

Path to Statehood

How the Northwest Ordinance guided western growth

SS.5.A.5.9 "Discuss the impact and significance of land policies developed under the Confederation Congress (Northwest Ordinance of 1787)."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each rule the Northwest Ordinance created. Number three details that show how those rules affected settlers or the growth of the United States.

Rules for the Northwest Territory

- ① After the American Revolution, the United States claimed land north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River, where Native nations already lived and governed themselves. In 1787, the Confederation Congress passed the Northwest Ordinance to organize this Northwest Territory. This land policy established territorial government and a planned path to equal statehood.
- ② The ordinance set stages for territorial self-government. At first, Congress appointed a governor and judges. When a district had 5,000 free adult male inhabitants, eligible voters could elect a legislature. Normally, 60,000 free inhabitants were needed to seek statehood, though Congress could allow admission earlier. A state constitution had to establish a republican government. These rules showed settlers how their voice in government could grow.
- ③ The Northwest Ordinance barred slavery in the territory and encouraged schools and education. The ban helped shape the region's development into free states, but slavery continued in some places as people evaded or narrowly interpreted it. The ordinance also created a process for adding new states. Later leaders used its idea of territorial growth leading to statehood in other western lands.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What problem did the Northwest Ordinance solve for the Northwest Territory?

2 How many free inhabitants were normally needed to seek statehood, and could Congress allow admission earlier?

3 How did the slavery ban shape the region, and why did it not end slavery everywhere there?

4 Why was the Northwest Ordinance important beyond the Northwest Territory?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence message to settlers in a new western territory. Explain how two Northwest Ordinance rules could affect their community, then end by telling why a path to statehood matters.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each rule the Northwest Ordinance created. Number three details that show how those rules affected settlers or the growth of the United States. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What problem did the Northwest Ordinance solve for the Northwest Territory?	It established territorial government and a planned path for the territory to become equal states.
2	How many free inhabitants were normally needed to seek statehood, and could Congress allow admission earlier?	Normally, 60,000 free inhabitants were needed. Congress could allow admission earlier.
3	How did the slavery ban shape the region, and why did it not end slavery everywhere there?	The ban helped the region develop into free states, but slavery continued in some places because people evaded or narrowly interpreted the ban.
4	Why was the Northwest Ordinance important beyond the Northwest Territory?	It created a process for adding new states, and later leaders used its idea of territorial growth leading to statehood in other western lands.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our community should prepare for territorial self-government. At 5,000 free adult male inhabitants, eligible voters can elect representatives to a legislature. The slavery ban can help shape our community, but enforcing it matters because slavery has continued in some places. A path to statehood matters because we can seek equal membership in the United States, normally at 60,000 free inhabitants.

Accept equivalent descriptions of the ordinance's territorial government, population steps, slavery ban, education support, and model for later statehood. For Part 3, look for two accurate rules, a reasonable effect on settlers, and a clear explanation of why statehood matters.