Prepare to Read

**Reading Skill**

**Use Definition Clues**

As you read about history, you will come across unfamiliar words. In this textbook, definitions for many unfamiliar words are included in the text that surrounds the word. When you read a word that you do not know, look at nearby sentences. Perhaps, the unfamiliar word is repeated and defined.

**Vocabulary Builder**

**High-Use Words**
- immigant, p. 455
- manual, p. 455

**Key Terms and People**
- vigilante, p. 454
- subsidy, p. 454
- transcontinental railroad, p. 455

**Background Knowledge**
With the Civil War over, the nation turned its attention to its western frontier. This stretched from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean. The frontier had prairies, mountains, and forests. Even though Americans thought of it as unsettled, it was the home of Mexican settlers and Native Americans.

Moving west, settlers first crossed the Great Plains. Most of the Plains receives little rainfall and has few trees. Thinking that crops could not grow there, settlers called the area the Great American Desert.

In this section, you will learn how railroad builders and miners made the West a vital part of the nation’s economy.

**Boom and Bust**

In many parts of the West, settlement came in a rush. This was especially true in areas where prospectors found gold or silver. New mining towns sprang up in a flash—but many did not last long.

The Gold Rush of 1849 in California excited the nation. Before long, miners spread from California to the Sierra Nevada and the Rocky Mountains and to the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory.

The Comstock Lode

Just before the Civil War, prospectors began searching for gold in the Sierra Nevada. In 1859, two Irish prospectors found the gold they were looking for. However, a third man, Henry Comstock, said the claim was on his land. The find became known as the Comstock Lode. A lode is a rich vein of ore.

At the Comstock Lode, a blue-tinted sand stuck to all the equipment and made the gold hard to dig out. The blue mud turned out to be loaded with silver. In fact, the silver was far more valuable than the gold. This was one of the richest silver mines in the world.
In the next 20 years, the Comstock Lode produced $300 million worth of silver and made Nevada a center of mining. A tent city near the mines grew into the boomtown of Virginia City, Nevada.

The Boom Spreads After the Civil War, prospectors fanned out over the West. They found valuable ores in Montana, Idaho, and Colorado. They made a gold strike in South Dakota’s Black Hills. In the 1890s, a gold find drew people from all over the world to Alaska.

Although each strike caused great excitement, few prospectors got rich. The ore was deep underground and expensive to extract. Comstock gave up and sold his mining rights for $11,000 and two mules. Many other prospectors sold their claims to large mining companies. By the 1880s, western mining had become a big business.

Boomtown Life Tent cities like Virginia City often arose around the diggings. Soon hotels, stores, and other wood-frame buildings appeared. Mining camps quickly grew into boomtowns. Where prospectors went, others followed. Merchants brought mule teams hauling tools, food, and clothing. Nothing was cheap in the boomtown stores. Sometimes, miners paid high prices for bottles of pure drinking water. They did not want to drink from streams that might be polluted with chemicals, like arsenic, used in mining.

Women who joined the mining boom could make a good living. Some opened restaurants. Others washed clothes or took in boarders. One woman just baked pies. In a year, she became quite wealthy.

Nearly half the miners were foreign born. The streets of the mining towns rang with Irish accents as well as Italian, German, Spanish, Chinese, and other languages. The foreign miners often faced hostility. For example, laws restricted Chinese miners to claims abandoned by others. Mobs often drove the Chinese from towns.

The Great American Desert When surveyor Stephen Long led his expedition west in 1820, he thought the region from the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains resembled the deserts of Siberia. In 1823, Long created a map that labeled the area “The Great American Desert,” and the name remained.

In the next 20 years, the Comstock Lode produced $300 million worth of silver and made Nevada a center of mining. A tent city near the mines grew into the boomtown of Virginia City, Nevada.

The Boom Spreads After the Civil War, prospectors fanned out over the West. They found valuable ores in Montana, Idaho, and Colorado. They made a gold strike in South Dakota’s Black Hills. In the 1890s, a gold find drew people from all over the world to Alaska.

Although each strike caused great excitement, few prospectors got rich. The ore was deep underground and expensive to extract. Comstock gave up and sold his mining rights for $11,000 and two mules. Many other prospectors sold their claims to large mining companies. By the 1880s, western mining had become a big business.

Boomtown Life Tent cities like Virginia City often arose around the diggings. Soon hotels, stores, and other wood-frame buildings appeared. Mining camps quickly grew into boomtowns. Where prospectors went, others followed. Merchants brought mule teams hauling tools, food, and clothing. Nothing was cheap in the boomtown stores. Sometimes, miners paid high prices for bottles of pure drinking water. They did not want to drink from streams that might be polluted with chemicals, like arsenic, used in mining.

Women who joined the mining boom could make a good living. Some opened restaurants. Others washed clothes or took in boarders. One woman just baked pies. In a year, she became quite wealthy.

Nearly half the miners were foreign born. The streets of the mining towns rang with Irish accents as well as Italian, German, Spanish, Chinese, and other languages. The foreign miners often faced hostility. For example, laws restricted Chinese miners to claims abandoned by others. Mobs often drove the Chinese from towns.

In the next 20 years, the Comstock Lode produced $300 million worth of silver and made Nevada a center of mining. A tent city near the mines grew into the boomtown of Virginia City, Nevada.

The Boom Spreads After the Civil War, prospectors fanned out over the West. They found valuable ores in Montana, Idaho, and Colorado. They made a gold strike in South Dakota’s Black Hills. In the 1890s, a gold find drew people from all over the world to Alaska.

Although each strike caused great excitement, few prospectors got rich. The ore was deep underground and expensive to extract. Comstock gave up and sold his mining rights for $11,000 and two mules. Many other prospectors sold their claims to large mining companies. By the 1880s, western mining had become a big business.

Boomtown Life Tent cities like Virginia City often arose around the diggings. Soon hotels, stores, and other wood-frame buildings appeared. Mining camps quickly grew into boomtowns. Where prospectors went, others followed. Merchants brought mule teams hauling tools, food, and clothing. Nothing was cheap in the boomtown stores. Sometimes, miners paid high prices for bottles of pure drinking water. They did not want to drink from streams that might be polluted with chemicals, like arsenic, used in mining.

Women who joined the mining boom could make a good living. Some opened restaurants. Others washed clothes or took in boarders. One woman just baked pies. In a year, she became quite wealthy.

Nearly half the miners were foreign born. The streets of the mining towns rang with Irish accents as well as Italian, German, Spanish, Chinese, and other languages. The foreign miners often faced hostility. For example, laws restricted Chinese miners to claims abandoned by others. Mobs often drove the Chinese from towns.
For every mile of track laid, the builders received generous help from the federal government. Subsidies were grants of land or money. For every mile of track, the government gave the railroad 10 square miles of land next to the track. Railroads got more than 180 million acres, an area the size of Texas. They also received federal loans.

Frontier Justice Mining towns sprouted so fast that law and order were hard to find. Miners formed groups of vigilantes, or self-appointed law keepers. Such groups hunted down bandits and imposed their own rough brands of justice. As boomtowns grew, local residents began to seek more lasting forms of government. Sheriffs, marshals, and judges replaced vigilantes. Colorado, Dakota, and Nevada organized into territories in 1861, followed by Arizona and Idaho in 1863 and Montana in 1864. In some mining towns, all the ore was soon extracted. Mines shut down and miners moved away. With few customers, businesses failed and merchants left. Boomtowns became ghost towns.

The Railroad Boom Railroads raced to lay track to the mines and boomtowns. They received generous help from the federal government.

Aid to Railroads Before 1860, railroad lines ended at the Missouri River. Then, the federal government began to offer subsidies. Subsidies are grants of land or money. For every mile of track, the government gave the railroad 10 square miles of land next to the track. Railroads got more than 180 million acres, an area the size of Texas. They also received federal loans.

### The Railroad Boom

#### Instruction
- Have students read The Railroad Boom. Remind them to look for context clues to clarify the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases.
- Ask: How do you think the government helped fund the creation of new railroads? (Possible answer: Linking the east and west coasts would create more unity in the country, make it easier to ship goods, and bring more people to the West in order to help territories gain statehood.)
- Have students complete the worksheet The Transcontinental Railroad. Ask them to summarize the challenges that faced the builders of the first transcontinental railroad.

#### Independent Practice
- Have students complete the study guide for this section.

#### Monitor Progress
- As students fill in the Notetaking Study Guide, circulate to make sure students understand life in boomtowns and the expansion of railroads.
- Tell students to fill in the last column of the Reading Readiness Guide. Ask them to evaluate whether what they learned was what they expected to learn.

#### Answers
- (a) the Northern Pacific (b) They could easily transport gold and silver throughout the country.
- Checkpoint Boomtowns were growing so rapidly that government-appointed law enforcement was difficult to establish.
Spanning the Continent

Westerners dreamed of a transcontinental railroad, a railroad line that spanned the continent. In 1862, Leland Stanford and his partners won the right to build a line eastward from San Francisco. Their railroad was the Central Pacific. Another railroad, the Union Pacific, would build west from Omaha. When the lines met, tracks would stretch from coast to coast.

The railroads hired thousands of workers—Native-born whites, Mexican Americans, and African Americans. Workers also immigrated to the United States from Mexico and Ireland. The Central Pacific brought 10,000 Chinese to the United States.

The work was hazardous, the pay low. Cutting through the Sierra Nevada, Chinese manual laborers were lashed by snow and howling winds. Avalanches buried weeks of work in moments and killed workers by the score. Daily progress sometimes came in inches.

At last, on May 10, 1869, the two lines met at Promontory, Utah. Stanford drove the final spike into the last rail with a silver mallet. “It is done,” snapped out a telegrapher. Word flashed across the nation.

Effects of the Railroads

New towns sprang up in the West. People and supplies poured in. Gold and silver poured out.

Rapid population growth brought political changes. Nevada became a state in 1864; Colorado in 1876; North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Washington in 1889; Idaho and Wyoming in 1890.

Looking Back and Ahead

Gold and silver discoveries brought boomtowns to the West. Then came railroads and more settlers. In the next section, you will read how these developments affected the Native Americans who lived in the West.

Assess and Reteach

Assess Progress

Have students complete Check Your Progress. Administer the Section Quiz.

Teaching Resources, Unit 6, Section Quiz, p. 28

To further assess student understanding, use the Progress Monitoring Transparency.

Progress Monitoring Transparencies, Chapter 13, Section 1

Reteach

If students need more instruction, have them read this section in the Interactive Reading and Notetaking Study Guide and complete the accompanying question.

Interactive Reading and Notetaking Study Guide, Chapter 13, Section 1 (Adapted Version also available.)

Extend

Tell students that William Morris Stewart, James Graham Fair, and George Hearst were known as the “silver kings” because they made their fortunes from the Comstock Lode. Have students do Internet research to learn more about these men and write a brief paragraph about each. Have students read their paragraphs to the class.

Writing Rubric Share this rubric with students.

Score 1 Answers inaccurate
Score 2 No details given to support answers
Score 3 Some inaccurate details given
Score 4 Correct and well-supported answers

Answer

Checkpoint They caused new towns to develop, leading to rapid population growth that helped western territories become states.

Chapter 13 Section 1 455
Transcontinental Railroad

Build Background Knowledge
Remind students that in the late 1800s, the United States included a large territory in the West, but it was sparsely settled and, compared to the East, had few developed transportation routes. Have students use the Idea Wave strategy (TE, p. T38) to brainstorm for the challenges settlers may have faced trying to establish themselves in the West before the transcontinental railroad. Write their ideas on the board. Then, have students list how the transcontinental railroad would have helped the settlers, and write their ideas on the board. Tell students that they will be learning more about the transcontinental railroad in this feature.

Instruction
■ Read Geography and History: Transcontinental Railroad with students. Ask students: How did Congress encourage the building of the transcontinental railroad? (Congress passed a law that provided for the construction of the railroad.) Ask: Why do you think Congress passed this law? (Students’ answers will vary but should show an understanding of the benefits of the transcontinental railroad.)
■ Discuss the building of the transcontinental railroad. Ask students: Who were some of the workers building the transcontinental railroad? (Chinese immigrants, former Civil War soldiers) Ask: What were some of the challenges these workers faced in building the railroad? (They faced foul weather and rugged terrain. They had to blast through mountains.)
■ Ask students: How did the transcontinental railroad change the West? (It made settling the West easier, and population in the western territories increased. However, Native Americans were hemmed in by the new settlements.)

Transcontinental Railroad

During the Civil War, Congress passed a bill that provided for the construction of a transcontinental railroad. The new law assigned two companies to build the railroad: the Central Pacific Railroad and the Union Pacific Railroad.

Two Railroads
The Central Pacific headed east from Sacramento. The Union Pacific headed west from Omaha.

The Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads

Physical Obstacles
The Union Pacific laid more track than the Central Pacific to complete the railroad. Foul weather and rugged terrain hampered construction efforts on both lines. The Central Pacific took almost five years to cross the Sierra Nevada.

Cross-Sectional Map of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific Railroads

Universal Access
Gifted and Talented
Creating a Poster Have students create posters recruiting workers to build the transcontinental railroad. The posters should persuade workers by explaining how the railroad will change the West, despite the challenges that the workers will face in building it. Have students show their posters to the class.

Less Proficient Readers

Special Needs
Instruction (continued)

- Display the History Interactive transparency Transcontinental Railroad. Ask:
  - How long was the railroad? (about 700 miles)
  - What was the most eastern city on the line? (Omaha)
  - What was the most western city on the line? (Sacramento)

Color Transparencies, Transcontinental Railroad

Monitor Progress

Ask students to complete the Analyze Geography and History activity. Circulate to make sure individuals understand the importance of the transcontinental railroad. Provide assistance as needed.

Independent Practice

Have students complete the History Interactive activity online.

Extend Online

For: History Interactive
Visit: PHSchool.com
Web Code: myp-6137

Writing Rubric

Share this rubric with students.

Score 1 Poor organization, does not address topic
Score 2 Details and organization often unclear or incorrect
Score 3 Good organization, some appropriate details
Score 4 Clear organization, ideas well supported and developed, strong conclusion

Answer

Student answers should show awareness of the challenges overcome to complete the transcontinental railroad.

Chapter 13 457