Whose Authority?

Georgia, the Cherokee Nation, and federal removal policy

8.C.8.3.C "Analyze how President Andrew Jackson supported state authority in conflicts with Tribal governments and how this position influenced federal policy toward Indian removal..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two details about Georgia's claim to authority, and circle two details about Cherokee self-government or rights. Draw an arrow connecting Jackson's response to the court ruling with a detail about federal removal policy.

A Ruling and a Removal Policy

1. In the early 1800s, the Cherokee Nation governed its communities on land that Georgia wanted for white settlement. Cherokee leaders used laws, courts, and treaties with the United States to defend their land and political independence. Georgia passed laws extending state control over Cherokee territory and limiting Cherokee self-government. The Cherokee argued that these laws violated their rights as a separate nation. The conflict raised a question: Would the federal government protect its treaty commitments to the Cherokee, or allow Georgia to exercise power on Cherokee land?

2. President Andrew Jackson favored moving Native nations west of the Mississippi River. In 1830, he signed the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the federal government to negotiate land exchanges with Native nations. Jackson also supported Georgia's effort to apply state laws in Cherokee territory, rather than treating the Cherokee government as beyond state control. He claimed that states had authority within their borders, but he also used federal power to push removal. His policy treated Georgia's demands for land as more important than Cherokee claims to self-government.

3. In Worcester v. Georgia (1832), the Supreme Court ruled that Georgia's laws had no force in Cherokee territory. Jackson's administration did not enforce the ruling against Georgia. An unverified story quotes Jackson: "John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it." Historians lack reliable evidence he said this, but the story fits his administration's refusal to challenge Georgia's control. In 1835, a small Cherokee group signed a removal treaty without the Cherokee government's approval. After Jackson left office, federal troops forced many Cherokee west in 1838.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Georgia's claim to authority conflict with the Cherokee Nation's claim to self-government?

2. How did Jackson's response to the Worcester ruling support Georgia's claim to authority?

3. How did Jackson use federal power to advance a policy that favored Georgia's demands for land?

4. What does the passage allow you to conclude about Jackson's response to Worcester, and what does it not allow you to claim about the famous quote?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence memo to a federal official in 1832. Explain how Jackson's support for Georgia's authority could affect Cherokee self-government and removal policy, then recommend a different federal response using two facts from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Whose Authority?

GRADE 8 · 8.C.8.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about Georgia's claim to authority, and circle two details about Cherokee self-government or rights. Draw an arrow connecting Jackson's response to the court ruling with a detail about federal removal policy. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Georgia's claim to authority conflict with the Cherokee Nation's claim to self-government?	**Georgia applied state laws in Cherokee territory, while the Cherokee Nation governed its communities and argued that its rights as a separate nation protected its self-government.**
2	How did Jackson's response to the Worcester ruling support Georgia's claim to authority?	**His administration did not enforce the ruling that Georgia's laws had no force in Cherokee territory, leaving Georgia's actions unchallenged.**
3	How did Jackson use federal power to advance a policy that favored Georgia's demands for land?	**He signed the Indian Removal Act, giving the federal government authority to negotiate land exchanges, and used federal power to push removal rather than protect Cherokee self-government.**
4	What does the passage allow you to conclude about Jackson's response to Worcester, and what does it not allow you to claim about the famous quote?	**His administration did not enforce the ruling against Georgia. The passage does not establish that Jackson actually said the quote.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Georgia's laws limit Cherokee self-government, even though the Cherokee Nation has used laws and treaties to defend its independence. The Supreme Court has ruled that Georgia's laws have no force in Cherokee territory, but Jackson's administration has not enforced that ruling. By leaving Georgia's actions unchallenged while using the Indian Removal Act to push land exchanges, the administration could make removal more likely. I recommend that the federal government uphold the court's ruling and protect its treaty commitments to the Cherokee.

Accept explanations that connect support for Georgia's authority to the failure to enforce Worcester and the federal push for removal. Students should identify the famous quote as unverified, not as a documented statement by Jackson.