# Land and Evidence

Read a law and a later account together

**6.P.3.1** "Comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize textual sources to acquire and refine knowledge in the social studies. Paraphrase the main idea and cite evidence from primary and secondary sources..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline the law's main idea, circle one table rule that supports it, and number two details from the later explanation that add to your understanding.

### What the Homestead Act Offered

1 Imagine choosing land you have never farmed. In 1862, the United States passed the Homestead Act. The law is a **primary source** because it was written when the policy began. It offered eligible settlers a way to claim public land. The table gathers three rules from the law, but these rules are not proof that every applicant succeeded.

**SOME RULES IN THE 1862 HOMESTEAD ACT**

| Rule | What the law said |
|---|---|
| Land | Up to 160 acres of public land |
| Applicant | At least 21 years old or head of a family |
| Claim | Live on and improve the land for five years |

2 This later historical explanation is a **secondary source**: it looks back at the law and its results. Settlers had to build a home and grow crops, not simply sign a form. Some families struggled with dry land, travel costs, and the price of tools. Many claims failed before the required years passed. The promise of land did not guarantee success.

3 The policy also affected Native nations. Federal officials treated land that Native communities used as available for settlers. The law describes how settlers could claim land, but it leaves out the experiences of those communities. Reading the law beside a later explanation helps us see both an opportunity for some settlers and a loss for others.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In your own words, what was the law's main idea? Use one table entry as evidence.

2. How is the table different from the later historical explanation? Give one detail from each.

3. Summarize what the third paragraph adds to the story of the law. Leave out your own opinion.

4. Use the table and the later explanation to explain why the five-year rule could be hard to meet.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 3- or 4-sentence museum label explaining what a settler had to do and why the law does not tell the whole story. Cite two different table entries and one fact from the later historical explanation, and leave out your own opinion.

ANSWER KEY

# Land and Evidence

GRADE 6 · 6.P.3.1

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the law's main idea, circle one table rule that supports it, and number two details from the later explanation that add to your understanding. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | In your own words, what was the law's main idea? Use one table entry as evidence. | **The law gave eligible settlers a way to claim public land. The table says a claim could cover up to 160 acres.** |
| 2 | How is the table different from the later historical explanation? Give one detail from each. | **The table lists rules from the law, such as living on and improving the land for five years. The later explanation describes results, such as claims that failed before then.** |
| 3 | Summarize what the third paragraph adds to the story of the law. Leave out your own opinion. | **The law offered some settlers a chance to claim land, but the policy also affected Native nations whose communities used that land.** |
| 4 | Use the table and the later explanation to explain why the five-year rule could be hard to meet. | **The table says settlers had to live on and improve the land for five years. The later explanation says some families faced dry land, travel costs, and the price of tools, and many claims failed.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Homestead Act offered eligible settlers a way to claim public land. The table says applicants could claim up to 160 acres and had to live on and improve the land for five years. The later historical explanation says that some families struggled with dry land and the cost of tools. It also explains that the policy affected Native nations whose communities used the land.

Accept accurate paraphrases that distinguish the law's rules from the later explanation of its results. For the museum label, check for two distinct table entries, a fact from the later explanation, and no unsupported opinion.