

SUITS CARD SORT

Why Settlers went West

This revision activity works best if you do it with a friend, and talk about it as you do it.

The cards on the page following represent 24 reasons why various people 'went west' in 19th-century America.

Print off and cut out the cards. Then, in discussion with others, sort them into four piles:

- ♣ — clubs (those that worked by force, fear and violence)
- ♥ — hearts (those that worked through love, adventure and hope)
- ♠ — spades (those that worked by providing people with jobs and activities)
- ♦ — diamonds (those that worked by giving people benefits and making them prosperous)

When you have finished, sort the cards again, this time into those that affected:

highly effective — some positive effect — no real benefit — counterproductive

There are no right or wrong answers; you need to discuss and argue your way to a consensus. Key in your discussion will be:

- *how* it worked to encourage people to go west
- *how well* it worked in encouraging them to go west

When you have finished, discuss these three key questions:

- 1 How do you measure the 'effectiveness' of a reason?
- 2 Which in your opinion was the most effective reason for people going west?
- 3 Based on your study, are you able to make any general statement about why people 'went west' in 19th-century America?

A Perpetual Emigrating Fund was set up to encourage more Mormons to come to Utah.	At Salt Lake City, each Mormon was given the land they needed, and skilled workers were carefully identified and given jobs relevant to their skills.
Desire for a new start; many former soldiers and slaves wanted to make a new life somewhere else.	Economic depression in the east in the 1830s.
Far western states such as California and Oregon were full – no cheap land.	From the 1850s miners were backed by businessmen from the eastern states, and they started to live in more permanent settlements.

Gold was discovered in California in 1848.	Land in the east was overcrowded and expensive.
Law and order were provided by local sheriffs and vigilante groups.	Manifest destiny – all Americans believed they had the right to all of North America.
More people made money from supplying goods to mining camps than from the mining itself.	Poverty and unemployment in the east.
Racial persecution.	Railroad companies were given land on the line to build towns and attract settlers.
Railroads – offered settlers free land near to the railroad.	Religious persecution.
Reports came back from people who had travelled to the west, saying how wonderful life was.	The Homesteaders Act of 1862 offered settlers 60 acres of free land.
The Mormons believed that God wanted them to settle at Salt Lake Valley.	The Mormons hated living amongst godless ‘gentiles’ in the east.
The Mormons were very unpopular and they were persecuted and attacked.	The railroad provided homesteaders with a way to transport supplies and machinery.
The US government wanted US citizens to settle all over North America to stop other countries such as Britain from taking over.	Wagon trains offered some protection on the long and dangerous journey.