Power and Protest

Weigh Washington's response to the Whiskey Rebellion

SS24.6.19a "Formulate and defend a position on the use of federal authority by Washington and his administration in response to the Whiskey Rebellion."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two facts that could support using federal force, and circle one fact that could support a different response. Use your marks to help you defend a position.

A Tax and a Test of Power

1 In 1791, Congress placed a federal tax on whiskey made in the United States. The new government needed money to pay debts, and the Constitution gave Congress the power to collect taxes. In western Pennsylvania, many farmers turned grain into whiskey because barrels were easier to carry over rough roads than heavy sacks of grain. Some farmers also used whiskey to trade for goods. They argued that the tax hit them harder than it hit larger makers closer to markets. Petitions and meetings did not end the dispute.

2 By 1794, protest had turned dangerous. Some opponents threatened tax collectors, and a crowd attacked the home of federal tax inspector John Neville. President George Washington sent representatives to speak with the protesters and offer forgiveness to those who promised to obey the law. He also called on state militias to enforce federal law when local efforts failed. Some people thought soldiers were needed to protect officials and show that national laws mattered. Others worried that sending soldiers might silence people with real complaints about an unfair tax.

3 About 13,000 militia members gathered, and Washington rode with them for part of the journey toward western Pennsylvania. Most protesters scattered before the force arrived, so there was no major battle between the militia and the rebels. Officials arrested several people. Two men were convicted of treason, but Washington later pardoned them. The whiskey tax remained in place for several more years. The episode raised a hard question for the new nation: How could a president enforce a law while still respecting the right to protest it?

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Make a case for Washington's decision to call on the militias. Use two facts from the passage.

2. Make a case against sending soldiers. Use one fact about the farmers and one concern from the passage.

3. Was Washington right to send representatives to speak with protesters as well as call on militias? Defend your answer with a fact from the passage.

4. Was Washington right to pardon the two men convicted of treason? Defend your position with a fact from the passage.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a new president facing a protest over a federal tax. Write five sentences that state when federal force is justified, propose one peaceful step and one enforcement step, and use two facts from the Whiskey Rebellion to defend your plan.

ANSWER KEY

Power and Protest

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.19a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two facts that could support using federal force, and circle one fact that could support a different response. Use your marks to help you defend a position. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Make a case for Washington's decision to call on the militias. Use two facts from the passage.	**Calling on the militias could protect federal officials after opponents threatened tax collectors and a crowd attacked John Neville's home.**
2	Make a case against sending soldiers. Use one fact about the farmers and one concern from the passage.	**Farmers argued that the tax hit them harder than larger makers, and some people worried that soldiers might silence those with real complaints.**
3	Was Washington right to send representatives to speak with protesters as well as call on militias? Defend your answer with a fact from the passage.	**Yes. Speaking with protesters gave them a chance to promise to obey the law and receive forgiveness, while the militias could enforce the law if needed. Accept a supported opposing view.**
4	Was Washington right to pardon the two men convicted of treason? Defend your position with a fact from the passage.	**Yes. Most protesters had scattered without a major battle, so a pardon could help end the conflict. Accept a supported opposing view, such as one citing the attack on Neville's home.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would advise the president to use federal force only if people threaten officials or block the law from being enforced. First, the president should send representatives to hear complaints and ask protesters to obey the law. Washington took this step during the Whiskey Rebellion. If threats continue, the president should call on forces to protect officials and enforce the law. During the rebellion, opponents threatened tax collectors and attacked John Neville's home, showing why protection might be needed.

Accept either position when the student's reasoning fits accurate passage evidence. For Part 3, look for a clear limit on force, a peaceful step, an enforcement step, and two relevant facts.