

# Wild West [Revision Cascade]

<b>The nature of the Great Plains</b>	Weather	The weather was extremely hot in the summer and freezing in winter. It was very windy all year round.
	Great American Desert	The white Americans nicknamed the Great Plains 'the Great American Desert' because they didn't think anybody could live there.
	Lack of resources	There was a shortage of trees for timber, and there wasn't a great deal of drinkable water.
	Hostile environment	Huge, flat and featureless; inaccessible; Wolves, bears and mountain lions; rattlesnakes and scorpion; locusts; and huge herds of bison.
	Major Stephen Long	One of the earliest Plains visitors, Major Stephen Long, wrote in 1820 that they were 'unfit for cultivation' and therefore 'uninhabitable'.
<b>Sioux life on the Plains</b>	The Sioux	The Sioux Nation were a group of Indigenous nomadic hunter-gatherers. They lived on the Great Plains, following the herds of buffalo around.
	Buffalo	The Sioux used the buffalo for almost everything. They used every part of it and even burned its dung for fuel.
	Tipis	The Sioux lived in tipis made of buffalo skin stretched over wooden poles. They held up well in the strong winds and could be packed up quickly.
	Horses	Horses were so important to the Sioux that they counted their wealth in how many horses they owned.
	Indigenous society	Indigenous society was split into Nation (like your school), Tribe (like your year group) and band (like your tutor group).
<b>Sioux beliefs and ceremonies</b>	Circles	The circle was a sacred symbol. They were surrounded by the circle of the horizon; tipis were circular; they lived the circle of life.
	The Medicine Man	The Medicine Man was a very respected elder in the tribe. He would provide healing and interpret visions.
	Sacred Land	The Indigenous people believed the land was sacred and nobody could own it. High land was particularly sacred because it was closer to the spirit world.
	Dances and ceremonies	The Indigenous people would hold religious ceremonies to ask for the blessing of the spirit world. Sometimes these would last for several days.
	The spirit world	The spirit world was where the spirits of dead Indigenous people lived. Its leader was Wakan Tanka. Indigenous people prayed to the spirit world for luck and success.
<b>Sioux hunting and warfare</b>	Warrior societies	All the men in a band would belong to a Warrior Society. They were in charge of organising the hunt and fighting battles.
	Buffalo hunting	They hunted the buffalo on horseback. Before they had horses, they hunted by driving buffalo off cliffs or dressing as wolves to get close to them.
	Indigenous warfare	Indigenous battles were usually fought very quickly between groups of warriors from different tribes. They fought only in the summer months.
	Counting coup	The bravest deed an Indigenous person could commit in war was to touch an enemy with a coup stick.
	Reasons for warfare	Indigenous tribes fought each other for revenge, to get horses or to gain honour and status within their tribe.
<b>Other tribes on the Plains</b>	The Mandan	The Mandan lived in villages of mud huts on the edge of the Plains and supported themselves by farming and fishing.
	The Cheyenne	Based on the centre of the Plains, they were allies of the Sioux and considered to be more peaceful than other tribes.
	The Cherokee	The Cherokee were once farmers but they were moved West after 1840 and lived on the Plains.
	The Crow	The Crow were considered to be the traditional enemies of the Sioux.
	The Comanche	The Comanche were based in the hot, desert region in the south of the Plains. They were particularly skilled horsemen.

<b>Early travellers across the Plains</b>	Mountain Men	The Mountain Men trapped animals in the Rocky mountains for their fur, which they sold at the annual Rendezvous. They created trails and maps.
	The 49ers	When gold was discovered in California in 1848, huge numbers of settlers crossed the Plains to get to the West, seeking their fortune.
	Farmers	When it became clear that there was good farmland in Oregon and California, people crossed the Plains to start a new life in the West.
	Push factors	Economic hardship and overcrowding in the eastern states pushed people to look for new opportunities on the other side of the Plains.
	Pull factors	There were vast quantities of land available in the West. Stories came back from settlers about how wonderful it was there.
<b>The Journey West</b>	Prairie Schooner	Settlers travelled in covered wagons called Prairie Schooners. They were made of hard wood and canvas. They could even act as boats.
	Weather dangers	Storms, early snows and high winds all created dangerous conditions for people crossing the Plains.
	Other dangers	Travellers also had to contend with Indigenous attacks, disease, stampeding animals, lack of food and water and getting lost.
	Timing the journey	The journey took at least six months. Travellers left gateway towns like Independence, Missouri, in April and hoped to reach the West before winter.
	Wagon trains	Travellers often went in large groups of wagons, led by a mountain man or explorer who had made the journey before.
<b>The Mormons</b>	Joseph Smith	Joseph Smith founded the Mormon religion in New York State. By the end of 1830 he had several hundred followers.
	Persecution	Non-Mormons saw the religion as blasphemous. They persecuted the Mormons, driving them out of towns across the midwest.
	Polygamy	When Joseph Smith announced polygamy was now part of the Mormon religion, a lot of Mormons turned against him, as well as non-Mormons.
	Death of Joseph Smith	In 1845 Smith was arrested and put in prison, but a mob of 200 people attacked the prison and killed him.
	Brigham Young	Young took over as leader of the Mormons and decided enough was enough. He made a plan to move the Mormons West, to the Great Salt Lake.
<b>The Mormon journey</b>	Brigham Young's leadership	Brigham Young was practical and down to earth. The Mormons were united behind him and followed his instructions carefully.
	Great Salt Lake	Young picked the Great Salt Lake because it was on land that nobody wanted. It was controlled by Mexico so they could legally practice polygamy.
	A speedy retreat	The Mormons had to leave before they were properly prepared due to persecution. This meant they had to get ready on the way.
	Winter quarters	The Mormons camped at Winter Quarters, a group of poorly built cabins. Although it helped them survive the winter, many died of sickness.
	Pioneer band	This group of 143 men, 3 women and 2 children went to the Great Salt Lake first, to select a site for the settlement. They arrived in April 1847.
<b>The Mormon experience at Salt Lake</b>	Success	The Mormons made a success of Salt Lake City, building a big city with a careful irrigation system and setting up farms to feed everybody.
	Reasons for success	It worked because everybody did their bit and followed the instructions and leadership of Young. They adapted well to their surroundings.
	Deseret	In 1848 the USA took control of the area. The Mormons wanted to create a state named Deseret. The USA instead created a Territory called Utah.
	The Perpetual Emigrating Fund	The Mormons set up a fund to pay for emigrants from Europe to come to Utah. This was very popular and a lot of people converted and moved there.
	The Mountain Meadow Massacre	The Mormons massacred 140 abusive pioneers. The US government stepped in and insisted a gentile governor be appointed.

<b>Moving to the Plains: push/pull factors</b>	Government Acts	The government passed 3 Acts giving away land: the 1862 Homestead Act, the 1873 Timber Culture Act and the 1877 Desert Land Act.
	The end of the Civil War	When the Civil War ended, thousands of demobilised soldiers and freed slaves drifted onto the Plains looking for a fresh start.
	Manifest destiny	The government and the media promoted the idea that it was the right and responsibility of the American people to occupy the whole continent.
	Poverty in the East	There was not enough land to go round in the East. Crops failed and there was extreme poverty. People were looking for a fresh start.
	Persecution	Religious persecution and poverty in Europe encouraged thousands of emigrants to settle on the Plains.
<b>The impact of the railroad</b>	Jobs	A large number of people moved to the Plains to work on the building of the railroads, including hundreds of men who emigrated from China.
	Cheap land	The railroad builders were granted a strip of land a mile wide for their building. They sold off what they didn't need very cheaply.
	Propaganda	The railroad advertised the benefits of Plains life heavily, to try and encourage more people to use their services.
	Ease of travel	The railroads made it a lot easier and quicker to travel to and from the Plains, and to transport supplies. It was less dangerous than going by wagon.
	New stations	When a railroad built a station, a town usually sprang up around it to provide lodgings and services to travellers.
<b>Homesteader problems</b>	Lack of wood	There was not enough wood on the Plains to build decent houses, nor to fence in crops and protect them.
	Lack of water	There wasn't much drinkable water on the Plains. This made it difficult to water crops and keep clean.
	Failing crops	The crops the homesteaders were used to growing were too fragile to stand up to the harsh winds and burning temperatures on the Plains.
	Tough land	The land had never been ploughed before. It was tough and choked with grass roots which broke the ploughs the homesteaders were used to using.
	Marauding animals	Herds of buffalo and the homesteaders' own livestock trampled and ate what crops survived because they could not be fenced off.
<b>Homesteader solutions</b>	Barbed wire	Barbed wire, invented by Joseph Glidden in 1874, allowed homesteaders to cheaply and effectively fence off their land and protect their crops.
	Sodhouses	The homesteaders built homes out of mud bricks and roofed them with squares of turf. They were warm and hardy, but difficult to keep clean.
	Farm equipment	The sodbuster, invented by John Deere, was a tough plough for Plains land. Other machines like threshers helped to make farming easier.
	Self-governing windmill	The self-governing windmill made use of the strong winds on the Plains to pump water up from deep underground to water crops.
	New crops and methods	Hard winter wheat was brought over from Russia. The homesteaders ploughed their fields after rain to trap moisture: this was called dry farming.
<b>The role of women</b>	Female homesteaders	Female homesteaders did everything from caring for the home to growing fruits and vegetables and even helping with the crop farming.
	Dangers	Prairie fires, floods, snakes, skunks, mosquitoes and malaria, outlaws and indigenous renegades.
	Teachers	A number of single women went to the Plains to act as schoolteachers. They were poorly paid but did a great deal to civilise the West.
	Community builders	The homesteaders were lonely, spread out on their 160 acre plots. Women worked to build community spirit with things like carnivals.
	Civilising influence	Often law and order problems in mining towns improved when men started to bring their wives and families to live with them.

<b>Law and order in mining towns</b>	Problems	Mining towns were full of men living in horrible conditions doing very hard jobs, alongside saloons and brothels. They were pretty lawless.
	Crimes	Common crimes included claim jumping, robbery and fights. It was legal to shoot somebody who was armed as you could claim self-defence.
	Law enforcement	The government struggled with law enforcement because the mining towns were so far from the East and very spread out. Sheriffs were often corrupt.
	Miner courts	Disputes about claims were dealt with by a committee of miners. They handed out punishments like flogging, banishment or hanging.
	Vigilantes	Vigilantes took the law into their own hands, hunting down suspected criminals and lynching them.
<b>Why cattle ranching spread to the Plains</b>	The long drive	Driving cattle from the Texan ranches to market took a long time. Some cattle died on the way and the rest lost a lot of weight on the journey.
	The Civil War	During the Civil War the cattle herds were left untended. By the time the ranchers got back, there were too many for the amount of grazing available.
	The growth of railroads	As the railroads spread across the Plains, cattle ranchers gravitated towards them as a method of transporting their cows to market.
	Demand for beef	Demand for beef increased in the East, and at the same time the government bought large stocks to feed the army and the Indigenous people.
	Conflict with homesteaders	The homesteaders didn't want the cattle crossing their land in case they brought diseases. They fenced off water and blocked the trails.
<b>The experience of the cowboys</b>	Cowboy tasks	Cowboys were in charge of protecting the herds. They would ensure they didn't stray too far, ward off wild animals and tend sick cattle.
	Open range	The open range was not owned by the ranchers and the cattle grazed freely. This meant the herds were mixed together.
	Branding	Once a year, the cattle were rounded up and branded so that they could be identified by each rancher.
	The long drive	In spring, the cattle would be rounded up and driven to market. At the end, the cowboys would receive their wages and go out on the town.
	Cow towns	Joseph McCoy founded Abilene, the first cow town. It was close to the railroad and had pens and feed for cattle waiting to go to market.
<b>Law and order in cow towns</b>	Cattle rustling	Stealing unbranded cattle was fairly common, as was altering brands to claim cattle not belonging to you.
	Fence cutting	Cattlemen cut fences to access water and get along cattle trails. In turn, homesteaders cut fences to avoid being cut off entirely.
	Horse stealing	This was regarded as one of the most serious crimes and horse stealers were often hanged if convicted. This led to conflict with the Indigenous tribes.
	Drunk and disorderly	When cowboys got their wages they would often spend them all in one night on drink, gambling and women. This caused law and order problems.
	Law and order forces	Town-appointed marshals and elected sheriffs tried to keep the peace but when the cowboys were in town this was easier said than done.
<b>The Johnson County War</b>	Wyoming Stock Growers Association	The WSGA, a group of wealthy cattle barons, decided they were going to get even with some local small ranchers and supposed cattle rustlers.
	Early lynching	Homesteaders settled on land the cattle barons thought belonged to them. In 1889 two critics of the cattle barons, Averill and Watson, were lynched.
	Buffalo	The cattle barons drew up a list of 70 supposed rustlers and hired some gunmen. They planned to capture the town of Buffalo.
	Fail	On their way to Buffalo, they were held up at a ranch by Nate Champion. They killed him, but the alarm had been raised and their plan failed.
	Condemnation	In the short term, the cattle barons were widely condemned and lost political support. This was a factor in the end of the open range.

<b>The end of the Open Range</b>	Overgrazing	By 1882, there were too many cattle and not enough grass to feed them.
	Bad weather	A severe drought in 1883 withered the grass. Two very cold winters between 1885 and 1887 killed large numbers of cattle.
	Falling demand for beef	As demand fell, the price fell. Ranchers were waiting for the price to rise, so didn't slaughter their cattle, putting pressure on the grass stocks.
	Cattle rustling	It became almost impossible to prevent cattle rustlers from stealing cows on the open range.
	Bankruptcy	Some cattle ranchers went bankrupt and their land was split up and taken over by homesteaders.
<b>American attitudes to the Indigenous people</b>	Negotiators	This group was mostly politicians and people living in eastern states who'd never encountered Indigenous people. They wanted a peaceful settlement.
	Exterminators	This group included most homesteaders and the army. They wanted the Indigenous people to be wiped off the face of America.
	Early conflict	The discovery of gold on Indigenous land and the development of the railroad brought white Americans into Indigenous territory, causing problems.
	Serious attacks	In the 1860s Indigenous attacks on miners and settlers became more serious. This turned more people against them.
	Final conflict	The Great Sioux War of 1876, fought because settlers started to dig up the Black Hills, was the Sioux's last major attempt to fight back.
<b>Government policy: Indigenous People</b>	Fort Laramie Treaties	Signed in 1851 and 1868, these are examples of US government attempts to make peace with the Sioux. Unfortunately they were both broken by settlers.
	Changing policy	The government was happy for the Indigenous people to live on the Plains when nobody else wanted to, but from the 1860s this changed.
	The Dawes Act	This divided the reservations into individually-owned plots of land, further splitting up the structure of Indigenous society.
	Buffalo extermination	The army gave away ammunition to people who shot the buffalo. They recognised that without them, the Sioux would struggle to survive.
	Total war and winter campaigns	The army attacked ALL Indigenous people, not just the warriors, and they fought the Sioux year-round, when they traditionally only fought in summer.
<b>The Battle of the Little Bighorn</b>	Defying the law	In June 1876 a group of Indigenous people, led by Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, refused to return to their reservation. The army were sent to make them.
	General Custer	Custer led the 7th Cavalry, a small group of soldiers who intended to attack the Indigenous warriors from the south.
	Disobeying orders	While Custer attacked in the south, a larger group would attack from the north. Unfortunately Custer disobeyed orders and attacked too early.
	Short-term win	Custer was outnumbered and the Sioux adapted their tactics so that all of the men were killed. Many were scalped.
	Long-term loss/ change of government policy	News reached the east on 4 July. There was a national outcry, public opinion turned against the Indigenous Nations, government policy changed and more troops were sent in. The Sioux returned to their reservation or fled to Canada.
<b>Changes in Plains Indigenous life by 1890s</b>	Reservations	These were usually poor quality pieces of land. The Indigenous people were expected to farm instead of hunt. All Indigenous people lived on reservations by 1885.
	Indian agents	Government-appointed Indian Agents controlled the reservations. They were in charge of distributing food and supplies.
	Handouts	The Indigenous people were not good farmers, but did not want to live on handouts. It broke their spirit and was a reason why they eventually stopped fighting.
	Indigenous children in white schools	Indigenous children were often sent to white-run schools to Americanise them. They lost touch with their culture which destroyed the next generation.
	Loss of status	The Indigenous people weren't allowed horses or weapons which meant a loss of status among them, and that they could no longer fight back.