More Than One Trail

Trace a series of forced removals to Indian Territory

8.C.8.3.E "Explain the series of forced removals of Tribal citizens from their homelands to Indian Territory, often referred to as the Trail of Tears. Reference: Trail of Tears and Indian Removal Act"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each nation's name where its removal is dated, and underline the government actions that led to each removal so you can trace the series.

Journeys Forced West

1. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. It allowed the president to arrange treaties exchanging Native homelands east of the Mississippi River for land west of it. Officials called these exchanges voluntary, but Tribal leaders faced threats and pressure, and many citizens refused to leave. The Choctaw were among the first forced west, beginning in 1831. Families left homes and farms in the Southeast and traveled toward Indian Territory, in present-day Oklahoma. Poor supplies and harsh weather made the journey deadly for many.

2. The removals did not happen all at once or in the same way. In 1836, U.S. troops forced many Muscogee (Creek) people from Alabama after fighting over land and removal. Soldiers marched captives west, and disease spread in crowded groups. Meanwhile, most Cherokee people opposed giving up their homeland. In 1835, a small group signed the Treaty of New Echota without the approval of the Cherokee national government. Federal officials treated the treaty as permission to remove the Cherokee, even though thousands of Cherokee citizens protested it.

3. In 1838, U.S. soldiers gathered Cherokee families into camps and forced them toward Indian Territory. Some traveled by water; others walked overland through winter into 1839. Exposure, hunger, and illness killed thousands. Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), Cherokee, and other Tribal nations faced distinct removals across many years. Together, these forced journeys are often called the Trail of Tears, not because everyone followed one trail, but because so many people suffered and died. Despite removal, these nations continued to govern themselves and keep their cultures alive in Indian Territory.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Indian Removal Act help bring about the Choctaw removal that began in 1831?

2. How do the Choctaw and Muscogee (Creek) journeys show that forced removal happened in different ways and at different times?

3. How did the Treaty of New Echota lead to the Cherokee removal, despite opposition from Cherokee citizens?

4. Why does the name Trail of Tears refer to a series of removals rather than one journey?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 65 to 85 word label for a museum display titled “More Than One Trail.” Mention the Indian Removal Act, explain in time order how Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), and Cherokee people were forced west, and tell visitors why the Trail of Tears was not one journey. Use your own words.

ANSWER KEY

More Than One Trail

GRADE 8 · 8.C.8.3.E

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each nation's name where its removal is dated, and underline the government actions that led to each removal so you can trace the series. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Indian Removal Act help bring about the Choctaw removal that began in 1831?	**The act allowed the president to arrange land-exchange treaties. Under pressure to leave, Choctaw families were forced from their homelands toward Indian Territory beginning in 1831.**
2	How do the Choctaw and Muscogee (Creek) journeys show that forced removal happened in different ways and at different times?	**The Choctaw removal began in 1831, and travelers faced poor supplies and harsh weather. In 1836, troops marched Muscogee (Creek) captives west, where disease spread in crowded groups.**
3	How did the Treaty of New Echota lead to the Cherokee removal, despite opposition from Cherokee citizens?	**A small group signed the treaty without the Cherokee national government's approval. Federal officials treated it as permission to remove the Cherokee, and soldiers forced families west beginning in 1838.**
4	Why does the name Trail of Tears refer to a series of removals rather than one journey?	**Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek), Cherokee, and other Tribal nations were forced west in distinct removals across many years, and many people suffered or died.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 opened the way for federal officials to push Native nations from their eastern homelands. Choctaw families were forced west beginning in 1831, and many suffered from poor supplies and harsh weather. In 1836, troops marched Muscogee (Creek) captives west. Soldiers later rounded up Cherokee families, who traveled in 1838 and 1839 after a disputed treaty. The Trail of Tears names these separate forced removals, not one walk, and recalls the people who suffered and died.

Accept responses that connect federal policy to forced removal and distinguish the nations' journeys by timing or method. Students should not suggest that all Tribal citizens followed one route.