



Read the passage carefully. Then answer the questions using clues and evidence from the text.

Linking a Nation: The Transcontinental Railroad



In the mid-1800s, crossing the United States was a long journey, taking months by wagon or ship. This made it hard for the growing nation to feel connected. Leaders envisioned a faster way to link the East and West, hoping to transform travel and trade.

This vision led to the Transcontinental Railroad. Two companies started building in 1863: the Central Pacific from California, and the Union Pacific from Nebraska. Workers faced great challenges. The Central Pacific blasted through the Sierra Nevada mountains, laying tracks on steep slopes. The Union Pacific crossed vast plains, battling harsh weather and difficult terrain.

Thousands of workers, many immigrants from China and Ireland, labored tirelessly. They used picks, shovels, and dynamite to carve a path. The work was hard, dangerous, and lonely, yet they persevered, driven by the dream of a united country.



On May 10, 1869, the two lines met in Utah. A "golden spike" marked the railroad's completion. This event changed America. A trip that once took half a year could now be done in about a week. Towns grew, goods shipped faster, linking the nation.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

(1)



Based on the passage, what can you conclude about the main reason for building the Transcontinental Railroad?

- (A) To make it easier for people to visit relatives.
- (B) To connect the country and improve travel and trade.
- (C) To provide jobs for immigrants from China and Ireland.
- (D) To explore new parts of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

(2) What does the passage suggest about why the workers kept building despite the hard, dangerous, and lonely conditions?

- (A) They were forced to work and could not leave.
- (B) They were paid a lot of money for their efforts.
- (C) They believed in the idea of a united country.
- (D) They enjoyed the challenge of battling nature.

(3) The author mentions the 'golden spike' most likely to show that...

- (A) gold was a common material used in building the railroad.
- (B) the railroad was a very expensive project to complete.
- (C) the completion of the railroad was a celebrated and important event.
- (D) workers were paid with gold for their hard work.

(4) Which statement is NOT well-supported by evidence from the passage?

- (A) Building the railroad was an easy job for the workers.
- (B) Travel across the U.S. was much faster after the railroad was built.



- C Immigrants played a big part in building the railroad.
- D The railroad helped towns grow and goods move more quickly.

(5) What clues in the passage helped you infer that building the Transcontinental Railroad was a very difficult task? Use details from the passage.

