

Free Land Opportunity Answer Key

1. To encourage people to settle in the western United States.
2. 160 acres of land; settlers had to live there for five years and improve the land (build a home, farm, etc.).
3. Answers may include: immigrants, freed African Americans, families seeking new opportunities, others moving west.
4. Native Americans were forced from their land, leading to conflict and loss of traditional territory.
5. Answers will vary; expected ideas include: to ensure settlers were serious and would help develop western land.
6. Answers will vary; teacher checks for text-based evidence and a clear explanation.

Teacher's Guide

- Emphasize citing text evidence when responding to questions.
- Discuss the different perspectives of homesteaders vs. Native Americans to build historical empathy.
- Provide vocabulary support for terms like "improve," "territory," and "immigrants."
- Differentiation:
 - Offer sentence stems for developing writers: "I think it was fair/unfair because..."
 - Advanced students can research actual homesteader stories and compare experiences.
- Extension ideas:
 - Create a mock advertisement promoting homesteading, highlighting the opportunities and risks.
 - Connect to geography by examining a map of major homesteading areas in the Great Plains.