Name Class Period Date

Sodbusters & Exodusters!

**Directions:** As you go through each station, carefully examine the documents or photos and answer the questions associated with them.

**Step 1:** Look at the projected image of the prairie on the overhead. What do you see? What resources are available there? Or perhaps more importantly…. what is missing?

**Step 2:** Read “Building a Sod House” and answer the questions below.

1. What were the requirements to keep land claimed under the Homestead Act?
2. What were the hardships of prairie life? What percentage of people didn’t make it?
3. What would you look for when choosing a claim?
4. What is “Nebraska Marble”? What were the difficulties of using it to build?
5. Describe a soddie. (i.e. What did the house look like? What were the most difficult parts of building? What were the like to live in? How did farmers make it feel like home?)

**Step 3:** *Ho, Kansas!*Land Advertisements

*Look at the different advertisements for land out west. What do they all have in common? What kind of land are they offering? Who is offering that land? To whom is the land being offered? (Support your answers by citing the number on the image.)*

**Step 4:** *“There are no renters here”* Read the letter written by Mattie Oblinger to her family and answer the questions

1. What are some of the chores or tasks Mattie describes in her letter that keep her busy?
2. Why does Mattie say in the second paragraph that “the thoughts of moveing next spring does not bother me”?
3. How does Mattie describe sod houses? How does she feel about them?
4. How does Mattie describe the prairie? What is Mattie’s biggest complaint? What does she see there?
5. Why is Mattie’s neighbor, Mr. McClain in danger of losing his claim?

**Step 5:***“A Settler’s Guide to the Illinois Wilderness”*

1. According to this guide, what does a settler need out west?
2. Why are buildings more expensive than they are in New England?
3. How much is the total cost for running a farm? How many crops of wheat will you need to make cost?
4. If a young man goes out west with no money, how long will it take him to become an independent farmer?

**Step 6:** Family Portraits

*Look at each of the pictures of the families in front of their soddy. What details do you notice? What do the images have in common? What is different? (Support your answers by citing the number on the image.)*

**Step 7:** Farm Life Portraits

*Look at each of these photos. What items do the families have? What do they choose to display? What do these images tell you about farm life on the prairie? What details stand out to you? Compare them to the readings you have already done. (Support your answers by citing the number on the image.)*