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### Lesson Plan #6

Class: United States History I average level (Grade 9)

Unit: The West

Overview: This lesson is designed to last a class period that is approximately 72 minutes in length. The lesson will challenge students to reexamine the popular mythology that permeates popular perceptions of the American West.

Objectives: Students will be able to write a thoughtful reflection based upon their understanding of what the American West is all about, create collages that visually show their view of the American West, critically analyze their work and apply information from a reading and class discussions to inform that analysis, distinguish between the mythical image of the American West versus the reality, and think about and discuss the reasons behind the popular mythology of the American West and what those reasons demonstrate about America.

Materials: Magazines (brought in by the teacher and students), Computers, excerpt from Anne Butler's essay (attached) found in the Milner book used in our class.

Assessment: Students will pass in collages and summaries that will be assessed as a class-work grade (see the first lesson plan for further explanation of the grading criteria) and the student reflection will be assessed at the end of the term when reflection books are collected (for further information see my second lesson plan).

Massachusetts Frameworks: USI.26 Describe the causes, course, and consequences of America's westward expansion and its growing diplomatic assertiveness. (Note: due to the limited treatment of western history in the frameworks, this lesson does not neatly fit into any framework category. This topic is relevant and was an area of concentration in our class.)

5 minutes – (Note: the class will meet in a computer lab for the first half of the period)  
Students will write a reflection based upon the following prompt: how would you describe what the American West is all about to someone from another country?

35 minutes – The teacher will instruct students to construct collages that represent what the west means to them. Students will utilize images and words from magazines and the internet to make their collages.

15 minutes – The students will read an excerpt (attached) from Bulter's essay entitled "Selling the Popular Myth". Students will then be asked evaluate which of the images in their collages represent the real west compared with those that represent the mythical west. Students will be encouraged to then spend time with a partner comparing their work and examining the differences between myth and reality in their collages. Student will be

asked to write a brief summary of their findings which they will turn in at the end of class along with their collages.

17 minutes – The teacher lead a class discussion in which students will be asked to share their findings. The teacher will point out and elaborate on images that represent the mythical west found in the collages. The teacher will then ask students to consider why certain myths persist.