

**The Experience:** Engage With a Real-World Parallel (5-10 minutes)

Mr. Rodriguez shows **before-and-after images** of a historic apartment complex in the community that is being redeveloped. Families who lived there for decades are being displaced.

He asks students:

**“Who has the right to decide what happens to this land?”**

Students are given **think-time**, then **turn and talk**, while Mr. Rodriguez listens, records responses, and confirms ideas publicly.

**Example Student Responses**

**Student Response 1:**

“The people who own the land probably get to decide because it’s their property.”

**Student Response 2:**

“The city should decide because they’re thinking about what’s best for everyone, not just one group.”

**Student Response 3:**

“The families who live there should have a say because it’s their homes and they’re the ones being affected.”

**Teacher “Stamping the Idea” (Naming the Thinking) (1-2 minutes)**

Mr. Rodriguez affirms and elevates student thinking:

**“I’m hearing you think about ownership, government power, and who is impacted by decisions. That’s important.”**

**“What you just did is evaluate *power*, *justice*, and *perspective*—that’s exactly what historians do when they study the past.”**

*(This stamps the thinking as historical work, not just opinion.)*

**Transfer:** Connecting to the Historical Content (15-20 minutes)

Mr. Rodriguez bridges students’ thinking to the text:

**“Now let’s take that same thinking and apply it to the past.”**

**“As we read about westward expansion, we’re going to ask: Who had the power to make decisions about land? Who benefited? And was it just for everyone involved?”**

Students then read a primary or secondary source related to westward expansion.

**Close: Writing and Discussion Task (5-7 minutes)**

**Student Task:**

Students write a short claim answering:

**“During westward expansion, who had the power to decide what happened to land, and was that use of power just?”**

Students must support their claim with **textual evidence**.

**Closing the Loop: Sharing and Refining Thinking (3-5 minutes)**

Mr. Rodriguez selects 1–2 student responses to share (either aloud or anonymously).

**Example Student Claim 1:**

“The U.S. government and settlers had the most power during westward expansion. This was not just because Native Americans were forced off their land even though they already lived there.”

**Example Student Claim 2:**

“Westward expansion benefited settlers because they got land, but it was unjust because Native Americans did not get a choice and lost their homes.”

**Sample Teacher Language to Close the Lesson (3-5 minutes)**

Mr. Rodriguez intentionally **selects a response that reflects the lesson goal** (power + justice) and explains why:

**“I want to pause on this response because it clearly explains *who had power* and *who was harmed*. That shows strong historical thinking.”**

He then invites students to confirm or extend the idea:

**“Turn and talk: Do you agree with this claim? What would you add or revise using evidence from the text?”**

**Example Student Responses When Closing the Loop**

**Student Response 1:**

“I agree, but I would add that the government made laws like the Homestead Act that helped settlers get land.”

**Student Response 2:**

“I would add a quote from the text that shows Native Americans were forced to move, not given a choice.”

**Student Response 3:**

“It’s similar to the apartment example because the people with less power didn’t get to decide.”

**Final Teacher Wrap-Up (1-2 minutes)**

Mr. Rodriguez closes by reinforcing the transfer:

**“Today, you used modern examples to understand historical decisions. Historians don’t just memorize facts—they analyze power, justice, and perspective across time.”**