Lines to Statehood

How two laws shaped land, statehood, and slavery

SS24.6.10b "Describe how the Northwest Land Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 established a foundation for future territorial growth of the United States and restricted the growth of slavery."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail that shows how the 1785 law helped organize land. Circle two details that show how the 1787 law shaped statehood and restricted slavery.

Two Laws for a Growing Country

1. Imagine buying land in a place with no street names or fences. In the 1780s, the United States held a large area northwest of the Ohio River. Congress needed a fair way to divide and sell land there. The Land Ordinance of 1785 ordered surveyors to measure it into square townships, each six miles on a side. Each township was split into 36 smaller sections. Buyers could identify a section by number instead of guessing at its borders. This system helped the government organize sales and plan settlement as the country grew.

2. Dividing land did not explain how settlers would govern themselves. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 gave the region a path from federal territory to statehood. At first, Congress chose a governor and other officials. As the population grew, residents could elect lawmakers. Once a territory had 60,000 free inhabitants, it could ask to join the Union as a state on equal footing with existing states. That path offered a model for adding new states, rather than keeping growing regions under federal rule forever.

3. The 1787 law also said slavery would not be allowed in the Northwest Territory. This rule restricted slavery's spread north of the Ohio River, though it did not end slavery in states where it already existed. The 1785 law organized land sales but did not ban slavery. The two laws worked in different ways: one made land easier to measure and sell, while the other set rules for government and statehood and placed a limit on slavery. The ban applied to the Northwest Territory, not automatically to every later U.S. territory.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the 1785 law make it easier for people to buy land as the country grew?

2. How did the 1787 law give a growing territory a way to become a state?

3. Where did the 1787 law restrict slavery's spread, and what was one limit of that rule?

4. How did the two laws work together to help the United States grow? Include one different job each law did.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine Congress is planning a new territory outside the Northwest Territory. Write four sentences explaining how it could use the 1785 survey idea, how it could use the 1787 path to statehood, and whether you would ask Congress to ban slavery there. Make clear whether the 1787 slavery ban would apply to this new territory automatically.

ANSWER KEY

Lines to Statehood

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.10b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail that shows how the 1785 law helped organize land. Circle two details that show how the 1787 law shaped statehood and restricted slavery. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the 1785 law make it easier for people to buy land as the country grew?	**It divided land into measured, numbered townships and sections, so buyers could identify the land they wanted.**
2	How did the 1787 law give a growing territory a way to become a state?	**Residents could elect lawmakers as the population grew, and a territory with 60,000 free inhabitants could ask to join the Union as an equal state.**
3	Where did the 1787 law restrict slavery's spread, and what was one limit of that rule?	**It barred slavery in the Northwest Territory, but it did not end slavery in existing states or automatically apply to every later territory.**
4	How did the two laws work together to help the United States grow? Include one different job each law did.	**The 1785 law organized land for sale and settlement. The 1787 law set a path to statehood and barred slavery in the Northwest Territory.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

First, surveyors should divide the new territory into numbered townships and sections so buyers can identify land clearly. Congress should set steps for residents to elect lawmakers and seek equal statehood as the population grows. I would also ask Congress to ban slavery in this new territory to limit its spread. The 1787 ban covered the Northwest Territory, so this new territory would need its own ban.

Accept plans that adapt the survey and statehood ideas without claiming either law automatically governed every later territory. Students may make a different choice about a new ban if they correctly identify the limited reach of the 1787 ban.