



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2014 Volume I: Understanding History and Society through Images, 1776-1914

"Whose Destiny? Viewing America's Westward Expansion through Artful Eyes"

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"Whose Destiny? Viewing America's Westward Expansion through Artful Eyes" is a curriculum unit of lesson plans designed for teachers of students in grade 8 or above who want to provide a variety of instructional strategies through which their students can learn about manifest destiny and American westward expansion. By focusing on the art and artists of the nineteenth century who portrayed the west, students will gain significant critical analysis strategies in order to examine and derive historical meaning from these important and still relevant works. From analysis, collaboration, discussion models, and several writing activities, students will be able to thoughtfully determine the various motivations and rationales of this massive movement west and the ultimate displacement of the indigenous Native Americans. Structured around a culminating visit to a local art museum, where students will view the actual paintings studied, this unit includes an exhaustive list of art works for any classroom as well as numerous other resources that will help make this event come to life for students, enabling them to decide for themselves what role manifest destiny, and the art works portrayed during this time, had on Native Americans and the American nation itself.

(Developed for U. S. History 1754-1870, grade 8; recommended for U. S. History, grades 6-12)

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