

Read the article "East Meets West" before answering Numbers 16 through 28.

East Meets West

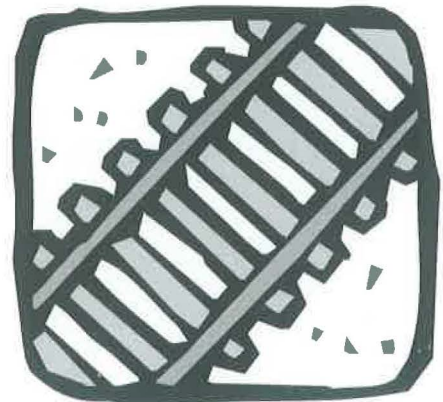
Before the United States was even a hundred years old, it faced problems that threatened to tear it to pieces. In the 1860s, the country endured the Civil War, which nearly ripped the northern and southern states apart. During that time, there was also a great divide between the eastern and western territories. America's East and West were separated—not by war but by distance and lack of transportation. As the Civil War was ending, a great innovation was chosen to pull the country back together: a railroad line that would reach from one end of the nation to the other.

In the 1800s, trains were a powerful and important means of transportation. People viewed these "iron horses" as awesome technology, much as we might view spaceships or jet planes today. Trains could move large amounts of people and cargo over land much more easily and effectively than horses or oxen could. Just as importantly, trains became a symbol to war-weary Americans. If railroad tracks could be built across the nation, they would unite the states and make America powerful again.

Today, in the age of spaceships and jets, this might seem an easy task. However, at the time, building a rail system was an extremely challenging feat. In the East, railroad tracks only reached as far as Nebraska. Meanwhile, in the West, railroads only ran north and south, making no attempt to connect with the East. There was a gap of about seventeen hundred miles between the eastern and western rail lines that kept the two halves of the nation apart.

Most people relied on wagon trains or long sea voyages to travel between the East and West. However, more and more people wanted to find another, more convenient way. A railroad would offer them a perfect opportunity. Investors and shopkeepers supported this idea because a railroad would help to encourage new towns full of potential buyers and sellers. Many investors and fortune hunters in the East were also excited to travel westward in search of gold.

Other Americans simply loved the idea of a new way to explore the country and learn about different places and ideas. In the 1800s, people did not have a complete picture



of America because much of it was barely explored. In the cities of the East, people could only look at artists' paintings of the beauty of the West and guess at what it might look like in person. They wanted to see for themselves the buffalo roaming the prairies and the mountain goats climbing the Sierra Nevada.

Many people wanted a railroad to be built, but nobody was sure who should build it. At first, the government and the army were set to carry the project through, but they both were hesitant. While they bickered among themselves, two private railroad companies took control of the project. These companies were the Union Pacific in the East and the Central Pacific in the West, and they became two of America's most famous competitors. In 1866, Congress sanctioned these companies to begin laying track and work their way toward the middle of the country, where they would meet.

The Union Pacific, the eastern company, started the race first. They sent teams of scouts and engineers westward to sketch out the line that the railroad tracks would follow. Next, vast construction gangs were sent out to begin grading, or leveling, the land, often as much as a hundred miles at a time. After that came an army of track-laying crews, each made of ten thousand workers and as many animals. These crews had the enormous task of actually installing the railroad tracks, which required hundreds of tons of steel bars and timber ties. The Union Pacific teams were huge, and they were able to work quickly and cover a lot of space. This was because most of the land in the East was flat and because it was easy to get supplies from nearby cities.

The Central Pacific, working in the West, had neither of these benefits. Their terrain was much harsher, largely consisting of forests and mountains. Every mile presented new challenges, and the company spent years tunneling and bridging its way across the hilly land. Additionally, the Central Pacific had a difficult time getting supplies. They had enough timber locally, but all the steel rails and other materials (including the trains themselves) had to be shipped in by sea.

Both the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific workforces were largely made up of immigrants to America. The Union Pacific's team was filled with Irish immigrants, and the Central Pacific mostly hired Asians. These workers suffered greatly during the construction of the railroads, often fainting from the heat of prairie summers or freezing in the cold western mountains.

Company officials demanded more and more of their workers, though, for the sake of profit. The companies were making many thousands of dollars per mile of rail, and with all the miles between the East and West, the moneymaking potential was almost endless. Even when the construction teams had almost met, they were instructed to lay tracks parallel to one another in order to cover more precious miles.

Finally, on May 10, 1869, the workers of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific met in Utah at a place they called Promontory Point. After laying

1,775 miles of track over the course of more than three years of hard labor, they could connect the tracks at last. Company officials and politicians from many states raced to Promontory Point to hold ceremonies and celebrations. Parades with bands from across the nation ushered in the new age for America, and five states donated gold or silver railroad spikes to be hammered into the rails to finish the project. The governor of California, Leland Stanford, pounded in the final gold spike, and the news spread across America that the East and West had finally been united.

Answer Numbers 16 through 28. Base your answers on the article "East Meets West."

- 16 Which subhead would be most appropriate for the last paragraph of the article on the railroads?
- F. The Grand Finale
 - G. California's Railways
 - H. Policies of Leland Stanford
 - I. Division of the Nation
- 17 Which organizational pattern does the author use in this article?
- A. He poses questions about the ways railroad companies operate.
 - B. He lists the greatest accomplishments in the history of railroad companies.
 - C. He explains why a great railroad line was needed and how it was built.
 - D. He describes the similarities and differences between railroads in the West and East.
- 18 Which sentence from the article provides the best evidence that the construction the railroad would be challenging?
- F. "There was a gap of about seventeen hundred miles between the eastern and western rail lines that kept the two halves of the nation apart."
 - G. "The Union Pacific teams were huge, and they were able to work quickly and cover a lot of space."
 - H. "At first, the government and the army were set to carry the project through, but they both were hesitant."
 - I. "However, more and more people wanted to find another, more convenient way."

- 19 With which statement would the author of this article most likely agree?
- A. It is unrealistic to think that people would want to visit many places in a nation.
 - B. Railroads were not a very reliable means of transportation.
 - C. Americans wanted to explore other countries instead of their own.
 - D. Many of the projects that greatly benefited Americans were long and difficult.

- 20 Read this sentence from the passage.

In 1866, Congress sanctioned these companies to begin laying track and work their way toward the middle of the country, where they would meet.

What does *sanctioned* mean as it is used here?

- F. punished
 - G. permitted
 - H. denied rights to
 - I. examined the ability of
- 21 How were the workforces of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific similar?
- A. Both workforces had to deal with steep mountains.
 - B. Both workforces were subjected to freezing temperatures.
 - C. Both workforces were largely composed of immigrants.
 - D. Both workforces needed to have their supplies sent by sea.
- 22 According to the evidence in the article about railroads, which of these reasons contributed most to the slowness of the Central Pacific's progress?
- F. The government did not support the Central Pacific's work.
 - G. The Central Pacific did not have enough timber to make rail ties.
 - H. Less money was being offered to Central Pacific owners.
 - I. Much of the Central Pacific's route was full of forests and mountains.
- 23 The author wrote this article mainly to
- A. describe what life was like for an immigrant worker in the 1860s.
 - B. convince readers that the Civil War damaged America's sense of unity.
 - C. inform readers about the history of one of America's great construction projects.
 - D. explain why Promontory Point was chosen as the meeting point for railroads.

- 24 Which sentence describes the attitude of railroad company officials toward their task?

F. It is an unimportant trifle.
G. It is a profitable venture.
H. It is an unpopular idea.
I. It will be of little service.



- 25 Explain the organizational pattern the author uses at the beginning of the article. Use details and information from the article to support your answer.

- 26 Workers from the competing rail lines were instructed to lay tracks parallel to one another because

F. it made the task of grading the land easier.
G. it assured that the tracks would be straight.
H. it would help travelers get to their destinations faster.
I. it allowed railroad owners to be paid for extra miles.

- 27 How are spaceships and railroads similar?

A. Both travel at great speeds.
B. Both carry passengers around the country.
C. Both are examples of great technologies.
D. Both existed during the Civil War.

- 28 Which statement is correct, according to the article?

F. The Union Pacific and Central Pacific spent five years building the tracks.
G. Many states were excited about the completion of the railroad line.
H. Much of the land in the East was covered with hills and mountains.
I. The Central Pacific progressed much more quickly than the Union Pacific.