

*Debating* the  
**DOCUMENTS**

Interpreting Alternative Viewpoints  
in Primary Source Documents

# The West: Paradise, or Paradise Lost?

*After the Civil War, the huge trans-Mississippi West  
was opened for settlement, conquest, and development*

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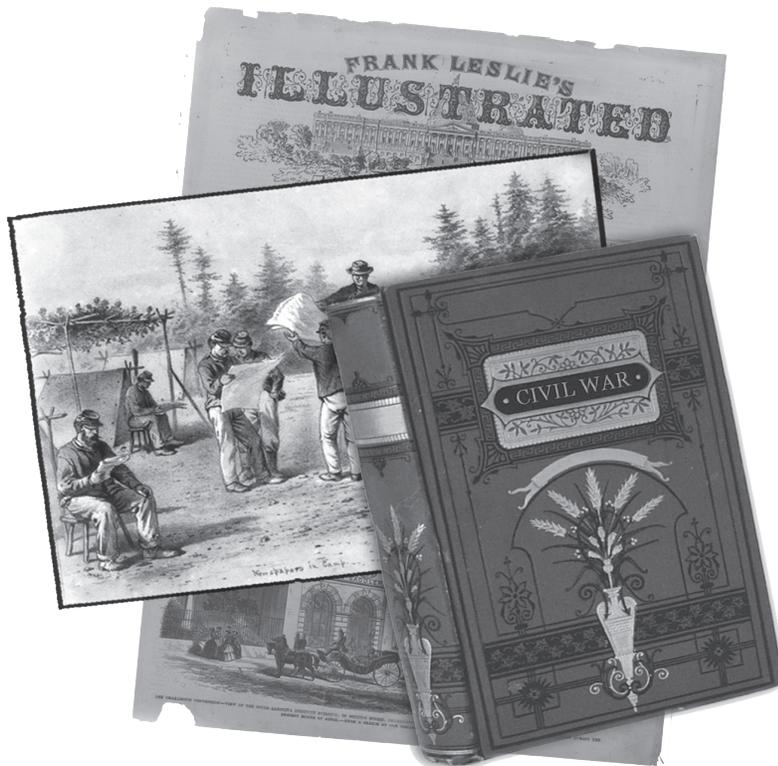
# Teacher Introduction

## ★ *Using Primary Sources*

Primary sources are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past era or historical event. They are the raw materials, or the evidence, on which historians base their “secondary” accounts of the past.

A rapidly growing number of history teachers today are using primary sources. Why? Perhaps it's because primary sources give students a better sense of what history is and what historians do. Such sources also help students see the past from a variety of viewpoints. Moreover, primary sources make history vivid and bring it to life.

However, primary sources are not easy to use. They can be confusing. They can be biased. They rarely all agree. Primary sources must be interpreted and set in context. To do this, students need historical background knowledge. *Debating the Documents* helps students handle such challenges by giving them a useful framework for analyzing sources that conflict with one another.



*“Multiple,  
conflicting  
perspectives are  
among the truths  
of history.  
No single  
objective or  
universal account  
could ever put an  
end to this endless  
creative dialogue  
within and  
between the past  
and the present.”*

From the 2005 Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct of the Council of the American Historical Association.

## ★ *The Debating the Documents Series*

Each *Debating the Documents* booklet includes the same sequence of reproducible worksheets. If students use several booklets over time, they will get regular practice at interpreting and comparing conflicting sources. In this way, they can learn the skills and habits needed to get the most out of primary sources.

### **Each *Debating the Documents* Booklet Includes:**

- **Suggestions for the Student and an Introductory Essay.** The student gets instructions and a one-page essay providing background on the booklet's topic. A time line on the topic is also included.
- **TWO Groups of Contrasting Primary Source Documents.** In most of the booklets, students get one pair of visual sources and one pair of written sources. In some cases, more than two are provided for each. Background is provided on each source. Within each group, the sources clash in a very clear way. (The sources are not always exact opposites, but they do always differ in some obvious way.)
- **Three Worksheets for Each Document Group.** Students use the first two worksheets to take notes on the sources. The third worksheet asks which source the student thinks would be most useful to a historian.
- **CD-ROM.** The ImageXaminer lets students view the primary sources as a class, in small groups, or individually. A folder containing all of the student handouts in pdf format, including a graphic organizer for use with the ImageXaminer's grid tool, allows for printing directly from the CD.
- **One DBQ.** On page 22, a document-based question (DBQ) asks students to write an effective essay using all of the booklet's primary sources.

## ★ *How to Use This Booklet*

**All pages in this booklet may be photocopied for classroom use.**

### **1. Have students read “Suggestions for the Student” and the Introductory Essay.**

Give them copies of pages 7–9. Ask them to read the instructions and then read the introductory essay on the topic. The time line gives them additional information on that topic. This reading could be done in class or as a homework assignment.

### **2. Have students do the worksheets.**

Make copies of the worksheets and the pages with the sources. Ask students to study the background information on each source and the source itself. Then have them take notes on the sources using the worksheets. If students have access to a computer, have them review the primary sources with the ImageXaminer. You may also ask them to use its magnifying tools to more clearly focus their analysis.

### 3. “Debate the documents” as a class.

Have students use their worksheet notes to debate the primary source documents as a class. Use the overheads to focus this discussion on each source in turn. Urge students to follow these ground rules:

- Use your worksheets as a guide for the discussion or debate.
- Try to reach agreement about the main ideas and the significance of each primary source document.
- Look for points of agreement as well as disagreement between the primary sources.
- Listen closely to all points of view about each primary source.
- Focus on the usefulness of each source to the historian, not merely on whether you agree or disagree with that source’s point of view.

### 4. Have students do the final DBQ.

A DBQ is an essay question about a set of primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, students write essays using evidence from the sources and their own background knowledge of the historical era. (See the next page for a DBQ scoring guide to use in evaluating these essays.)

The DBQ assignment on page 22 includes guidelines for writing a DBQ essay. Here are some additional points to make with students about preparing to write this kind of essay.

**The DBQ for this booklet (see page 22):**

*“Our romantic image of the ‘Wild West’ of the late 1800s is not entirely a myth.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?*

- Analyze the question carefully.
- Use your background knowledge to set sources in their historical context.
- Question and interpret sources actively. Do not accept them at face value.
- Use sources meaningfully to support your essay’s thesis.
- Pay attention to the overall organization of your essay.

## ★ Complete DBQ Scoring Guide

Use this guide in evaluating the DBQ for this booklet. Use this scoring guide with students who are already familiar with using primary sources and writing DBQ essays.

### Excellent Essay

- Offers a clear answer or thesis explicitly addressing all aspects of the essay question.
- Does a careful job of interpreting many or most of the documents and relating them clearly to the thesis and the DBQ. Deals with conflicting documents effectively.
- Uses details and examples effectively to support the thesis and other main ideas. Explains the significance of those details and examples well.
- Uses background knowledge and the documents in a balanced way.
- Is well written; clear transitions make the essay easy to follow from point to point. Only a few minor writing errors or errors of fact.

### Good Essay

- Offers a reasonable thesis addressing the essential points of the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least some of the documents and relates them to the thesis and the DBQ.
- Usually relates details and examples meaningfully to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some relevant background knowledge.
- May have some writing errors or errors of fact, as long as these do not invalidate the essay's overall argument or point of view.

### Fair Essay

- Offers at least a partly developed thesis addressing the essay question.
- Adequately interprets at least a few of the documents.
- Relates only a few of the details and examples to the thesis or other main ideas.
- Includes some background knowledge.
- Has several writing errors or errors of fact that make it harder to understand the essay's overall argument or point of view.

### Poor Essay

- Offers no clear thesis or answer addressing the DBQ.
- Uses few documents effectively other than referring to them in “laundry list” style, with no meaningful relationship to a thesis or any main point.
- Uses details and examples unrelated to the thesis or other main ideas. Does not explain the significance of these details and examples.
- Is not clearly written, with some major writing errors or errors of fact.

# Suggestions to the Student

## ★ *Using Primary Sources*

A primary source is any record of evidence from the past. Many things are primary sources: letters, diary entries, official documents, photos, cartoons, wills, maps, charts, etc. They are called “primary” because they are first-hand records of a past event or time period. This Debating the Documents lesson is based on two groups of primary source documents. Within each group, the sources conflict with one another. That is, they express different or even opposed points of view. You need to decide which source is more reliable, more useful or more typical of the time period. This is what historians do all the time. Usually, you will be able to learn something about the past from each source, even when the sources clash with one another in dramatic ways.

## ★ *How to Use This Booklet*

### 1. Read the one-page introductory essay.

This gives you background information that will help you analyze the primary source documents and do the exercises for this Debating the Documents lesson. The time line gives you additional information you will find helpful.



### 2. Study the primary source documents for this lesson.

For this lesson, you get two groups of sources. The sources within each group conflict with one another. Some of these sources are visuals; others are written sources. With visual sources, pay attention not only to the image’s “content” (its subject matter), but also to its artistic style, shading, composition, camera angle, symbols and other features that add to the image’s meaning. With written sources, notice the writing style, bias, even what the source leaves out or does not talk about. Think about each source’s author, that author’s reasons for writing and the likely audience for the source. These things give you clues as to the source’s historical value.

### 3. Use the worksheets to analyze each group of primary source documents.

For each group of sources, you get three worksheets. Use the “Study the Document” worksheets to take notes on each source. Use the “Comparing the Documents” worksheet to decide which of the sources would be most useful to a historian.

### 4. As a class, debate the documents.

Use your worksheet notes to help you take part in this debate.

### 5. Do the final DBQ.

“DBQ,” means “document-based question.” A DBQ is a question along with several primary source documents. To answer the DBQ, write an essay using evidence from the documents and your own background history knowledge. The DBQ is on page 22.

## • *The West: Paradise, or Paradise Lost?* •

In 1893, historian Frederick Jackson Turner presented his famous “frontier thesis.” It claimed that steady westward settlement was what made America a unique land of liberty and equality. Turner saw the frontier as a “safety valve” enabling the poor to leave crowded cities to seek a better life out west. This eased deep class divisions that caused such suffering in Europe. On the frontier, “rugged individualism” was the ideal. It was an ideal that stressed liberty, equality, hard work, and individual responsibility.

Turner also noted that the frontier was a thing of the past. Citing 1890 census data, he announced that no real frontier line existed any longer. The nation would have to learn to live in a closed space. Could its democratic ideals and practices survive this change? Turner was not sure.

Whatever the truth of Turner’s thesis, it is no surprise that the frontier was a big issue for people in the late 1800s. In the 35 years following the Civil War, the entire trans-Mississippi West was conquered, settled, and altered forever. It was fully tied into all of the key social, economic, and cultural networks of the United States as a nation.

Settlement took place in stages. First came fur trappers who lived among and traded with the Indians. These settlers were followed by miners in search of gold and other minerals. They were followed by the cowboy and the great cattle drives (1866 to about 1890). Finally, farmers arrived by the millions. From 1870 to 1900, acres of land under cultivation in the U.S. more than doubled.

Those heading west often imagined a pristine land of unlimited opportunity. Anyone who worked hard had a chance at success and the American dream. For millions that dream was just to put down roots and set themselves up as independent, property-owning farmers. Were

their dreams realistic? Was their image of the West accurate? Turner’s ideas seem to suggest it was. Yet Turner also knew that the West and the individualism it fostered had a darker, more selfish side.

First of all, the frontier was never truly an empty, “pristine” wilderness. It was filled with native peoples who fiercely resisted anyone taking their traditional lands. In other words, the West was not so much “settled” as it was conquered. The harsh treatment of the conquered tribes is a key part of the story of the American West.

As for frontier equality and individualism, some historians say this, too, is partly myth. In each wave of settlement (miners, cowboys, farmers), a similar pattern held. At first, individuals arrived with limited supplies and equipment seeking to make a mark. Some did strike it rich or set up successful farms. Yet many others soon ended up as struggling employees for the large corporations whose money and machinery gave them great advantages in mining, fishing, timber, and agricultural. Also, in the rush to develop the region’s land, water, mineral, and timber resources, these businesses often did great damage to the West’s fragile natural

On the other hand, other historians say that for all its problems, this pattern of development was a beneficial one. Large-scale business and agribusiness gave millions a chance to work and get ahead. The tragedy of the final Indian Wars and the problems of ecological damage were real enough. Yet the West did offer millions a better chance. In time, a conservation movement arose to protect its natural resources. The West was no paradise, but “paradise lost” is not a fair label either.

Now you can use the documents for this lesson to decide with which of these groups of historians you agree most.

# The West Timeline

1862

• • •

The Homestead Act gives 160 acres of free land to each homesteader who lives, builds a home, improves, and farms the land for five years.

1864

• • •

Cheyenne chief Black Kettle agrees to peace, but a volunteer force massacres nearly two hundred men, women, and children at Black Kettle's Sand Creek encampment in Colorado.

1866

• • •

The Lakota, angry about a fort along the Bozeman trail to Montana mining country, annihilate a patrol led by Captain William J. Fetterman. Also, the era of the long-range cattle drives on the open range begins. The drives will last until 1885.

1867-68

• • •

Treaties establish separate reservations for various Plains Indian tribes in parts of Oklahoma, Wyoming, Montana, and Dakota Territories.

1869

• • •

The first transcontinental railroad is completed. Others follow. Many are financed with huge grants of land to sell. To do this, the railroads promote western settlement vigorously.

1872

• • •

The Yellowstone Act sets aside part of northwest Wyoming as a public park.

1874

• • •

Mennonite immigrants bring a new strain of drought-resistant wheat to Kansas. Officials estimate hunters are killing three million buffalo a year. Joseph Glidden receives a patent for barbed wire. Together these things transform the Plains from the "Great American Desert" it was once thought to be into a fertile land of farms and ranches.

1876

• • •

Gold is discovered in the Black Hills of Dakota. Prospectors disrupt these sacred Lakota lands, triggering the Lakota War. During it, George Armstrong Custer's force is wiped out, but the Lakota lose the war.

1877

• • •

After a 1400-mile flight, Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce surrender.

1887

• • •

The Dawes Severalty Act creates a system of private land ownership for American Indians. This gives individual Indians farms, but it also divides up the reservations and weakens Indian cultures.

1889

• • •

The Oklahoma Land Rush takes place (see Visual Source Document 3).

1890

• • •

Federal troops massacre Lakota Chief Big Foot and 350 followers at Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Reservation. This is the last real battle of the Indian Wars.

1891

• • •

The Forest Reserve Act allows land to be set aside as public forests to preserve a timber supply.

1893

• • •

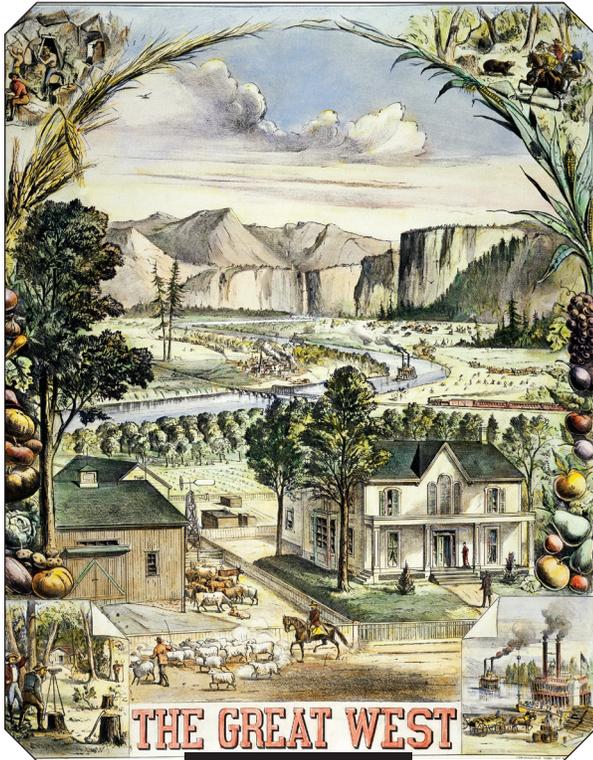
Historian Frederick Jackson Turner declares the frontier closed.

1902

• • •

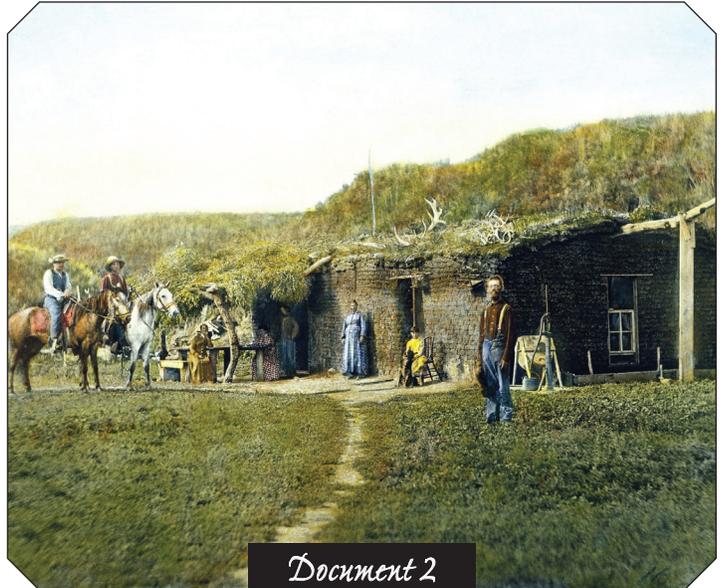
The Newlands Reclamation Act authorizes federal construction of dams and reservoirs.

## Visual Primary Source Documents 1 & 2



*Document 1*

The Granger Collection, New York



*Document 2*

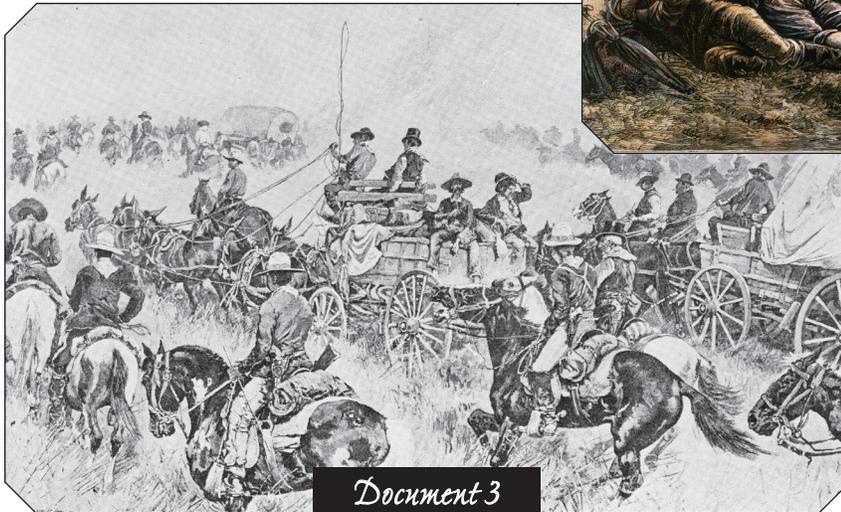
The Granger Collection, New York

### *Information on Documents 1 & 2*

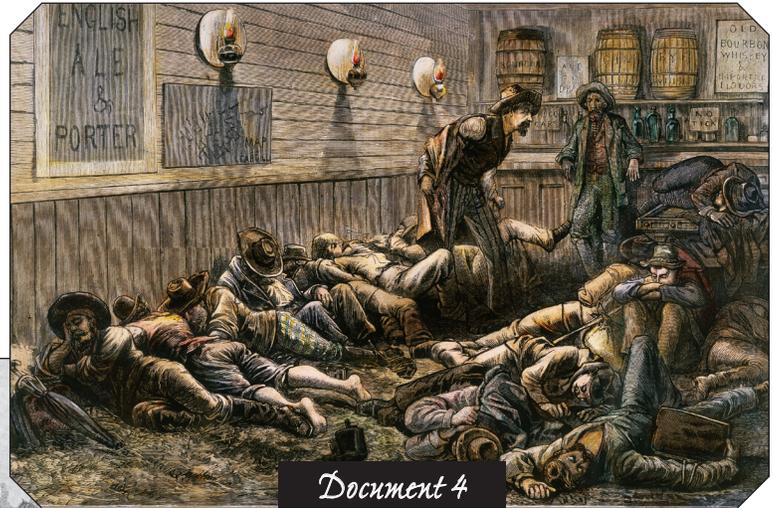
**Document 1:** 'The Great West', 1881.  
An American lithograph, with scenes of farming, mining, hunting, and river life in the American West.

**Document 2:** A pioneer family alongside their sod house near Coburg, Nebraska, in 1887. (Oil over a photograph.)

## Visual Primary Source Documents 3 & 4



Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-110999



The Granger Collection, New York

### *Information on Documents 3 & 4*

**Document 3:** In the 1880s, most of Oklahoma Territory was still set aside as Indian land. However, about two million acres of it was unassigned. Indians wanted those acres for their future use, but frontier settlers, or “boomers,” also wanted them. The government finally agreed with the settlers. On April 22, 1889, thousands of settlers were allowed to ride into Oklahoma and choose 160 acres of land each for a homestead. This 1905 drawing by Albert Richler depicts some of those settlers rushing to stake out their claims that day.

**Document 4:** This American engraving of the 19th century shows miners and other emigrants seeking their fortune at Leadville, Colorado, bedding down for the night in a billiard saloon. Miners hoping to strike it rich out West rarely did so. Over time, expensive machinery began to be needed to reach valuable minerals such as gold, silver, or lead. Large companies came to replace the individual miner panning for gold on his own.

# Study the Document: Visual Sources 1 & 2

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

## **1** Main Idea or Topic: Doc 1

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Write a caption for this poster, one that uses the word “paradise” and explains why that word sums up this image of the American West.

## **2** Background Knowledge

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In Document 1, what specific features seem to make up this artist’s notion of what made the West such an ideal place to live? Based on what you know about life in late-nineteenth century America, why would this ideal appeal so strongly to so many?

## **3** Main Idea or Topic: Doc 2

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Pretend you are living in this sod house. Write a letter to fit on the back of this picture to send to a friend or relative back east. In your letter, try to convince this person to move out to your community.

# Study the Document: Visual Sources 3 & 4

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

## 1 Main Idea or Topic

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For each of these two sources, write a caption explaining who these people are, what they are hoping for, and what challenges they face.

## 2 Background Knowledge

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List three facts you think a student needs to know to better understand one of these illustrations. That is, three facts either about Oklahoma and the “boomers” in the land rush shown in Document 3, or three facts about miners in the West in the late 1800s, as shown in Document 4.

## 3 Compare and Contrast

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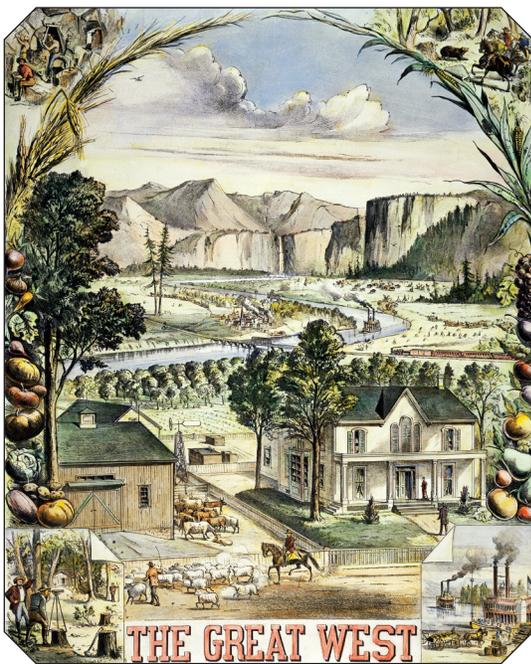
Is it fair to say that Documents 1 & 2 are the “myth” of the West while Documents 3 & 4 are the “reality” of the West? Why or why not? And if so, was the reality of the West mainly bad, mainly good, or somewhere in between?

# Comparing the Documents

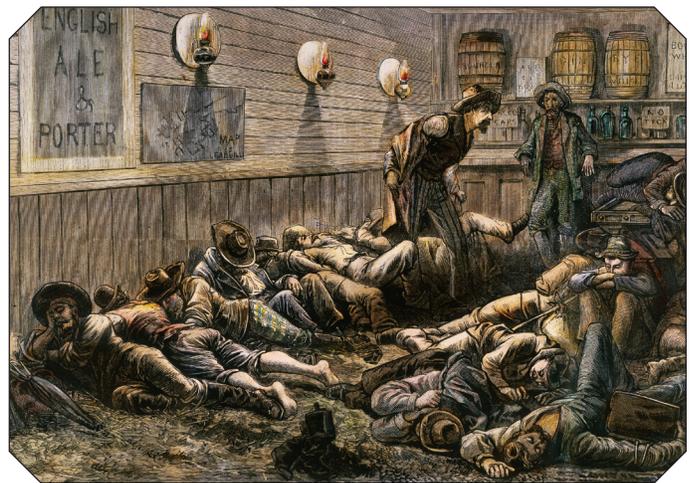
## ★ *The Visual Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the “Comparison Essay” worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents — and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

**Which of these primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the differences between myth and reality in the West in the late 1800s?**



*Documents 1 & 2*



*Documents 3 & 4*

## Comparison Essay

*I chose Documents \_\_\_\_\_ because:*

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*I did not choose Documents \_\_\_\_\_.*

*However, a historian still might use the documents in the following way:*

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KEEP THIS IN MIND: Some sources are very “biased.” A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

# Written Primary Source Documents 1 & 2

## Information on Documents 1 & 2

**Document 1** is a portion of Walt Whitman's poem "Pioneers! O Pioneers!" It celebrates the frontier spirit and the strengths needed to settle the American West. The poem appeared as a part of Whitman's famous *Leaves of Grass* (1900).

**Document 2** is a passage from a book by Theodore Roosevelt titled *Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail* (1888). The book is an account of Roosevelt's years as a Dakota rancher (1884–86). This passage on the cowboy ends Chapter 6, "Frontier Types." Roosevelt later became a U.S. president (1901–1909). He always celebrated the vigorous, adventurous spirit he felt he had met in its purest form on the western frontier.

### • Document 1 •

O you youths, Western youths,  
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride  
and friendship,  
Plain I see you, Western youths, see you  
tramping with the foremost,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Have the elder races halted?  
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied,  
over there beyond the seas?  
We take up the task eternal, and the burden,  
and the lesson,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the past we leave behind;  
We debouch\* upon a newer, mightier world,  
varied world,  
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of  
labor and the march,  
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We detachments steady throwing,  
Down the edges, through the passes, up the  
mountains steep,  
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing, as we  
go, the unknown ways, Pioneers! O pioneers!

\*debouch — to emerge into a wider area

### • Document 2 •

It is utterly unfair to judge the whole class  
[of cowboys] by what a few individuals do  
in the course of two or three days spent in  
town, instead of by the long months of weary,  
honest toil common to all alike. To appreciate  
properly his fine, manly qualities, the wild  
rough-rider of the plains should be seen in his  
own home. There he passes his days, there  
he does his life-work, there, when he meets  
death, he faces it as he has faced many other  
evils, with quiet, uncomplaining fortitude.  
Brave, hospitable, hardy, and adventurous, he  
is the grim pioneer of our race; he prepares  
the way for the civilization from before whose  
face he must himself disappear. Hard and  
dangerous though his existence is, it has yet  
a wild attraction that strongly draws to it his  
bold, free spirit. He lives in the lonely lands  
where mighty rivers twist in long reaches  
between the barren bluffs; where the prairies  
stretch out into billowy plains of waving grass,  
girt only by the blue horizon; plains across  
whose endless breadth he can steer his  
course for days and weeks and see neither  
man to speak to nor hill to break the level;  
where the glory and the burning splendor  
of the sunsets kindle the blue vault of heaven  
and the level brown earth till they merge  
together in an ocean of flaming fire.

## Written Primary Source Document 3

### Information on Document 3

The Nez Perce were Indians of the Northwest. They had met with Lewis and Clark in 1805. Until the 1860s, they remained friendly with Americans, even helping them in battles with other Indians. Then, after gold was discovered in the area, U.S. officials drastically reduced the size of the Nez Perce reservation. This led to war in 1877. After an amazing 1400-mile retreat, Nez Perce Chief Joseph surrendered with these now famous words: "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. Below is a statement Chief Joseph made later describing his people's long dealings with whites. The passage is in Chester Anders Fee's *Chief Joseph: The Biography of a Great Indian* (Wilson-Erickson, 1936). Chief Joseph died in 1904, widely admired yet still in exile.

### • Document 3 •

*For a short time we lived quietly. But this could not last. White men had found gold in the mountains around the land of the Winding Water. They stole a great many horses from us and we could not get them back because we were Indians. The white men told lies for each other. They drove off a great many of our cattle. Some white men branded our young cattle so they could claim them. We had no friends who would plead our cause before the law councils. It seemed to me that some of the white men in Wallowa were doing these things on purpose to get up a war. They knew we were not strong enough to fight them. I labored hard to avoid trouble and bloodshed. We gave up some of our country to the white men, thinking that then we could have peace. We were mistaken. The white men would not let us alone. We could have avenged our wrongs many times, but we did not. Whenever the Government has asked for help against other Indians we have never refused. When the white men were few and we were strong we could have killed them off, but the Nez Perce wishes to live at peace.*

*On account of the treaty made by the other bands of the Nez Perce the white man claimed my lands. We were troubled with white men*

*crowding over the line. Some of them were good men, and we lived on peaceful terms with them, but they were not all good. Nearly every year the agent came over from Lapwai and ordered us to the reservation. We always replied that we were satisfied to live in Wallowa. We were careful to refuse the presents or annuities which he offered.*

*Through all the years since the white man came to Wallowa we have been threatened and taunted by them and the treaty Nez Perce. They have given us no rest. We have had a few good friends among the white men, and they have always advised my people to bear these taunts without fighting. Our young men are quick tempered and I have had great trouble in keeping them from doing rash things. I have carried a heavy load on my back ever since I was a boy. I learned then that we were but few while the white men were many, and that we could not hold our own with them. We were like deer. They were like grizzly bears. We had a small country. Their country was large. We were contented to let things remain as the Great Spirit Chief made them. They were not; and would change the mountains and rivers if they did not suit them.*

# Study the Document: Written Sources 1 & 2

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

## **1** Main Idea or Topic: Doc 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Choose the one line in this poem that seems to sum up best its view of the West and the pioneer spirit. Explain your choice.

## **2** Main Idea or Topic: Doc 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Roosevelt speaks of the “grim pioneer” who “prepares the way for the civilization from before whose face he must himself disappear.” What do you think he means by this?

## **3** Compare and Contrast \_\_\_\_\_

Re-read the first paragraphs of the introductory essay for this lesson. What do you think Whitman might think and feel about Turner’s frontier thesis? Do you think Roosevelt would react to this thesis exactly as Whitman would? Why or why not?

# Study the Document: Written Source 3

Instructions: Take notes on these questions. Use your notes to discuss the documents and answer the DBQ.

## 1 Main Idea or Topic

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In your own words, explain why Chief Joseph thinks it was impossible for Indians and non-Indians to find a way to live with each other in peace.

## 2 What Else Can You Infer?

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What is suggested or implied in the document? For example, what does it suggest about the kind of society whites were creating among themselves in the West at this time?

## 3 Compare and Contrast

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Imagine that Chief Joseph has read either Document 1 (Whitman) or Document 2 (Roosevelt). Create a brief dialogue in which Chief Joseph reacts to that document, and its author then replies to Chief Joseph.

## Comparing the Documents

### ★ *The Written Sources*

Answer the question by checking one box below. Then complete the statements on the “Comparison Essay” worksheet. Use all your notes to help you take part in an all-class debate about these documents — and to answer the final DBQ for the lesson.

**Which of these primary source documents would be most useful to a historian trying to understand the differences between myth and reality in the West in the late 1800s?**

*Part of Walt Whitman’s poem “Pioneers! O Pioneers!” celebrating the frontier spirit, and a passage from a book by Theodore Roosevelt on his years as a Dakota rancher in which he celebrates the adventurous spirit of the western frontier*

*Documents 1 & 2*

*A passage from a statement Nez Perce Chief Joseph made after his people were defeated in 1877, in which he describes their long and tragic dealings with whites*

*Document 3*

## Comparison Essay

*I chose Document(s) \_\_\_\_\_ because:*

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*I did not choose Document(s) \_\_\_\_\_.*

*However, a historian still might use the document(s) in the following way:*

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KEEP THIS IN MIND: Some sources are very “biased.” A biased source is one that shows you only one side of an issue. That is, it takes a clear stand or expresses a very strong opinion about something. A biased source may be one-sided, but it can still help you to understand its time period. For example, a biased editorial cartoon may show how people felt about an issue at the time. The usefulness of a source depends most of all on what questions you ask about that time in the past.

## Document-Based Question

Your task is to answer a document-based question (DBQ) on the settling of the West in the late 1800s. In a DBQ, you use your analysis of primary source documents and your knowledge of history to write a brief essay answering the question. Using all four sets of documents, answer this question.

### *Document-Based Question*

**“Our romantic image of the ‘Wild West’ of the late 1800s is not entirely a myth.” Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?**

Below is a checklist of key suggestions for writing a DBQ essay. Next to each item, jot down a few notes to guide you in writing the DBQ. Use extra sheets to write a four- or five-paragraph essay.

○ *Introductory Paragraph*

Does the paragraph clarify the DBQ itself? Does it present a clear thesis, or overall answer, to that DBQ?

○ *The Internal Paragraphs — 1*

Are these paragraphs organized around main points with details supporting those main ideas? Do all these main ideas support the thesis in the introductory paragraph?

○ *The Internal Paragraphs — 2*

Are all of your main ideas and key points linked in a logical way? That is, does each idea follow clearly from those that went before? Does it add something new and helpful in clarifying your thesis?

○ *Use of Primary Source Documents*

Are they simply mentioned in a “laundry list” fashion? Or are they used thoughtfully to support main ideas and the thesis?

○ *Concluding Paragraph*

Does it restate the DBQ and thesis in a way that sums up the main ideas without repeating old information or going into new details?