

PELMANISM

How the Homesteaders overcame their problems

This revision activity works best if you do it with a friend, and talk about it as you do it.

This simple game will familiarise you with the events, and help you remember the facts.

Print off (on card or thick paper) & cut out the cards below, shuffle and lay them out face down on the table. In turn, players turn over two cards; if they have a Problem card which matches its Solution card, they keep the 'trick', if not, they replace both cards face down in their exact place on the table.

For a harder game, lay out the problem+solution cards in as below. Ask one player to leave and remove an agreed number of cards. Invite them to return and remember the missing information.

<p>PROBLEM: Little wood to build houses.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: Houses made from sods of earth.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: No wood for fuel.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: Cattle and buffalo dung was used as fuel.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: The Plains had never been ploughed; and there were not enough people to plough the land as in the east.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: Steel 'sodbuster' ploughs produced by Deere and Company were brought by train. Homesteaders clubbed together to buy one.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: The temperature rose to more than 80°C in summer. Hot winds evaporated any rainfall.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: 'Dry farming': when it rained, the land was ploughed immediately to put a fine layer of dust over the moisture to trap it and stop it evaporating.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: There was no moisture in the soil, and no rivers or lakes.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: Wind pumps meant that water deep underground could be pumped to the surface.</p>

<p>PROBLEM: Crops that were planted could not survive the extreme temperatures and low rainfall.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: In 1874, Turkey Red wheat (a Russian crop) was introduced which could survive the climate of the Plains.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: The 60 acres that had been offered to them by the 1862 Homesteaders Act was not enough to support a family.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: The Timber and Culture Act of 1873 allowed farmers to claim a further 160 acres if they grew half an acre of trees.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: Farmers needed to fence the land so that they were sure where their holding was, and to stop animals from straying.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: After 1874, barbed wire allowed farmers quickly and efficiently to fence their land. This allowed selective breeding to take place.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: Fire, Colorado beetle and grasshoppers.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: None.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: Fleas and bedbugs.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: A coat of whitewash.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: Lack of soap.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: Made from boiling fat with potash.</p>
<p>PROBLEM: Isolation and hardship.</p>	<p>SOLUTION: Occasional trips to town; local hoedowns.</p>