

From Sea to Shining Sea | Lesson Plan

How did America grow from coast to coast?

Students will embark on a journey through time to explore the expansion of the United States, learning about influential figures, pivotal events, and groundbreaking innovations that shaped the nation.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify key individuals involved in the expansion and exploration of the United States.
- Describe the significance of the Louisiana Purchase and its impact on the growth of the nation.
- Interpret the meaning of the phrase “from sea to shining sea.”
- Summarize the early history of the United States from the era of George Washington to the Lewis and Clark Expedition.
- Understand and apply key vocabulary terms associated with the period of American expansion.

Key Vocabulary:

- **Nation:** A large group of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language inhabiting a particular country or territory.
- **Native American:** A member of any of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, the land's original inhabitants before European colonization. Native Americans have diverse cultures, languages, and traditions and are known for their deep respect for nature and ancestral lands. They have played a significant role in the history and culture of the United States.
- **Territory:** New land explored and settled by American pioneers.
- **Pioneer:** An early settler to the American Western frontier.
- **Liberty:** The state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behavior, or political views; often associated with the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed to individuals.

Educational Standards: CCRA.R.1, CCRA.R.7, CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.7, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.L.4, CCRA.SL.4, CCRA.L.1, CCRA.L.6

Academic Topics: Life Lessons, American Values, America

What You'll Need

- Video: *Otto's Tales: From Sea to Shining Sea* (Watch [Here](#))
- Book (Optional): *From Sea to Shining Sea* (Purchase [Here](#))
- Worksheet: *From Sea to Shining Sea* (Click [Here](#))
- Prepped in Advance: Brown butcher paper, Index cards, Markers, Tape

Scan to watch episode:



Lesson Plan (45 mins.)

Warm-Up: (5 mins.)

1. Engage students in a conversation about the phrase “from sea to shining sea” and gauge their prior knowledge.
2. Display a contemporary map of the United States, assisting students to locate their state and identify the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.
3. Contrast this with a map of the original 13 colonies, prompting observations.
4. Set the stage for the video, outlining its context on the growth of the United States.

Watch and Discuss: (15 mins.)

1. Show the video *Otto's Tales: From Sea to Shining Sea* to the class.
2. Instruct students to note key individuals during the video and select one who captures their interest.
3. Play the video, pausing as needed for clarity and engagement.
4. Facilitate a discussion post-viewing, addressing questions and highlighting student interest in historical figures.

Wrap-Up: (25 mins.)

Creating an Interactive Timeline (20 minutes):

1. Write the following bolded names and events on separate index cards for students.
 - **George Washington:** The first President of the United States from 1789-1797, commander-in-chief of the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War, and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States.
 - **Washington D.C.:** The capital city of the United States, established July 16, 1790, located between Maryland and Virginia, known for being the seat of the U.S. federal government and for its significant landmarks and monuments.
 - **Constitution:** The supreme law of the United States, ratified on June 21, 1788, outlining the national framework of government, foundational principles, and the rights of citizens.
 - **John Adams:** The second President of the United States (1797–1801) and a Founding Father, notable for being the first president to reside in the White House.
 - Louisiana Purchase: Vast territory sold to the United States by France (1803).
 - **Thomas Jefferson:** The third President of the United States (1801-1809), principal author of the Declaration of Independence, and architect of the Louisiana Purchase, significantly expanding U.S. territory.
 - **Lewis and Clark:** Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were American explorers commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson to lead the Corps of Discovery Expedition (1804–1806) to explore the newly acquired western portion of the country after the Louisiana Purchase.
 - **Sacagawea:** Shoshone guide and interpreter who accompanied Lewis and Clark in 1804 on their expedition.

- **Robert Fulton:** An American inventor and engineer best known for developing the first successful commercial steamboat (1807), significantly advancing transportation and trade in the early 19th century.
 - **Westward Expansion:** The movement of settlers from the eastern region of the United States to areas beyond the Mississippi River and eventually to the Pacific Coast from roughly 1803-1890.
2. Roll out the brown butcher paper along a wall or on a long table, marking it with the timeline's span (e.g., 1700s to 1900s).
 3. Divide students into groups, assigning each a specific event or figure from the corresponding index cards. Assign more than one event or figure if possible.
 4. Instruct each group to discuss the individual or event and the date on an index card. They can also draw or attach images representing their subject.
 5. Have each group place their index cards on the timeline at the appropriate points using tape or glue and tell the class a little about that event or figure, explaining its significance to the class.
 6. Evaluate students' ability to identify key historical figures and describe their significance.
 7. Assess comprehension of the term "from sea to shining sea" and its historical context.
 8. Review students' engagement and findings during the classroom timeline activity.

Don't have time for the full lesson? Quick Activity (15 mins.)

For a condensed version of the lesson, focus on the maps and video, facilitating a class discussion to synthesize the content covered.