

Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Free Land Opportunity

**Directions:** Read the passage about the Homestead Act and answer the questions that follow. Use evidence from the text when possible.

### The Homestead Act of 1862

In 1862, the United States government created the Homestead Act to encourage people to settle in the West. The law promised 160 acres of land to any adult who was willing to live on and improve the land for five years. Homesteaders had to build a home, farm the soil, or make other improvements to show they were committed to the land. After completing these requirements, they could officially own the land for little or no cost. The Act attracted thousands of settlers, including immigrants, freed African Americans, and families seeking a fresh start. However, the expansion onto this land forced Native American groups from their homes, leading to conflict and loss of traditional territory.

1. What was the main purpose of the Homestead Act?
2. How much land could settlers receive, and what did they have to do to keep it?
3. Name two groups of people who took advantage of the Homestead Act.
4. What is one challenge or negative outcome mentioned in the passage?
5. Inference: Why do you think the government required settlers to improve the land before owning it?
6. Opinion: Do you think the Homestead Act was fair to everyone involved? Explain your answer using at least one fact from the passage.