

Land, Luck, Scandal

Evaluate how Georgia's land policies shaped settlement, fairness, and conflict.

SS8H4.b "Evaluate the impact of land policies pursued by Georgia; include the headright system, land lotteries, and the Yazoo Land Fraud."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the goal or claimed benefit for each policy, circle two results of each policy, and number the policies 1 through 3 to compare what Georgia intended with what happened.

Three Ways Georgia Handed Out Land

- ① After the American Revolution, Georgia used the headright system to attract settlers and reward people who would develop farms. Eligible white heads of households could receive 200 acres, with additional acreage for family members and enslaved people, up to a limit. The policy helped some families gain farmland and pushed settlement farther west. It also favored wealthier households that could claim more people. As settlers sought land, the system increased pressure on Creek and Cherokee lands and helped drive conflict and removal.
- ② Beginning in 1805, Georgia used land lotteries to distribute much of its public land. Instead of granting acreage according to household size, the state assigned eligible citizens a chance to win a parcel. The goal was to spread land access more broadly and reward citizens. Some winners built farms, but others sold their lots quickly. The lotteries also treated Creek and Cherokee homelands as land Georgia could give away. By encouraging settlement there, they increased dispossession of Native peoples.
- ③ In 1795, the Yazoo Land Fraud began when Georgia lawmakers sold about 35 million acres of western land to four companies for a very low price. Supporters said the sale would bring money to the state and speed settlement. Many lawmakers had accepted bribes, however, and public anger led a new legislature to cancel the sale in 1796. The scandal damaged trust in Georgia's government. Later court decisions protected the companies' contracts, leaving Georgia with costly claims and a lasting warning about corrupt land deals.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What goal did the headright system serve, and what effect did it have on Creek and Cherokee lands?

2 How did the land lotteries distribute land differently from the headright system? Give one effect of the lotteries.

3 Why did public anger grow over the Yazoo land sale? Use two details from the passage.

4 What happened after 1796 that made the Yazoo Land Fraud continue to affect Georgia?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Choose one of the three land policies. Write five sentences that judge whether its benefits outweighed its harms. Use at least two details from the passage to support your judgment.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the goal or claimed benefit for each policy, circle two results of each policy, and number the policies 1 through 3 to compare what Georgia intended with what happened. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What goal did the headright system serve, and what effect did it have on Creek and Cherokee lands?	It aimed to attract settlers and develop farms. It increased pressure on Creek and Cherokee lands, contributing to conflict and removal.
2	How did the land lotteries distribute land differently from the headright system? Give one effect of the lotteries.	Lotteries gave eligible citizens a chance to win a parcel rather than granting acreage based on household size. Effects included some new farms, quick resale of lots, and increased dispossession of Creek and Cherokee peoples.
3	Why did public anger grow over the Yazoo land sale? Use two details from the passage.	Lawmakers sold about 35 million acres to four companies for a very low price, and many lawmakers had accepted bribes.
4	What happened after 1796 that made the Yazoo Land Fraud continue to affect Georgia?	Later court decisions protected the companies' contracts, leaving Georgia with costly claims.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Georgia's land lotteries had a mixed impact. They gave some eligible citizens a chance to receive land by lottery instead of by household size. This could help a person without a large household. However, the land had been claimed by Creek and Cherokee peoples. Because the lotteries increased pressure for removal, the harm to Native nations outweighed the benefit.

Accept equivalent evidence-based explanations for the short answers. For the open response, accept any policy and judgment if the student states a clear claim and supports it with at least two accurate passage details.