6.2 The American West, c1835-c1895: Migration and Early Settlement: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write in full sentences for Questions 1, 2 and 3. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 Explain two consequences of the Donner Party's disaster in the Sierra Nevada during the winter of 1846-47.

(Total for Question 1 is 8 marks)

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2 Write a narrative account analysing how the experience of migrants travelling west changed between the start of large-scale trail migration on the Oregon Trail (early 1840s) and the Mormon migration to Salt Lake (1846-47).

You may use the following information in your answer:
- the early years of Oregon Trail migration in the 1840s
- the planning and leadership of the Mormon migration under Brigham Young

You should also use information of your own.

(Total for Question 2 is 8 marks)

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3 Explain two of the following:

(a) the importance of Brigham Young's leadership for the success of the Mormon migration

(b) the importance of the Donner Party's fate for later migrants travelling west

(c) the importance of the Oregon Trail for early migration to the West

You must answer on TWO parts.

(Total for Question 3 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 6.2 The American West, c1835-c1895: Migration and Early Settlement: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 1 Identifies one or two general consequences of the Donner Party's disaster, with little or no supporting detail or explanation. **1-2**

Level 2 Identifies and begins to explain one consequence, supported by accurate detail. **3-4**

Level 3 Explains two consequences of the Donner Party's disaster, each supported by accurate and relevant detail. **5-6**

Level 4 Explains two consequences in a well-developed, logically structured way, supported throughout by precise and accurate detail, showing how the consequences connect. **7-8**

Indicative content:

- News of the Donner Party's fate spread widely once survivors were rescued in early 1847, and became a widely told cautionary tale about the dangers of unproven shortcuts and starting the trail too late in the season.
- Later migrant guidebooks and organisers placed much greater emphasis on sticking to well-tested routes and keeping to a strict travel schedule, so as to clear mountain passes such as those in the Sierra Nevada well before the first winter snowfall.
- The disaster reinforced the value of experienced, well-informed leadership on the trail, encouraging later migrant parties, including Mormon groups, to plan more carefully and to rely on scouts and accurate information rather than unproven advice.
- The tragedy became, and has remained, one of the best-known individual episodes of the westward migration, shaping how later generations remembered the human cost and risk involved in travelling the overland trails.

Question 2

Level 1 Simple, generalised statements, with little organisation or sense of change over time. **1-2**

Level 2 Some accurate knowledge is deployed, with limited organisation into a sequence; the account may be more a list of events than a developed narrative. **3-4**

Level 3 The account is organised and mostly coherent, and shows some analysis of how the situation changed, with accurate supporting detail. **5-6**

Level 4 The answer demonstrates a coherent, well-organised narrative that analyses connections between events across the period, showing clearly how the situation changed, fully supported by precise and accurate detail. **7-8**

Indicative content:

- From the early 1840s, migrant families began travelling the roughly 2,000-mile Oregon Trail in covered wagons, often with limited experience of the route and relying on incomplete or sometimes unreliable advice about shortcuts and conditions.
- Difficulties such as disease (especially cholera), river crossings, harsh weather and wagon breakdowns were common on the early trail, and the risks of poor planning were shown starkly by the Donner Party's disaster in the winter of 1846-47, after the party took an unproven shortcut and was trapped by early snow.
- In 1846, facing persecution in Illinois after the murder of Joseph Smith in 1844, the Mormons under Brigham Young began their own westward migration, but organised it far more carefully than many earlier parties, sending scouts ahead and planning staged winter camps along the way.
- By the time the Mormon advance party reached the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847, migration west had become better understood: routes, hazards and timings were more widely known, and organised, well-led groups such as the Mormons were able to plan around lessons learned from earlier, harder journeys.
- Overall, the narrative moves from early, sometimes poorly informed migration in the first half of the 1840s, through the stark warning of the Donner Party's fate in 1846-47, to the more disciplined and successful Mormon migration that founded a lasting settlement at Salt Lake in 1847.

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Question 3

Level 1 For each part answered: identifies a general point of importance, with little or no supporting detail or explanation.	**1-4**
Level 2 For each part answered: begins to explain importance, supported by some accurate detail.	**5-8**
Level 3 For each part answered: explains importance clearly, supported by accurate and relevant detail, with some analysis of consequences.	**9-12**
Level 4 For each part answered: explains importance in a well-developed, analytical way, fully supported by precise and accurate detail, showing clearly why the event or development mattered for the outcome named.	**13-16**

Indicative content:

- (a) Brigham Young's leadership was important because his careful planning, use of scouts and staged organisation of the journey helped the Mormon migration avoid the kind of disaster that struck poorly planned parties, allowing thousands of migrants to reach and successfully settle the Salt Lake Valley from 1847.
- (b) The Donner Party's fate was important because it became a widely known warning about the dangers of unproven shortcuts and late starts, encouraging later migrants and guidebook writers to plan routes and timings more carefully to avoid being trapped by winter snow in mountain ranges such as the Sierra Nevada.
- (c) The Oregon Trail was important because it was the main route by which large numbers of migrants travelled west from the early 1840s, carrying reports of available farmland that encouraged further migration and beginning the large-scale movement of settlers that would reshape the West over the following decades.
- A strong answer on any two parts explains a clear causal link between the person, event or route named and its stated importance, using precise dates and detail rather than general description.

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