A Plan to Unite

Defense, trade, and the debate over colonial power

8.C.1.1.E "Examine the goals of the Albany Plan of Union and how it reflected colonial reactions to changing imperial economic policies."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two goals of the Albany Plan. Circle details about who would control money or trade, then number one reason colonial assemblies opposed the plan.

Who Should Pay for Defense?

1. In 1754, delegates from seven British colonies met in Albany, New York, as fighting with France threatened the Ohio Valley. British officials hoped the meeting would strengthen ties with the Haudenosaunee, whose support mattered in the contest for western land and trade. Benjamin Franklin brought a plan for the colonies to work together on defense and relations with Native nations. The proposal was called the Albany Plan of Union. It was written before the French and Indian War spread widely across North America.

2. Under the plan, a president general chosen by the British Crown would lead alongside a grand council selected by colonial assemblies. That council could raise money through taxes for shared defense, manage western settlements, and oversee trade and diplomacy with Native nations. This arrangement would let colonies combine resources instead of waiting for separate assemblies to act. It also kept a role for the Crown. Franklin and other supporters hoped joint action would protect trade routes and help colonies respond quickly to threats from France.

3. Economic power was part of the debate. Britain already controlled colonial commerce through trade laws, and officials wanted colonies to pay more of the cost of their defense. Some colonists favored a council chosen locally that could decide how to raise and spend shared funds. Yet colonial assemblies feared that a new council could take away their own power over taxes. British leaders also worried that a united colonial government might become too independent. Neither side approved the plan. Later British taxes after 1763 sparked protests, but they did not cause the 1754 proposal.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How would two powers given to the grand council help the colonies meet the plan's goals?

2. How did the plan give both Britain and the colonial assemblies a role in decisions about defense and money?

3. Why might an assembly reject the plan even if it agreed that the colonies needed to pay for defense?

4. How did the economic concern behind the 1754 plan differ from the concern that led to protests after 1763?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence note from a 1754 delegate to a colonial assembly recommending whether to accept the Albany Plan. Include one goal of the plan, one economic pressure Britain or the colonies faced, and how the plan's division of power shapes your recommendation.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · 8.C.1.1.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two goals of the Albany Plan. Circle details about who would control money or trade, then number one reason colonial assemblies opposed the plan. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How would two powers given to the grand council help the colonies meet the plan's goals?	**The council could tax for shared defense and oversee trade and diplomacy with Native nations, helping the colonies respond together to threats and protect trade routes.**
2	How did the plan give both Britain and the colonial assemblies a role in decisions about defense and money?	**The Crown would choose the president general, while colonial assemblies would select the grand council, which could raise taxes for shared defense.**
3	Why might an assembly reject the plan even if it agreed that the colonies needed to pay for defense?	**The assembly might fear that the grand council's power to tax would reduce its own control over money.**
4	How did the economic concern behind the 1754 plan differ from the concern that led to protests after 1763?	**The plan addressed how colonies could share defense costs and manage trade. Later protests responded to new British taxes, which came after the plan.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I urge our assembly to accept the Albany Plan so the colonies can organize defense together. Britain wants the colonies to pay more of their defense costs, and shared taxes could pay for supplies. Because our assembly would select members of the grand council, we would have a voice in spending that money. Although the Crown would appoint the president general, coordinated action is worth that limit on local control.

Accept either recommendation in Part 3 if the four sentences accurately connect a plan goal, an economic pressure, and the Crown's and assemblies' roles. Do not accept an answer that treats British taxes imposed after 1763 as a cause of the 1754 plan.