

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## The Exodusters

In the year 1879, a fever spread throughout the land. This was not a fever that makes the head hot and the body ache. This fever was a dream that spread through a people. This fever was caught by many who longed for a life of freedom and an opportunity to own and farm the land.	14 29 42 56
African Americans were on the move. Families and friends gathered and talked about their dream. Together, they began the long march west to a place called Kansas.	66 80 83
In the Exodus in days of old, so the story goes, a man named Moses led his folk to the fertile land and a better life. So, too, did African Americans, known as Exodusters, march to the promised land of Kansas.	99 114 124
The Civil War had brought freedom at last to slaves. After years of shackles and service, these men and women deserved a new start in life. The U.S. government offered them the chance to settle some land on the wide-open plains. For African Americans, this was an opportunity to leave the shadow of someone else’s fields, which was an opportunity to enjoy their own harvest.	137 150 163 174 187 189
America was proud to offer this gift to men and women new to freedom. The land was promised to any and all who agreed to homestead at least five years. All that it cost was a five-dollar fee and five long years of backbreaking toil. Toil was not new for African Americans, but to own land was a dream come true.	203 217 232 245 250
They came by wagon, on foot, by steamboat, and by rail. The Exodusters left the South behind and came to Kansas any way they could. In their minds, an image was taking shape—the image of the black pioneer. Yes, the African American pioneer was about to tame the wild frontier!	263 277 291 301

