6.4 The American West, c1835-c1895: Development of Settlement, Ranching and the Cattle Industry: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 1HI0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. You are advised to spend about 30 minutes on this pack.

1 State one way in which the growth of ranching and barbed-wire fencing led to the decline of the open range in the later 1870s and 1880s.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Write a narrative account analysing how settlement of the Plains developed between the passing of the Homestead Act (1862) and the completion of the transcontinental railroad (1869).

You may use the following information in your answer:
- the terms of the Homestead Act and who it attracted to the Plains
- the difficulties settlers faced adapting to the Plains environment in these years

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 the Homestead Act (1862) for the settlement of the Plains

(b) the importance of barbed wire for farming and ranching on the Plains

(c) the importance of the Chisholm Trail for the growth of the cattle industry

You must answer on TWO parts.

(Total for Question 3 is 16 marks)

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Mark scheme · 6.4 The American West, c1835-c1895: Development of Settlement, Ranching and the Cattle Industry: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a factor, e.g. increasing numbers of ranchers and farmers fenced land with barbed wire **B1**

supporting detail, e.g. this reduced the amount of unfenced grazing land available and increasingly separated ranches from one another, ending the earlier system of unrestricted, shared open-range grazing **B1**

Answer: Growing use of barbed wire to fence land reduced the unfenced grazing available, ending the earlier open-range system.

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:

- The Homestead Act of 1862 offered 160 acres of public land for a small fee on condition of five years' residence and improvement, attracting many families who could not otherwise have afforded to own farmland.
- In the years immediately after 1862, settlers arriving on the Plains faced serious practical difficulties: a shortage of timber for building and fencing, tough prairie turf that was hard to plough, and unreliable rainfall, so early settlement was often slow and hard.
- Through the mid-to-late 1860s, some technological solutions began to appear, such as sod houses built from turf blocks where timber was scarce, though widely available solutions such as effective barbed wire were not yet in use.
- By 1869 the completion of the transcontinental railroad transformed the pace of settlement, since it made the journey west and the transport of goods far quicker and cheaper, encouraging a much larger wave of settlers than the earlier Homestead Act alone had produced.
- Overall, the narrative moves from the Homestead Act creating the legal opportunity for settlement in 1862, through several years in which the harsh Plains environment limited how quickly that opportunity could be taken up, to the railroad's completion in 1869 removing a major practical barrier and accelerating settlement significantly.

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) The Homestead Act was important because it gave ordinary families a realistic, affordable route to owning Plains farmland, directly driving the wave of settlement that followed 1862 and shaping the pattern of small, family-run farms across much of the Plains.
- (b) Barbed wire was important because it solved the region's timber shortage for fencing, letting farmers protect crops and ranchers mark out grazing land cheaply, and its spread from 1874 was a key factor in ending the earlier open-range system by enclosing land that had previously been shared.
- (c) The Chisholm Trail was important because it was the main route by which millions of Texas longhorn cattle were driven north to railheads such as Abilene in the years after the Civil War, making large-scale commercial cattle ranching profitable and shaping the growth of Kansas cattle towns.
- A strong answer on any two parts explains a clear causal chain from the Act, technology or trail named to its stated importance, using precise dates and detail rather than general description.

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