

Unit: Western Expansion  
**Lesson #8 Additional**  
**Western Conflicts**

Essential Questions:

- What was the purpose of the Mexican-American War?  
(*second half on the next lesson...*)

**Sourcing--**

Have a student on the overhead display the following:

- Circle **who** wrote the ordinance...
- Underline twice **when** the document was written
- Put a box around the area that gives a general purpose for **why** the document was written

**Contextualization—**

Read the background selection entitled, In the Time of Manifest Destiny and discuss the different controversies that called O'Sullivan to write this editorial (other than the war itself)

Discuss the Manifest Destiny Painting and all of the characters in it...

**Comprehension—**

After reading the document, student should fill in the cartoon bubbles to give meaning to *WHY* the United States fought the war and what they were to gain by taking over the Mexican Cession land.

**Corroboration—**

Walt Whitman on the Mexican War,  
The Brooklyn Eagle, May/June  
1846

Mexico's Perspective on the Issues--  
by Albert Ramsey/ 1850

American Progress  
By John Gast 1872

James K. Polk  
Message on War with Mexico  
May 11, 1846

Excerpts from:  
**Manifest Destiny,**  
**John O'Sullivan (1846)**

... Texas is now ours. Already, before these words are written, her Convention has undoubtedly ratified (*endorsed*) the acceptance, by her Congress, of our proffered (*extended*) invitation into the Union... It is time then that all should cease (*stop*) to treat her as alien. . .

California will, probably, next fall away from the loose adhesion (*union*) which, in such a country as Mexico, holds a remote province in a slight equivocal (*shifty*) kind of dependence on the metropolis (*land*). Imbecile (*Unintelligent*) and distracted, Mexico never can exert any real government authority over such a country...

... Besides, the Anglo-Saxon (*European*) foot is already on [California's] borders. Already the advance guard of the irresistible army of Anglo-Saxon emigration (*European immigrants*) has begun to pour down upon it, armed with the plough and the rifle, and marking its trail with schools and colleges, courts and representative halls, mills and meeting-houses. A population will soon be in actual occupation of California, over which it will be idle for Mexico to dream of dominion (*authority*)...

... They will necessarily become independent. All this without the agency of our government, without responsibility of our people—in the natural flow of events . . . . And they will have a right to independence—to self-government—to the possession of the homes conquered from the wilderness by their own labors and dangers, sufferings and sacrifices. . . . Whether they will then attach themselves to our Union or not, is not to be predicted with certainty.

... Unless the projected rail-road across the continent to the Pacific be carried into effect, perhaps they may not; though even in that case, the day is not distant when the empire of the Atlantic and the Pacific would again flow together . . .

John O'Sullivan Coins the Phrase "Manifest Destiny"  
1845 Excerpted from "Annexation," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review 17 (July 1845): 5–10.

## In the Time of Manifest Destiny

*John L. O' Sullivan (1813-1895), founder and editor of the United States Magazine and Democratic Review and avid Democrat casually coined the phrase "manifest destiny" in this 1845 editorial in which he commended the addition of Texas to the United States and hopefully looked further west to California as a site for future expansion. Texas had won independence from Mexico in 1836, but President Andrew Jackson opposed admitting Texas to the Union for fear of provoking political conflict over the slavery issue. By 1844, however, James Polk won the presidency in part because of his pro-annexation position. Polk's aggressive expansionism soon provoked war with Mexico. O' Sullivan also continued to advocate American expansion by supporting the filibuster movement that sought to conquer Cuba, among other Latin American lands. Not included in the editorial is a fairly neutral discussion of the problem of slavery, in which O' Sullivan suggested that manumitted slaves might be sent to Central and South America, by way of Texas, thus allowing the U.S. to "slough . . . off" the African race. Although O' Sullivan denied that the Texas issue had anything to do with the expansion of slavery, the westward expansion of slavery fueled the sectional tensions that led to Civil War. -D. Voelker*

American Progress  
By John Gast 1872



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Discussion Questions:

- 1) In this particular section of the editorial, where does O’Sullivan suggest that the United States expand next? Why?
- 2) How does the author feel about the Mexican government (or those who live on the lands)? *Give examples from the text.*
- 3) How does the author portray the Americans that intend on taking over the land?
- 4) How does this idea/picture that the author is painting with the Mexicans (and their land) connect with what happened to the Native Americans?

Who benefited from Manifest Destiny?  
Who Suffered?

Directions: Use the bubbles to explain the perspective of people who would have believed in the concept of *Manifest Destiny*, and those who were affected by it.

