When Conflict Grows

Trace how tension and armed responses deepened conflict in two regions.

8.C.13.5.E "Describe escalating conflict between American Indians, military forces, and civilians (e.g., Whitman Mission and Sand Creek Massacres)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline causes of tension, circle attacks and armed responses, and number three events in the order they happened. Use your marks to trace how conflict escalated.

Two Places, Growing Conflict

1 In the 1840s, wagon trains carried growing numbers of U.S. settlers into the Oregon Country. Their arrival put pressure on land and food sources used by the Cayuse people. Near present-day Walla Walla, Marcus and Narcissa Whitman ran a mission that also served travelers. A measles outbreak then swept through the area. Many Cayuse children died, while some settlers survived. The Whitmans tried to treat sick people, but some Cayuse believed the missionaries had caused the deaths. Disease, land pressure, and distrust made relations increasingly tense.

2 In November 1847, a group of Cayuse attacked the Whitman Mission. They killed Marcus and Narcissa Whitman and 12 others, 14 people in all, and took other people captive. The attack did not represent every Cayuse person's decision. Settlers feared further attacks and called for action. Oregon's provisional government organized a volunteer militia, and fighting with Cayuse people followed. This conflict became known as the Cayuse War. Five Cayuse men were later tried and executed for the killings. Violence did not settle disputes over land.

3 In Colorado, conflicts between settlers and Native nations also grew. In 1864, Cheyenne and Arapaho families camped at Sand Creek after seeking peace with U.S. officials. Black Kettle, a Cheyenne leader, believed his village was under U.S. protection. On November 29, Colorado volunteer soldiers attacked the camp, killing about 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho people, many of them women, children, and older adults. The Sand Creek Massacre intensified anger and fighting across the Plains. The two attacks were not directly linked; both show how expansion, distrust, and armed responses deepened conflict.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did disease and the arrival of settlers increase tension before the Whitman Mission attack?

2. How did the Whitman Mission attack lead to fighting between a volunteer militia and Cayuse people?

3. Why was the attack at Sand Creek an escalation of conflict rather than a step toward peace?

4. What pattern of escalating conflict appears in both places? What connection between the attacks should you avoid claiming?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four- or five-sentence museum label titled "When Conflict Escalates." Trace how civilians, Native people, and armed forces were involved in both places, using at least two details from the passage, and explain why the events should not be treated as one chain of events.

ANSWER KEY

When Conflict Grows

GRADE 8 · 8.C.13.5.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline causes of tension, circle attacks and armed responses, and number three events in the order they happened. Use your marks to trace how conflict escalated. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did disease and the arrival of settlers increase tension before the Whitman Mission attack?	**Settlers put pressure on Cayuse land and food sources. After many Cayuse children died of measles, some Cayuse believed the Whitmans had caused the deaths.**
2	How did the Whitman Mission attack lead to fighting between a volunteer militia and Cayuse people?	**Settlers feared further attacks and called for action. Oregon's provisional government organized a volunteer militia, which then fought Cayuse people.**
3	Why was the attack at Sand Creek an escalation of conflict rather than a step toward peace?	**Cheyenne and Arapaho families had sought peace, and Black Kettle believed the camp was under U.S. protection. Colorado volunteer soldiers attacked it, killing about 150 people and intensifying anger and fighting.**
4	What pattern of escalating conflict appears in both places? What connection between the attacks should you avoid claiming?	**Expansion and distrust were followed by attacks and armed responses that deepened conflict. The Whitman Mission attack did not cause the Sand Creek Massacre.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When Conflict Escalates

Settlers' arrival put pressure on Cayuse land, and deaths from measles deepened distrust near the Whitman Mission. After a group of Cayuse killed 14 people there, frightened settlers called for action, and a volunteer militia fought Cayuse people. In Colorado, Cheyenne and Arapaho families sought peace at Sand Creek, but volunteer soldiers attacked their camp, killing about 150 people and intensifying fighting. These events happened in different places and were not directly linked, but both show how distrust and armed responses can deepen conflict.

Accept other accurate cause-and-effect explanations supported by the passage. Students should distinguish the two locations and not claim that the Whitman Mission attack caused the Sand Creek Massacre.