

Guided Reading Activity

War and the West, 1844–1890

Lesson 4 *Farming the Plains*

Review Questions: Identifying Supporting Details

Directions: Read each main idea. Use your textbook to supply the details that support or explain each main idea.

A. Main Idea: During the late 1800s, construction of the railroads encouraged settlement of the Great Plains.

1. **Detail:** The Great Plains were once called The Great American Desert because of the scarcity of

_____ and _____.

2. **Detail:** The population of the Great Plains grew steadily after _____.

3. **Detail:** One important factor that spurred population was the construction of the _____.

4. **Detail:** In the year _____, settlement increased because of the passage of

_____.

5. **Detail:** The law entitled settlers to _____ acres and title to the land after living there

_____ years.

B. Main Idea: New farming techniques and new inventions helped to make the Great Plains the Wheat Belt of the United States.

1. **Detail:** One new farming method of planting seeds deep in the ground was called _____;

farmers planted seeds deep in the soil where there was enough _____ for growth.

2. **Detail:** Two inventions that made harvesting large wheat crops easier were the _____ and

_____.

3. **Detail:** The Wheat Belt included parts of the Dakotas and the states of _____ and

_____.

4. **Detail:** In the 1880s a severe _____ destroyed much of the wheat crop and turned the soil to

_____.

5. **Detail:** However, by the 1890s wheat prices dropped because of _____.

6. **Detail:** In 1889, an event called the _____ opened one of the last large territories for

settlement.

Guided Reading Activity *cont.*

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Summary and Reflection

Directions: Summarize the main ideas of this lesson by answering the question below.

What were the factors that contributed to the development of the Great Plains as a major agricultural region?
