Choices Under Pressure

Homelands, culture, and trade during the American Revolution

8.C.2.2.C "Explain how the preservation of homelands, cultures, and trade affected the stance taken by many American Indians."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details about homelands, circle details about trade, and number details about councils. Use your marks to explain why Haudenosaunee people took different stances during the war.

A War Reaches Haudenosaunee Homelands

1. In the 1770s, war between Britain and its colonies reached Haudenosaunee homelands in what is now New York. The Haudenosaunee were a confederacy of six nations, with their own governments and long-standing trade ties. British and colonial leaders both sought their support. For Haudenosaunee communities, choosing a side was not simply a vote for a new government or a king. Families depended on land for farming and hunting, on trade for tools and supplies, and on keeping their councils able to govern.

2. Many Mohawk and Seneca people sided with Britain. Settlers from the colonies had pushed onto Indigenous land, so these communities feared that an American victory would bring more land loss. Trade with British merchants also supplied goods such as cloth and metal tools. Supporting Britain could help protect access to those goods and, leaders hoped, their authority over their homelands. Yet this was a difficult choice: Britain had not always stopped settlers from taking land. An alliance was a strategy for protecting community life, not proof that British leaders shared Indigenous goals.

3. Other Haudenosaunee people made a different calculation. Many Oneida people supported the Americans, influenced partly by ties to colonial neighbors and hopes that those relationships would protect their villages and local trade. Some tried to remain neutral rather than risk their homes in war. The split strained the confederacy's tradition of nations meeting in council and seeking agreement. No position guaranteed safety. During the war, attacks and forced moves damaged communities on different sides. Their choices show that preserving land, cultural practices, and trade mattered, even when people disagreed about the best path.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why did many Mohawk and Seneca people see Britain as a possible partner in protecting their homelands?

2. How did trade concerns help explain support for Britain among some Haudenosaunee people and support for the Americans among others?

3. Why might neutrality have seemed like a way to protect a community's homeland?

4. How did taking different stances in the war put a Haudenosaunee cultural tradition under strain?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a Mohawk or Oneida community council at the start of the war. In five or six sentences, recommend a stance, explain how at least two concerns from the passage shape your advice, and name one risk of your choice.

ANSWER KEY

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GRADE 8 · 8.C.2.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details about homelands, circle details about trade, and number details about councils. Use your marks to explain why Haudenosaunee people took different stances during the war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did many Mohawk and Seneca people see Britain as a possible partner in protecting their homelands?	**They feared that an American victory would bring more settlers onto their land. Leaders hoped an alliance with Britain would help protect their authority over their homelands.**
2	How did trade concerns help explain support for Britain among some Haudenosaunee people and support for the Americans among others?	**British merchants supplied goods such as cloth and metal tools, which some Mohawk and Seneca people hoped to keep receiving. Ties to colonial neighbors led many Oneida people to hope that supporting the Americans would protect local trade.**
3	Why might neutrality have seemed like a way to protect a community's homeland?	**Some people hoped that staying out of the war would reduce the risk to their homes.**
4	How did taking different stances in the war put a Haudenosaunee cultural tradition under strain?	**The nations traditionally met in council and sought agreement. Their different wartime stances made that agreement harder to maintain.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would advise a Mohawk community council to support Britain. Settlers from the colonies have already pushed onto Indigenous land, and an American victory could bring more settlers. An alliance with Britain might help our council keep authority over our homeland. It could also protect trade with British merchants for cloth and metal tools. The risk is that Britain has not always stopped settlers from taking land, so its help is uncertain.

Accept other stances if students connect at least two concerns from the passage to their recommendation and identify a plausible risk. Responses should not claim that every person in a nation made the same choice.