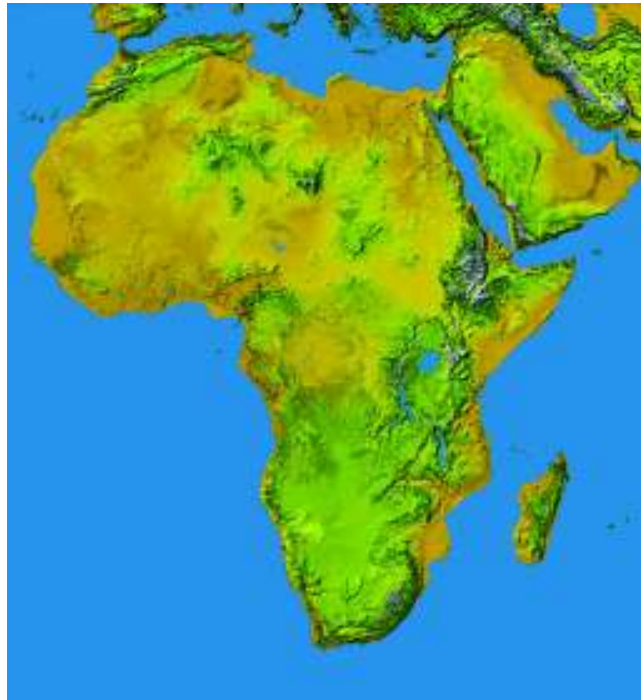
Nile River as far south as modern-day Sudan. It traded ivory, iron, and gold with Egypt, its northern neighbor and was influenced by its culture. The people of Kush worshipped some Egyptian gods, and in its capital, Meroe, many pyramids were constructed.

Another mysterious ancient kingdom in Africa was the kingdom of **Punt**. Very little is known about Punt, which the Egyptians called the “land of the gods.” Punt and Egypt traded ebony, myrrh, and exotic animals. It is thought that this kingdom was found on the Red Sea coast to the south of Egypt.

Other African civilizations arose in more modern times that became rich, powerful, and influential in world history. At the far eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea during the first millennium, there was the state of **Tyre** (which was located in modern-day Lebanon, where the city of Tyre is still in existence.) There is plenty of evidence that the people of Tyre, the **Phoenicians**, were famous for trading, especially a purple dye, which was reserved for royalty. Tyre became such a powerful trade power in the Mediterranean that the Phoenicians established colonies to the west. In North Africa (modern-day Tunisia), they started a town they called **Carthage**, which meant “the new city” in their language. From Carthage, the Phoenicians traded the new rich resources they found in Africa such as textiles, gold, silver, and copper.

As the population of Carthage grew, the Phoenicians founded other colonies farther to the west on the **Iberian Peninsula** (where Spain and Portugal are now) and dominated trade in the Mediterranean from the founding of Carthage in 814 BCE until its fall after three wars with the newly powerful city of **Rome**. These wars are known as the **Punic Wars** (because the Romans called the Carthaginians “*Punici*”), and they lasted from 264 BCE until 146 BCE when Scipio Africanus destroyed the city of Carthage and its fleet.

However, Carthage was not the only great civilization in North Africa. Many people are familiar with the advanced civilization in Egypt in ancient times. There was also the kingdom of **Aksum** (or Axum), situated west of Egypt and east of Carthage. This country was another important trading center, dealing in gold and ivory. Artifacts indicate they traded not only with Egypt and other neighbors, but also with civilizations in the Far East. Aksum had a written language that, unlike Egyptian hieroglyphs, was not pictographs but had an actual alphabet. The Ge'ez language was used to facilitate trade. They also had a unique architectural style that included the **obelisk**,



The immense African continent has varied climate zones and topography that includes coastal areas, mountains, deserts, and rainforest. (Image credit: NASA/JPL/NIMA)

a structure found in Egypt as well. Aksum adopted **Christianity** very early in the religion's history and even had an alliance with the Eastern Roman Empire **Byzantium**. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church is a cultural artifact of this civilization and is one of the oldest known forms of Christianity.

The ancient Kingdom of **Mali** was located in northwestern Africa, where the modern country of Mali is located today. In the eighth century, a new religion called **Islam** began and spread from its source on the Arabic Peninsula into neighboring areas such as the Hindu Kush (Afghanistan), Northwestern India, and Northern Africa.

In a process called **jihad**, followers of Islam spread the religion by conquering a country and then offering those who were conquered the chance to become Muslim. Those who did not choose to convert to Islam would pay a higher rate of taxes than citizens who did convert. In time, the Islamic empire spread into Asia and Africa, and to the Iberian Peninsula, forming an Islamic kingdom called **al-Andalus**.



Ancient ruins of the city of Carthage.
(Image credit: Faresbenrayana)

How to Read Ancient Dates

When looking at dates in ancient times, you'll often see BCE (Before Common Era) and CE (Common Era). If there is no label, you can assume the date is CE. But which date came first, 500 BCE or 150 BCE? Which date is closer to modern day? The answer is clear if you think of time as a number line.



Dates that occurred before the current era are viewed looking backward in time, so the numbers get larger the further back in time an event happened. Dates in the current era are viewed looking forward in time, so the numbers get larger as they approach the present. This means an event in 500 BCE occurred 350 years *before* 150 BCE.

Of course, events that happened in ancient times are hard to pinpoint, especially those that happened before written records were common. That's why you'll often see a range of dates rather than a specific year. If you want to find out approximately how long ago a date BCE was from today, simply add 2,000 years to it. For instance, Carthage was founded around 814 BCE or over 2,800 years ago. That's ancient!



The Obelisk at Axum
by Henry Salt, 1809

By the end of the first millennium, the northern part of Africa was heavily Islamic, including the ancient kingdom of Egypt. It was these North African Muslims that spread Islam to the Musa (Emperor) of Mali, known as Mansa Musa. Mali had grown rich on trade and in the capital there were mosques and a university with a library with 700,000 scrolls. When Mansa Musa made a *pilgrimage* to Mecca, a journey that all Muslims are required to make, he brought huge amounts of gold, which gave him and his African kingdom great notoriety.

By the 15th century, the kingdom of *Songhai* arose, encompassing the old kingdom of Mali and several other West African Kingdoms. Songhai was very large, and thrived in trade with countries in the Mediterranean, Europe, and India. Songhai was famous for its well-organized bureaucracy. It was ruled by a Muslim *caliph* who forged alliances with caliphs in other predominantly Muslim countries. Songhai continued to be a very powerful country until it experienced a civil war in the late 16th century and was invaded by neighboring Morocco.

Despite ups and downs, periods of prosperity and turmoil, each of these early civilizations made lasting contributions to African and European culture.

Africa and Europe Establish Trade

Like every story in history, Africa's story is intricately tied to other places and people. Africa went largely unnoticed by inhabitants of the continent of Europe throughout the medieval period (500–1500 CE). Religious warfare called the *Crusades* united European countries in the quest to combat the religion of Islam and spread Christianity, and at the same time, introduced Europeans to the textiles, goods, and technology of the Eastern world. The interest in trade grew further with Marco Polo's book about his travels in Cathay (China), which became a bestseller.

By the 15th century, the countries of Europe began looking for easier ways to trade goods with Asia. Travel over land using caravans was tedious and costly. Spain and Portugal, situated on the Iberian Peninsula, wanted to establish trade routes, but each country had different theories of the best way to get to Asia. Spain, after pushing the Muslims out of Southern Spain in January of 1492, gave money and ships to a sailor named *Cristobal Colon* who thought the best way to reach Cathay was to sail west across the "Ocean Sea."

The Portuguese had the idea to reach the East by the *circumnavigation* of Africa (sailing around the southern edge of the continent). The first voyages of exploration were sent out by Prince Henry the Navigator who had the vision of ocean exploration south along the coast of Africa. He started a school of navigation, which was founded in 1418. First, a Portuguese sailor named *Gil Eannes* sailed south to Cape Bojador, the large bulge in the northwest part of Africa. The first cargo ever brought back to Europe from Africa was a cargo of sealskins. While sailing along this coast, the

What Century Is It?

Centuries are counted from the year 1 of the Current Era. The first century was from year 1 to year 99, the second century was from year 100 to 199, and so on. This means that the century doesn't match the numbers of the date. For instance, something that happened in 1250 was in the 13th century and something that happened in 1760 was in the 18th century. Don't let this confuse you! Just remember that the first hundred years were the first century, even though we weren't yet to year 100!

CENTURY	YEARS	CENTURY	YEARS
1st century	1–99	12th century	1100–1199
2nd century	100–199	13th century	1200–1299
3rd century	200–299	14th century	1300–1399
4th century	300–399	15th century	1400–1499
5th century	400–499	16th century	1500–1599
6th century	500–599	17th century	1600–1699
7th century	600–699	18th century	1700–1799
8th century	700–799	19th century	1800–1899
9th century	800–899	20th century	1900–1999
10th century	900–999	21st century	2000–2099
11th century	1000–1099		

ongoing trade in *slaves* among African nations was discovered. Prince Henry decided to become active in the slave trade, and Portugal began importing enslaved Africans in 1441.

When Prince Henry died in 1460, exploration continued under the new King of Portugal, John II who came to the throne in 1481. He sent out **Bartolomeo Diaz**, who, in 1488, was the first European to travel to the tip of the African continent. He named this point the Cape of Storms because a large storm drove him off course and enabled him to find the cape, but King John renamed it the **Cape of Good Hope**, as now they knew they had the ability to reach India by the circumnavigation of Africa. The Portuguese achieved success when **Vasco da Gamma** rounded the Cape and reached India in 1497.

Through this process of exploration, Portugal built a mighty trade empire in Africa and India, which traded in slaves, gold, ivory, precious gems, spices, exotic fruits and wines, and textiles. These riches made Portugal competitive with Spain, who had chosen the route to the West under the admiralship of **Cristoforo Columbo** (or, as the Spanish called him, Cristobal Colon).

Colon, or as we know him today, Christopher Columbus, believed he sailed to someplace in Asia. He probably never realized he had traveled to a new hemisphere and two new continents—North



Band of Captives Driven into Slavery,
artist unknown (Image credit:
Wellcome Collection)

and South America—but he did claim the new lands he encountered for Spain. Spanish explorers and soldiers, called ***conquistadors*** (Spanish for *conquerors*) built a huge Spanish empire in North and South America. They began to bring in vast quantities of gold and precious metals from the highly developed Aztec and Inca empires.

Spain’s explorations and conquests in the “New World” brought them much wealth and natural resources, but did not make other European countries such as France and England very happy, and soon they too were sending out expeditions seeking a “Northwest Passage” to Asia.

European colonies developed in North and South America. These new European colonies worked hard to develop goods and crops to trade with and enrich their mother countries, and these products were largely developed through agriculture, which involved buying captives forced into slavery from the Portuguese and other countries that participated in the lucrative slave trade with West Africa. Slavery spread rapidly in the Western Hemisphere throughout the 16th and 17th

centuries. It became an enduring problem that would end in a series of wars brought by enslaved people demanding their freedom or, in the United States, by descendants of European colonists rising up against slavery in the abolition movement.

Lesson



Unit Project and Learning Reflection

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Complete a unit project of your own design. Complete a learning reflection.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Design a project that combines personal interests with the unit theme.
- Demonstrate project-management skills.
- Reflect on the learning process and content.

Unit Project

History is often framed by wars and conflicts. For the next two weeks, you'll look away from the conflicts and struggles of humanity and turn your attention to the accomplishments of people around the world. Based on the historical periods you've studied in this unit, you'll explore some element of human achievement in art, science, math, music, technology, engineering, architecture, medicine, literature, or any other creative endeavor or innovation.

What do *you* like? Find something you are interested in and explore an aspect related to it. Do you like maps? Fashion? Animals? Food? Whatever it is, look back in time to see how that interest could be used as a framework for a project. Your project doesn't have to be anything elaborate; you just have to create something that shows what you've discovered.

You have two weeks to complete this project.

Here are a few examples of project ideas, just to help with your own brainstorming:

- If you are interested in food from different cultures, you might find out what kinds of crops were grown in one particular region during that time period, and then create a menu of what might have been a typical meal or a feast. You might even try to make the meal! You can photograph what you've cooked, or create a handwritten menu. You might draw an illustration of the feast, or make up a new recipe based on the available ingredients.

- If you like art, you might draw, paint, or sculpt a reproduction of artwork from that culture and time period. You might learn about one particular artist and create a slide show of that artist's work, using captions to highlight historical details. You could compare the art style of the time to earlier or later styles, or you could show how art was a reflection of the social and political events of that era.
- If you like movies, you could watch a movie based on the historical time period and write a movie review. You could use film clips or trailers from different movies related to one time period and compare how historical details were represented (costume, geographical features, food, family or social structure, etc.). Or you might create your own short film or video compilation that highlights one aspect of the time period.
- If you like building things, you might create a diorama (either physical or computer generated) that shows a particular region or historical event. You could recreate a style of architecture or make a model of a typical house. Or you might create a replica of an artifact, such as a type of tool, jewelry, container, vehicle, or other item in daily use at the time.

Use your imagination! Try to come up with a project that you will enjoy doing. Talk to friends and family members before you start your project. Discussing and brainstorming ideas with others will help you refine your project before you begin. Plan the different stages or steps of your project so that it can be completed within two weeks. (If you have a longer project in mind, discuss your idea with your teacher.) Make a checklist of tasks, write down how long you expect each to take, and check off tasks as they are completed. If you find yourself getting bogged down, think about how you can streamline the process or adjust the original timeline.

As you are working on your project, continue to talk about it and get input from others, especially if you come to a challenging part or need to adapt your original idea. You don't have to do this project by yourself—make it a collaboration with others! (Just make sure to give them credit when your project is complete.)

Learning Reflection

You have just spent several weeks exploring a great deal of information about world history. It's important to take time to let what you've learned sink in, to ponder its relevance to modern life.

Let your mind wander back over what you've discovered in the past weeks. (It might help to look over the table of contents, reading material, or the assignments you did to refresh your memory.) You can use the following questions to guide your reflections, but you shouldn't feel limited by them—reflections are personal, and each person will think about different aspects of what they've learned.

- What stands out as meaningful or baffling to you?
- What did you learn that was new or surprising?
- Did something raise a strong emotion in you, such as resentment, empathy, or wonder?

- What types of assignments did you most enjoy? Which were most challenging to you?
 - If you had a time machine, is this a time period you would wish to visit? Why or why not?
 - Is there some element of this time period that you wish was present in our modern culture?
 - Is there a lesson to be learned from the struggles, mistakes, and triumphs experienced by the people long ago?

When you have spent some time reflecting and turning over ideas in your head, express your thoughts in some sharable form. This can be in writing, poetry, music, art, discussion or interview format, or any other way you'd like to share your reflections.

Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Plan and implement a self-designed project				
Identify discrete project tasks				
Create a project timeline				
Produce a tangible outcome that can be shared				
Express thoughts related to self-reflection				

For Enrolled Students

If you would like to discuss your project ideas, get input, or have questions as you are working on your project, let your teacher know.

When you have completed your project and learning reflection, share them with your teacher.

Lesson



Radical Change in the Americas (1830–1920)

ASSIGNMENT SUMMARY

- Complete the reading selections.
- Find an informational graphic, work of art, and primary source material.
- Create an informational graphic or artwork.
- Write a firsthand perspective based on primary source material.

Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson you will be able to:

- Locate and cite primary source material.
- Locate and cite a relevant work of art.
- Express a historical perspective.

Reading

Read the following reading selections:

- The Fight for Canada
- Westward Expansion and the Impact on American Indians
- Mexican Revolution

Note that there is a good deal of reading in this lesson. Glance over everything—the reading selections and the assignments—before you begin so you can plan your time wisely. Remember to look up each location on an atlas, map, or globe as you read.

Assignments

Read all the assignment instructions before you begin as all of this lesson’s assignments are related to one another.

- Find three different resources related to the westward expansion into United States territories during the 19th century. You will need to locate:
 - One map, chart, or table showing relevant data
 - One work of art depicting this era
 - One excerpt from a primary source text, such as a letter, journal, government communication, or eyewitness account from the 1800s

Include a few sentences for each of these three sources explaining what information each one conveys about this time period. Make sure each source has a proper citation.

Note that **primary source material** refers to material created during a historical time period by someone who was involved. This is an original source, not a secondhand account of what happened. The text of a speech is a primary source; a newspaper article about the speech is a secondary source. A primary source expresses firsthand knowledge or perspective of an event while a secondary source is created by someone reporting something they heard or read.

- Based on the primary source material you shared for assignment #1, write a firsthand account from the perspective of someone who was present or impacted by the topic being discussed. For instance, you might write a journal entry or letter from a pioneer facing the challenges and hardships of building a new life in the West; you might write a conversation or eyewitness account of a Native American hunting buffalo or watching them being shot for fun by passengers on a passing train. Whatever the topic, approach it in a personal way, from the point of view of someone deeply involved at the time. Ideas, details, and events should reflect the historical time period.

Learning Checklist

Use this learning checklist to track how your skills are developing over time and identify skills that need more work.

SKILLS	Developing	Consistent	Competent	Notes
Identify relevant informational graphics				
Identify primary source material				
Write from a historical perspective				

For Enrolled Students

When you have completed this lesson, please submit lessons 15 and 16 to your teacher.

Reading Selections

The Fight for Canada

Just as the Spanish and the Portuguese claimed territories in Latin America and settled there, the French and the British claimed land in North America. **Canada** is the area where the conflicts over North America between the British and the French took place.

Vikings were probably the first Europeans to live in Canada (although indigenous peoples had established First Nations throughout North America thousands of years before). In Nova Scotia, a large peninsula off the eastern coast, a stone carved with runes looking very much like the grave markers of the Norse peoples was found. Later, a British explorer claimed all the land he saw along the eastern coast for England.

Then in 1534, a Frenchman named **Jacques Cartier** sailed among the islands and peninsulas at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, and claimed the land for France. These first French settlers were rugged and hardworking, and made their living by fishing, hunting, and farming. They formed a close-knit society in the eastern region called **Acadia** (modern-day New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island). These communities developed their own French dialect, customs, and traditions.

Later, in 1603, another Frenchman named **Samuel de Champlain** founded the settlement of New



Native Americans trading furs at a Hudson Bay Company trading post in the 1800s, artist unknown (Image credit: Hulton Archive)

France, and established several permanent cities including **Quebec**, which became a trading and shipping center for the fur trade. In 1642, New France established the city of **Montreal**. These cities grew quickly. The French continued to expand their territory in North America, eventually traveling down the Mississippi River to expand their claims to include an immense region called the **Louisiana Territory**.

In 1670, British explorers found their way into the Hudson Bay and quickly established their presence in the region north of New France. The British government gave control of this new territory to the **Hudson Bay Company**, which became a powerful trading empire, thanks to the lucrative **fur trade**. Fierce competition around preferred hunting grounds, resources (mainly animals prized for their

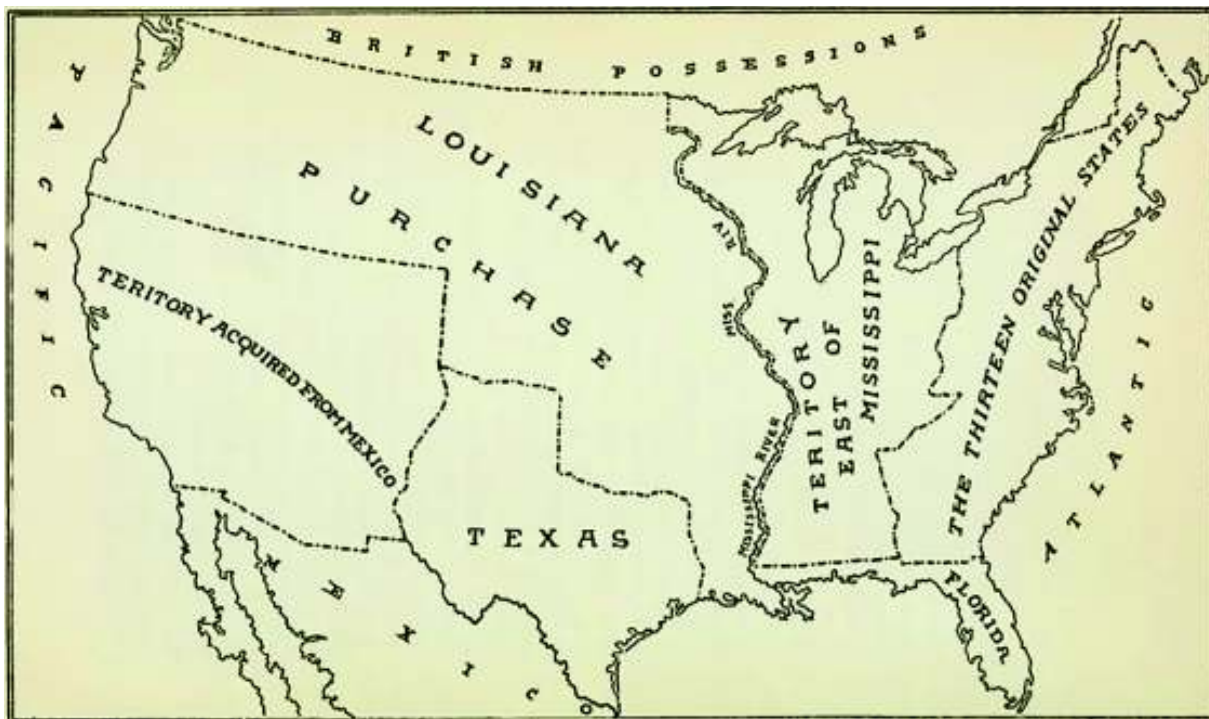
pelts), and trade routes resulted in years of brutal fighting between the French, English, and native populations.

The British, who had settled in New England (the northeast region of the United States), were not happy with the French presence in North America. The British sent colonists from Scotland, England, Wales, and New England, trying to claim the land for Britain. France fought back. The Acadians promised to remain neutral in the wars, but the British wanted them removed. In the late 1770s, all the Acadians who did not flee were rounded up and sent to other British colonies, scattered all over the globe. Some of them made their way down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to Louisiana, where their descendants, the **Cajuns**, still preserve some of their culture.

The poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote about the expulsion of the Acadians in his poem “Evangeline”:

*“There disorder prevailed, and the tumult and stir of embarking,
Busily plied the freighted boats; and in the confusion
Wives were torn from their husbands, and mothers, too late, saw their children
Left on the land, extending their arms, with wildest entreaties.”*

After over 100 years of conflict as both sides tried to expand their influence in North America, France and England went to war. The British had a large number of soldiers in their colonies, but many Native American tribes sided with the French. The resulting **French and Indian War** lasted



This 1903 map shows the extent of the sprawling Louisiana Purchase. (Image credit: Benjamin F. Gue, *History of Iowa from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*)

from 1754 to 1763. (This North American conflict was part of the larger Seven Years' War fought between Britain and France on continents worldwide.)

When the war ended with the signing of the **Treaty of Paris (1763)**, Great Britain had gained New France and all the French territory east of the Mississippi River as well as Florida, which had been colonized by the Spanish. Spain was granted all the French territory west of the Mississippi River (the Louisiana Territory) along with the port of New Orleans. There were many other elements of this complicated treaty, with control of lands being negotiated in many regions around the world.

However, in 1801, Spain and France signed a treaty agreeing to return the Louisiana Territory to France. This news was not welcome in the new United States, as colonists had been pushing west for decades. Both the Mississippi River and the port of New Orleans were important means of trade and travel. Wary of Napoleon Bonaparte's plans for expansion, the United States entered into negotiations to purchase the Louisiana Territory from France. A deal was struck in 1803: 15 million dollars for 828,000 square miles. This worked out to three cents per acre. The **Louisiana Purchase** opened a vast new territory for settlement—and began a long, sad chapter in the relationship between the United States and the many First Nations that lived in the American West.

Westward Expansion and the Impact on American Indians (1830–1870)

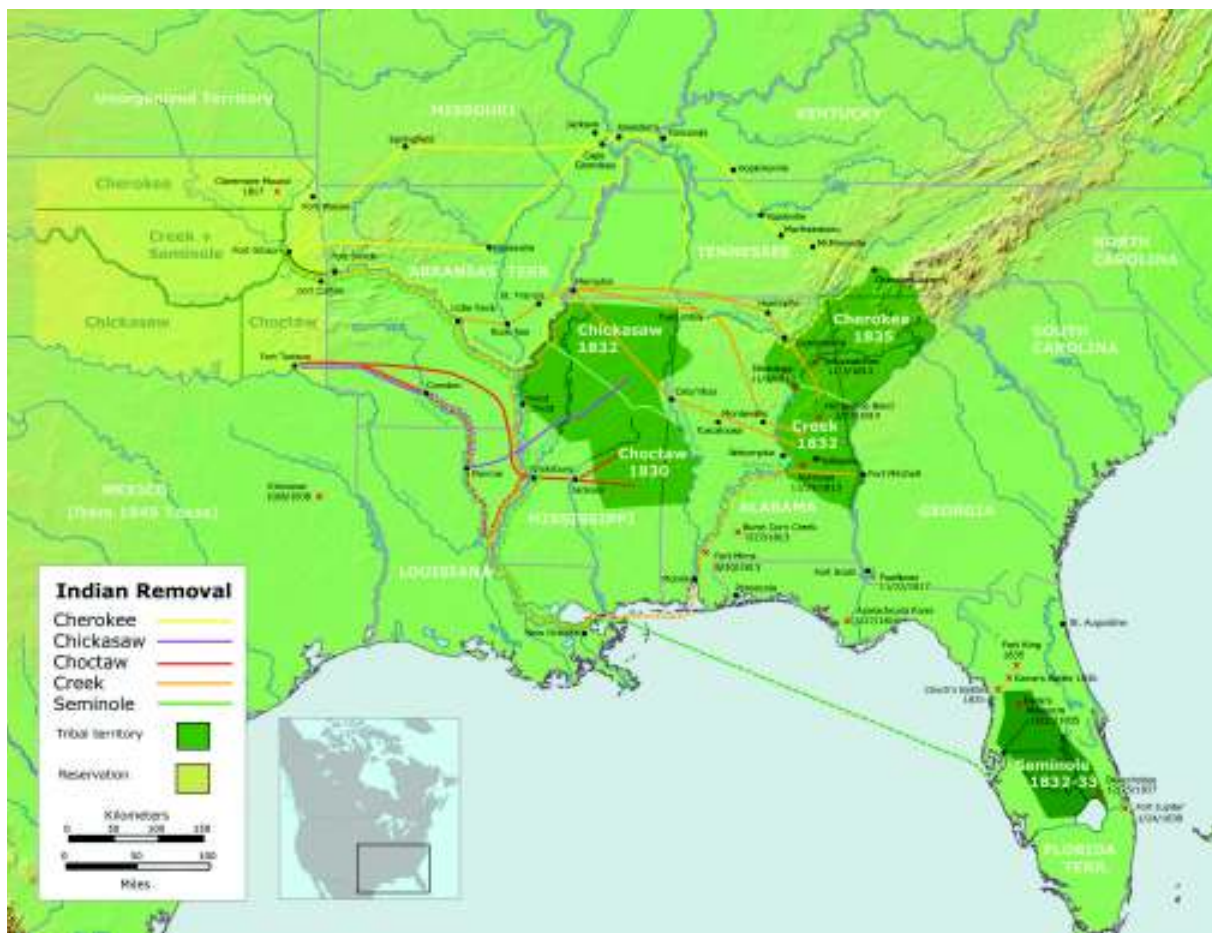
Once the eastern and southern regions of the United States were inhabited by settlers of European descent, they soon turned their eyes toward the West. The idea that a person, through their own hard work, could have their own piece of land to farm, was appealing, especially to those who were not born into privilege. Many believed it was the Union's "**manifest destiny**"—that it was their God-given right—to expand the nation's borders. The fact that other people had lived on those lands for thousands of years did not seem to matter. Ever since European settlers first arrived in North America, they had viewed the native peoples as inferior to them.

Andrew Jackson was President of the United States from 1829 to 1837. During his presidency, he sought to move the American Indians as far west as possible. He wanted their lands for white farmers and settlers. He refused to consider that the Indians had rights to their lands. Ever since settlers of European descent began colonizing North America, they had ignored the rights and needs of the native people. By the time Jackson became president, the U.S. government had already made and broken many **treaties** (agreements) with the leaders of Native American nations.

With Jackson's encouragement, Congress passed a law called the **Removal Act of 1830**, which granted land west of the Mississippi River to tribes in exchange for their tribal lands in Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Florida. This Act led to forced removal of over 100,000 American Indians, particularly those belonging to the Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Choctaw tribes. The Cherokee people resisted this removal, and sent a petition to Congress with more than 15,000 Cherokee signatures protesting the Removal Act. In 1831, they took their case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which first ruled that the tribes were controlled by the government and then reversed the ruling, stating that the Cherokee Nation was a sovereign, independent nation. Jackson ignored the Court's ruling and continued to forcibly remove American Indians from their

homelands. In 1838, the Cherokee people were forced to migrate, walking over 1,000 miles to the new Indian Territory (modern-day Oklahoma). Thousands died during this brutal march along what came to be known as the “*Trail of Tears*.”

As more and more settlers moved into the West, the U.S. government wanted to control more and more land. In 1851, the government met with some tribal leaders and signed the *Treaty of Fort Laramie*, which established boundaries to tribal lands and gave the U.S. government permission to build roads and forts in these territories. However, when gold, silver, and other minerals were found on Indian land, the government broke the treaty, allowing thousands of white settlers access to tribal territories. Native Americans were once again forced off their land and onto *reservations*, usually in places where prospects for farming and hunting were poor. Once confined to reservations, the government embarked on a mission to get Native Americans to give up their culture and religious practices. The goal was for them to be *assimilated* into the dominant white culture, to “Americanize” them, a goal that totally disregarded the wishes of most Native Americans, who would never give up their rich cultural heritage willingly. Laws were passed that outlawed many native traditions and customs.



This image maps the routes different tribes took when forced from their lands onto reservations between 1836 and 1839. (Image credit: Nikater/Demis and Washburn, *Handbook of North American Indians*)

After the Civil War ended, migration to lands west of the Mississippi River increased, helped by the **Homestead Act** (1862), which gave 160 acres of land to people who were willing to settle on the land. This was a dream come true for many Easterners, especially poor city dwellers who were barely making a living. For the Native Americans living on the land, it was nothing short of invasion and theft. When the **transcontinental railroad** was completed in 1869 and railroad tracks spanned the country from east to west, migration into tribal lands became even easier. Through the Homestead Act, eventually 80 million acres were deeded to white settlers.

Most of the people moving west wanted a new start for their families. They wanted to live in the open space, away from the crowded cities of the East. They wanted to build homes and work the land. In order to get there, they had to endure months of difficult, dangerous travel. Because the wagons were filled with all their belongings, anyone who was able walked beside the wagon to make it easier on the oxen or horses. Many people walked virtually the entire way across the country in their search for a new life. Once they found a place to settle, families had to work hard to survive. Many did their best to live peacefully with their Native American neighbors and often wouldn't have survived without the help and advice of those who had lived on the land for millennia. Traditional medicines, crop cultivation, food preservation, hunting techniques, and survival skills shared by Native Americans helped new settlers survive and thrive in the new land.

However, the government continued its campaign to strip lands and rights from the First Nations. Eventually many Native American tribes rebelled against the unjust treatment and dishonest dealing of the U.S. government. There were many bloody battles between the U.S. Army and the Native Americans between 1861 and 1891. President Rutherford B. Hayes admitted in 1877,

“Many, if not most, of our Indian wars have had their origin in broken promises and acts of injustice upon our part . . .”

In 1887, Congress passed the **General Allotment Act** (also known as the **Dawes Act**), which was aimed at dispersing tribal groups by dividing up reservation land and giving small plots to individual families. The remaining land could then be opened to development by white settlers. Within a few decades, two-thirds of tribal lands were lost.

Before the influx of white settlers, the tribes of the Plains relied on the buffalo (bison) for their daily needs. It was their main food source, and its hide was used for clothing and shelter. The buffalo was also central to their religious ceremonies. White pioneers, hunters, and railroad crews destroyed the migration patterns of the buffalo, and slaughtered them by the hordes. Railway crews killed them to feed the huge gangs of laborers, and others just killed them for sport, leaving their rotting carcasses behind. William Cody



Buffalo Hunt on the Southwestern Plains, by John Mix Stanley, 1845 (Image credit: Gift of the Misses Henry/ Smithsonian American Art Museum)

shot approximately 4,000 buffalo over a period of 18 months, earning the nickname “Buffalo Bill.” Between 1872 and 1874, 9 million buffalo were killed, and by 1900 there were fewer than 50 buffalo left in the entire country. Without the buffalo, many Indian tribes could not resist the efforts of the white settlers to displace them.

In 1876, the U.S. Cavalry fought Lakota, Cheyenne, and Arapaho warriors in the famous **Battle of the Little Bighorn** in southern Montana, also called **Custer’s Last Stand**. General **George Armstrong Custer** was known for leading his Civil War troops into dangerous situations, hoping to capture glory for himself. He did the same thing at Little Bighorn. With 264 men, he entered an Indian camp of between 2,500 and 4,000 Sioux, commanded by chiefs **Sitting Bull** and **Crazy Horse**. Chief Sitting Bull led the counterattack in which Custer and his entire company were killed. Nonetheless, Chief Sitting Bull and the Sioux surrendered several years later, when the tribe was nearly starving. The Sioux were moved to the Standing Rock reservation in the Dakotas.

Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce Indians were also told to leave their land. Knowing he could not fight the U.S. Army, he began to march his people to the Lapwai Reservation in Idaho. During the march, some Nez Perce killed some white settlers. The army pursued them, and Chief Joseph decided to save his people by taking them to Canada. After months of successfully evading the U.S. troops, the Nez Perce were captured within 30 miles of the Canadian border.

Chief Joseph’s speech of surrender is very moving. He said:

“I am tired of fighting . . . It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more forever.”

The Nez Perce were sent to Oklahoma, but their chief was made to live in Washington. He lived the rest of his life in exile from his people.

Mexican Revolution (1910–1920)

In 1810, Mexico rebelled against Spanish rule, and after many struggles, declared their independence in 1821. Nearly 100 years later, another huge upheaval occurred as the **Mexican Revolution** tore through the land from 1910 to 1920. This war was plagued with political conflict as one ruler after another took control and then was overthrown. At the center of this conflict was the rights of the poor who had been at the mercy of the wealthy ruling class for centuries.

In the decades following Mexico’s War of Independence, self-rule was established but the inequality between the rights, privileges, and opportunities of the wealthy and the poor continued. The indigenous and peasant populations of Mexico continued to struggle from a lack of economic and political support. In 1858, **Benito Juárez**, who was a Zapotec Indian, was elected president. This new government enacted a series of reforms designed to limit the power of the centralized (conservative) regime and the Catholic Church. In 1857, a new constitution was created

guaranteeing, among other things, freedom of speech and the right to vote for all male citizens. Conservative opposition to these reforms led to a fierce civil war that started in 1858 and lasted three years.

Benito Juárez continued his climb to power after the war but angered foreign governments when, in an attempt to bring the bankrupt nation into financial stability, he declared an end to the repayment of Mexico's debts. France, Spain, and England all sent troops to Mexico to try to force Juárez to resume payments, but eventually Juárez prevailed. Spanish and British troops quickly withdrew, and Mexican troops continued to battle against the French, who claimed rule over Mexico. Mexican troops won a major battle on May 5, 1862, which is commemorated by the national holiday of *Cinco de Mayo*.

Meanwhile, the United States, embroiled in its own civil war, was unable to send troops to assist the Mexicans (the Monroe Doctrine stated that any interference by foreign nations in Mexico would not be tolerated by the U.S.). When the U.S. Civil War ended in 1865, the U.S. government threatened to come to Mexico's aid and French troops were finally forced to withdraw. Mexico was once again an independent nation.

Juárez won the re-election in 1871 and held onto power, despite an attempted revolt led by *Porfirio Díaz*, who took control of the country when Juárez died the following year. Porfirio Díaz ruled the country almost continuously for nearly 40 years, instituting absolute rule as a dictator. He introduced many changes to Mexico's commerce and economy, including increasing exports of gold and silver and building an extensive railroad system. Investors from other countries built large industries in Mexico and before long, Mexico City was a sprawling metropolis. Huge tracts of land that had once belonged to rural communities were given away to foreign investors and those loyal to the government. Unfortunately, the economic changes mainly benefited the wealthy, including Díaz, leaving the vast majority of the population in poverty. The injustice of this system was clear to all who didn't benefit from it, and by 1910, Mexico's revolution was underway.

It wasn't only the poor people who opposed Díaz's rule, but also liberals and intellectuals. A wealthy landowner named *Francisco Madero* published a book proclaiming the need for free, democratic elections in Mexico—something that had not been part of Díaz's regime—and the citizens rallied to his call and revolted. Within a year, Díaz was forced from power and Madero was elected president.

However, conflict continued as popular leaders of the working class (such as *Emiliano Zapata* in the south and *Francisco "Pancho" Villa* in the north) fought for freedom from control by the



Benito Juárez, President of Mexico, artist unknown, circa 1890–1900 (Image credit: Libro de Historia de Mexico)

wealthy ruling class. Villa and his followers in the north sought political control while Zapata and his followers in the south sought freedom and justice for the indigenous people whose land had been stolen. Violence spread throughout the nation as rebelling factions struggled with government forces. In 1913, Madero was overthrown by **Victoriano Huerta**, who declared himself dictator but was forced to resign a year later. The followers of Zapata and Villa continued their war against government forces led by General **Álvaro Obregón**. It is difficult to imagine the amount of chaos and bloodshed that reigned during this tumultuous time in Mexico's history.

When Obregón was elected president in 1920, he faced a country devastated by ten years of revolution and weakened by the migration of nearly one million Mexicans who moved north to the United States to escape the violence and find greater opportunities. Obregón made sweeping changes to benefit the poor and working class, and enacted educational reform that allowed the arts to flourish in Mexico. Later, in 1934, General **Lázaro Cárdenas** was elected to the presidency, and he continued to strengthen the nation by redistributing land, building schools in rural areas, and giving political power to labor unions. The ideals of the Mexican Revolution were realized.



Detail of a Diego Rivera mural, *Dream of a Sunday Afternoon in Alameda Park*, from the Diego Rivera Mural Museum in Mexico City (Image credit: Adam Jones)

Along with a political revolution came a cultural revolution as artists, musicians, and writers expressed the story and struggles of the Mexican people through art. Novels such as *The Underdogs (Los de Abajo)* by **Mariano Azuela** conveyed the brutality of the Revolution and the desperation of those seeking a better life. Artists such as **Diego Rivera**, **José Clemente Orozco**, and **David Alfaro Siqueiros** painted huge murals that not only represented the pride and identity of the people but also served to help educate them. Public education, and improving literacy rates among a mainly illiterate population, was a top priority of the new reforms. Between 1920 and 1970, murals appeared on buildings and walls all over the country, telling the story of the Mexican people. Music, like the murals, also began to tell the story of the Revolution and its heroes. *Corridos* were popular songs that told a story of a particular event or person's life. In song, story, and art, the sacrifices and victories of the people would not be forgotten.