1. What national event America was recovering from in 1865, when this scene was painted?
2. Why did a western scene like this offer hope to Americans from the northeast, midwest, and southern regions?
3. Describe the scale of the landscape depicted by Bierstadt in this painting. How large would a six foot person appear standing in the center of this valley?
4. How has Bierstadt created an illusion of great distance or depth?
5. How does this light add to the drama of this scene?
6. On a map, locate Yosemite National Park. Compare photographs of Yosemite Valley with Bierstadt’s painting to understand how he exaggerated the size of the rock formations. Do you agree with this exaggeration?
7. Consider how this painting makes you feel about America. Explain the role Bierstadt’s paintings might have played in the development of tourism to the West.

Writing Assignment: Research Albert Bierstadt and write a short biography, no longer than two paragraphs, including his education, training as an artist, and trips to the west.