Borders on Paper

How the 1783 peace treaty shaped a new nation

SS24.6.9b "Analyze how the Treaty of Paris of 1783 affected the development of the United States, including the establishment of its boundaries."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two boundary details, then circle two ways the treaty's boundaries affected the new nation's development.

What Did the Treaty Change?

1. In 1783, leaders from the United States and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Paris to end the Revolutionary War. Britain recognized the United States as an independent nation. The treaty also described a much larger country than the thirteen former colonies. Its eastern edge was the Atlantic Ocean, and its western edge reached the Mississippi River. This gave the new nation a legal claim to land beyond the Appalachian Mountains. A line on paper, however, did not mean that Americans already lived on or controlled every part of that land.

2. The treaty placed British Canada to the north of the United States, with the Great Lakes forming part of that border. Spanish Florida lay to the south. These borders helped other governments see where the United States claimed authority. The Mississippi River became a western boundary, not a promise that the United States owned the land beyond it. Spain controlled territory west of the river and the river's outlet at New Orleans. As settlers looked west, access to river trade mattered, but the treaty did not guarantee control of that outlet.

3. The treaty's land claims also affected people who had not signed it. Many Native nations lived and governed in the area between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River. They had not given up their lands in the Treaty of Paris. Yet some U.S. settlers and leaders treated the treaty's western boundary as permission to move into those lands. Disputes and violence followed. The treaty gave the United States international recognition and room to grow, but building a nation within its claimed borders would involve conflicts over land and power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Britain's recognition of U.S. independence change the new nation's standing?

2. How did the Mississippi River boundary create an opportunity for the United States?

3. How could the borders with British Canada and Spanish Florida help the United States develop?

4. Why did the treaty's western land claim lead to conflict with Native nations?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A newspaper claims, “The treaty gave the United States every land and trade right it needed to grow without conflict.” Write four sentences correcting this claim. Explain one opportunity created by the western boundary and two limits involving Native nations and Spain's control of New Orleans.

ANSWER KEY # Borders on Paper

GRADE 6 · SS24.6.9b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two boundary details, then circle two ways the treaty's boundaries affected the new nation's development. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Britain's recognition of U.S. independence change the new nation's standing?	**It established the United States as an independent nation recognized by Britain.**
2	How did the Mississippi River boundary create an opportunity for the United States?	**It gave the United States a legal claim to land beyond the Appalachian Mountains, allowing room for growth.**
3	How could the borders with British Canada and Spanish Florida help the United States develop?	**They helped other governments see where the United States claimed authority to its north and south.**
4	Why did the treaty's western land claim lead to conflict with Native nations?	**Native nations lived and governed within the claimed area and had not given up their lands. Some U.S. settlers and leaders treated the treaty as permission to move there.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The treaty set the Mississippi River as the western edge of the United States, giving the new country a claim to more land. That claim offered room for growth beyond the Appalachian Mountains. Native nations still governed lands within the claimed borders and had not given them up in the treaty, so settlement could lead to conflict. Spain controlled the river's outlet at New Orleans, so the treaty did not give the United States control of that trade route.

Accept responses that distinguish a U.S. land claim from control of land or trade. Students should not describe Native nations as having surrendered their lands in the treaty.