

Americans Move West**Focus on Writing****A Letter**

European Americans are settling the West. You are an Irish immigrant working on a railroad that crosses the Great Plains. Write a letter to your sister in Ireland telling her about what you see and experience.

PREWRITING

- 1. Taking Notes on Mining, Ranching, and the Railroads** Take notes on how mining, ranching, and the railroads changed the West.

Mining	Ranching	Railroads
Mining brought many settlers to the West		

- 2. Taking Notes on the Wars for the West** Take notes on the wars between the U.S. government and the Plains Indians. How might a railroad worker have experienced these conflicts? How might they have affected the worker's life?
- 3. Taking Notes on Farming and the Great Plains** Take notes on the growth of farming on the Great Plains. Answer these questions: How did farmers interact with the railroads? What changes might have been apparent to a railroad worker?

WRITING

- 4. Using a Model** Use the model on the next page to get started writing. Make certain your letter includes each part shown.

<p>[Your name] [Your address]</p> <p>[Your sister's address]</p> <p>[Date]</p> <p>Dear [your sister's name],</p> <p>I'm writing to tell you about my life on the Great Plains and all the amazing events I have seen during my time here.</p>

5. Writing Your Letter Begin the body of your letter with the main idea, as shown above. Next, review your notes about the many changes to the West during this time. Select the three or four points to make in your letter. End with a conclusion that summarizes your points. Your letter should be written in an informal tone, more like everyday spoken language than like a formal speech.

EVALUATING AND PROOFREADING

6. Evaluating Your Letter Does your letter do a good job of describing life on the Great Plains? Use the questions below to evaluate and revise your letter.

Rubric

- Is the letter written from the point of view of an Irish immigrant working on a railroad that crosses the Great Plains?
- Does the letter follow the appropriate letter format?
- Does a main idea indicate what will be included in the letter?
- Does the letter include three or four main points about life on the Great Plains?
- Is the letter written in an informal tone?
- Does the letter end with a conclusion that summarizes the main points?

7. Proofreading Your Letter To perfect your letter, check the following:

- Capitalization and spelling of all proper names and places
- Punctuation, grammar, and spelling