How Territory Took Shape

Trace the decisions and removals that led to Indian Territory.

8.C.6.3.B "initiate the process of Tribal removals and the eventual establishment of Indian Territory."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline federal proposals, laws, and actions that moved Tribes toward Indian Territory, then circle the name of the region where many removed nations were sent.

From Homelands to Indian Territory

1. In the early 1800s, the United States expanded west while settlers demanded land held by Tribal nations in the Southeast. After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, federal leaders saw lands west of the Mississippi River as a place to move eastern Tribes. Presidents, including Thomas Jefferson, proposed exchanging eastern homelands for western land. Some officials called this a choice, but pressure from settlers and state governments made staying difficult. Long before any mass march west, these proposals and early land agreements began a federal process of removal.

2. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. It authorized the president to negotiate land exchanges with Tribes living east of the Mississippi, but it did not itself order every Tribe to leave. Under pressure, Choctaw leaders signed the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830, giving up land in Mississippi for land farther west. Many Choctaw families began moving in 1831. The government often failed to provide the food and supplies it had promised, and many people died. This removal showed how federal policy became a painful journey.

3. The Cherokee Nation fought removal in court. In 1832, the Supreme Court ruled that Georgia's laws had no force in Cherokee territory. Even so, a small group signed a removal treaty in 1835 without the Cherokee government's approval. Soldiers forced thousands of Cherokee people west in 1838 and 1839. Federal officials assigned removed nations land in a region west of the Mississippi that became known as Indian Territory, mostly in present-day Oklahoma. Native peoples already lived there. Removal reshaped their lands as well as the lives of the newcomers.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Louisiana Purchase help start federal plans to remove eastern Tribes?

2. How did the Indian Removal Act lead toward the Choctaw journey west?

3. What happened after the Cherokee Nation challenged removal in court, and what does that show about the removal process?

4. How did assigning land to removed nations help Indian Territory take shape, and who else was affected?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 60 to 85 word museum label explaining how federal decisions led to Indian Territory. Include two dated steps in order, explain why removal was not simply a free choice, and mention an effect on Native peoples already living there.

ANSWER KEY

How Territory Took Shape

GRADE 8 · 8.C.6.3.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline federal proposals, laws, and actions that moved Tribes toward Indian Territory, then circle the name of the region where many removed nations were sent. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Louisiana Purchase help start federal plans to remove eastern Tribes?	**It gave federal leaders control of western lands they proposed exchanging for eastern Tribal homelands.**
2	How did the Indian Removal Act lead toward the Choctaw journey west?	**The act authorized the president to negotiate land exchanges. Under pressure, Choctaw leaders signed an 1830 treaty exchanging land in Mississippi for western land, and many families began moving in 1831.**
3	What happened after the Cherokee Nation challenged removal in court, and what does that show about the removal process?	**Despite the Supreme Court ruling against Georgia's laws in Cherokee territory, a small group signed a removal treaty without the Cherokee government's approval, and soldiers later forced thousands west. Removal continued despite Cherokee opposition.**
4	How did assigning land to removed nations help Indian Territory take shape, and who else was affected?	**Federal officials assigned removed nations land in the region that became known as Indian Territory. Removal also reshaped the lands of Native peoples already living there.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

After the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, federal leaders proposed moving eastern Tribes west to make room for settlers. The 1830 Indian Removal Act allowed the president to negotiate land exchanges. These agreements were not simply free choices: pressure and broken promises shaped the journeys. Despite a court ruling against Georgia's laws, soldiers forced Cherokee families west in 1838 and 1839. Federal officials assigned removed nations land in the region called Indian Territory. These assignments also reshaped the lands of Native peoples who already lived there.

Accept other accurate chains of events from the passage. Look for a distinction between the act's authorization to negotiate and the later forced removals.