**Turner’s Thesis**

FOCUS QUESTION: According to Frederick Jackson Turner, how was the United States changed and transformed by westward expansion?

Directions: Analyze the following quotes from “*The Significance of the Frontier in American History,”* to explain the main points of the Turner Thesis. Explain what you think Jackson meant by each quote and how each selection might help you to answer the lesson focus question.

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| **QUOTE** | **ANALYSIS**  *How was the U.S. changed or transformed by westward expansion?* |
| 1. “The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development. |  |
| 1. “American development has exhibited not merely advance along a single line, but a return to primitive conditions on a continually advancing frontier line, and a new development for that area.” |
| 1. “In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish…Little by little he transform the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe…The fact is, that here is a new product that is American.” |  |
| 1. “The frontier promoted the formation of a composite nationality for the American people…In the crucible of the frontier the immigrants were Americanized, liberated, and fused into a mixed race.” |
| 1. “The legislation which most developed the powers of the National Government, and played the largest part in its activity, was conditioned on the frontier…” |  |

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| **QUOTE** | **ANALYSIS** |
| 1. “It was democratic and nonsectional, if not national; easy, tolerant and contented; rooted strongly in material prosperity. It was typical of the modern United States.” |  |
| 1. “But the most important effect of the frontier has been in the promotion of democracy here and in Europe. As has been indicated, the frontier is productive of individualism.” |  |
| 1. “So long as free land exists, the opportunity for a competency exists, and economic power secures political power.” |
| 1. “America has been another name for opportunity, and the people of the United States have taken their tone from the incessant expansion which has not only been open but has even been forced upon them…American energy will continually demand a wider field for its exercise.” |  |
| 1. “And now, four centuries from the discovery of America, at the end of a hundred years of life under the Constitution, the frontier has gone, and with its going has closed the first period of American history.” |