Whose Ways Count?

Trace how beliefs about culture shaped treatment across three regions.

7.G.8 "Explain how ethnocentrism influenced the way different groups in Africa, Asia, and the Southwest Pacific interacted and treated one another."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one belief about whose way of life mattered more in each paragraph, then circle an action that belief helped justify.

When One Culture Becomes the Measure

1. When British settlers arrived in Kenya in the early 1900s, many wanted land for farms. Some officials saw Maasai cattle grazing as a poor use of land because they valued European-style farming more. This is ethnocentrism: judging another group's way of life by the standards of your own group and treating it as less worthy. Colonial authorities pushed Maasai communities off large areas of their land and into smaller reserves. Maasai families lost access to grazing routes they had long used. Their ways of managing cattle were overlooked, while settlers gained land.

2. In India, British rule also shaped whose knowledge counted. In 1835, a British government decision directed public education money toward teaching in English instead of supporting learning in languages such as Sanskrit and Arabic. Some British leaders claimed European books were worth more than Indian scholarship. That judgment put British ideas at the center of schools and made many local traditions seem less important in official classrooms. Indian scholars and families did not all agree with this view; many continued to study, teach, and write in their own languages.

3. In Australia, part of the Southwest Pacific, government policies harmed many Aboriginal families. During the 1900s, officials removed many Aboriginal children from their families and placed them in institutions or other homes. Officials claimed that European customs would be better for the children than learning from their own communities. That belief treated Aboriginal cultures as inferior, and the removals caused lasting pain and loss of language and family ties. Aboriginal people fought these policies and worked to keep their cultures alive. In all three places, ideas about superiority helped justify unequal treatment.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did some officials' view of Maasai cattle grazing affect the way Maasai communities were treated?

2. How did some British leaders' view of Indian scholarship influence the 1835 education decision?

3. What belief did Australian officials use to justify removing Aboriginal children, and how did the removals affect families?

4. What did the actions in India and Australia have in common? How did the treatment of people differ?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a meeting between a British official and local leaders in one region from the passage. In 5 to 6 sentences, write a historically plausible alternative to the action described. Show how the official could listen to local knowledge, and explain how this would change how people are treated.

ANSWER KEY

Whose Ways Count?

GRADE 7 · 7.G.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one belief about whose way of life mattered more in each paragraph, then circle an action that belief helped justify. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did some officials' view of Maasai cattle grazing affect the way Maasai communities were treated?	**Officials viewed grazing as a poor use of land and pushed Maasai communities into smaller reserves, taking away grazing routes.**
2	How did some British leaders' view of Indian scholarship influence the 1835 education decision?	**They valued European books more, and public education money was directed toward teaching in English rather than supporting learning in Sanskrit and Arabic.**
3	What belief did Australian officials use to justify removing Aboriginal children, and how did the removals affect families?	**Officials claimed European customs were better for children than learning from their communities. The removals caused lasting pain and loss of language and family ties.**
4	What did the actions in India and Australia have in common? How did the treatment of people differ?	**Both actions favored European ways over local cultures. In India, the government favored English in public education; in Australia, officials removed Aboriginal children from their families.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

At a meeting in 1835, a British official asks Indian scholars what students need to learn. The scholars explain why lessons in Sanskrit, Arabic, and other local languages matter to their communities. Instead of calling European books more valuable, the official proposes funding lessons in both English and local languages. Indian teachers help choose the texts for these classes. This plan treats Indian knowledge as valuable rather than making British ideas the only standard.

Accept answers that connect a stated belief of cultural superiority to a specific action and its effect. For Your Turn, accept a plausible alternative in any one of the three regions that shows local people being heard and treated more fairly.