

Vocabulary.

Tier II Terms	
Morrill Acts	Laws passed in 1862 and 1890 that gave states land to sell, requiring the states to then use the money to build and finance colleges of "agriculture and mechanical arts."
Pacific Railway Act	1862 law passed by Congress to encourage private firms to build a transcontinental railroad.
Promontory Point, Utah	Location where in 1869 the first transcontinental railroad was completed.
soddies	Houses built by homesteaders made from patches of grass and soil.
speculator	A person who either received land free or bought it for cheap in order to sell it later at a high profit in violation of the purpose of Homestead Act.

Text

Railroad Reach Westward	
	<p>Beginning in 1862 Congress passed the <u>Pacific Railway Act</u> to encourage a <i>transcontinental railroad</i>. In all, 170,000,000 acres of land were granted to businesses, including the Central Pacific Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad. These businesses were granted from \$16,000 - \$48,000 loans for each mile of track laid with 5 miles of right-of-way on either side of the railroad. A cash bonus was given to whoever first completed a transcontinental railroad. On May 10, 1869, the first was completed at <u>Promontory Point, Utah</u>.</p> <p>By 1890, many railroads cut across the vast plains and through the mountain ranges of the west. What were once southern states were reconnected with the north by rail and the long drive of the cowboys were no longer necessary as rails made their way into Texas and reached north to the midwestern slaughterhouses.</p> <p>What's more, as the network of railroads grew, migrating west became more tempting. But the first big question for these settlers was how can I afford to buy any land anywhere?</p>

Synthesizing Information: What did you learn about the difficulties of building the cross-country railroads from the video we watched?

Question 1:

YOUR Answer

Your TEAM'S Answer

Homestead Act and New Technologies		
	<p>With new land and territories to settle, in 1862 Congress passed the <i>Homestead Act</i>. According to the Act, every family would receive <i>land grants</i> of 160 acres of free land just to move into unsettled territory. Over 600,000 families took advantage of the offer. Mostly farmers, but also businessmen and merchants, moved west. Among them were thousands were <i>exodusters</i> looking for a way to start anew in a land unfamiliar to racism and discrimination. Cattlemen fenced open lands, miners and woodcutters claimed national resources. In addition, private <u>speculators</u>, railroad agents, and state agents took advantage of the free government land diverting from its intended purpose of getting land to settlers and farmers to making personal profit from their own personal sale.</p> <p>While the land was fertile, farming was difficult because the land was hard. Breaking up the hard soil was not something that could be done by hand in time to plant seed before the rains came. As a result, new technologies were needed. While the <i>steel plow</i> was an old technology, it was needed to dig into the soil for the new method of dry farming. While the surface was dry, the plow was necessary to get the seeds deep into the ground where there was enough moisture for the seeds to grow. The <i>seed drill</i> was designed to plant the seeds in the ground in rows. By evenly spacing the crops, less seed was wasted, and it would be easier to harvest at the end of the summer and into the fall. The <i>mechanical reaper</i> made it easier to harvest the crops by mechanically cutting down and gathering the plants. While barbed wire was a cheap, it was an efficient way to keep grazing livestock and cattle off the farmland. The <i>steel windmill</i> prevented crop dehydration by bringing up underground water for irrigation.</p> <p>All of these helped to increase the amount of food grown. Combined with the railroad, it was easier for farmers to get the tools and supplies they needed shipped from the east and to ship their crops back to the cities and towns in the more developed east.</p>	
Synthesizing Information: From the video, describe the challenges faced by settlers who farmed the Great Plains.		
Question 2:		
YOUR Answer	Your TEAM'S Answer	

Government Support		
	<p>Newly formed states were encouraged to sell land to settlers and businesses thanks to the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890. States were given 30,000 acres per member of Congress to sell and use the money to build schools to train and teach farmers. These schools became (and remain) some of the biggest educational institutions – Florida State University, for example.</p> <p>Most settlers on the plains were “dirt poor” and had to build their houses out of sod. These <i>soddies</i> were warmer in winter and cooler in the summer but made for good living conditions for insects and snakes. Not to mention, they would easily leak when it rained.</p>	
Question 3:		
YOUR Answer		Your TEAM'S Answer
Summarize what you learned about Farmers and Homesteading.		