Whose Authority Counts?

State power, federal law, and Tribal sovereignty in the Jacksonian Era

8.C.8 "Examine the political, economic and social transformations of the Jacksonian Era. Describe the factors that led to the election of President Andrew Jackson..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline South Carolina's and Georgia's claims of authority, and circle Jackson's response to each. Write 1 and 2 beside the claim-and-response pairs so you can compare them.

Two Conflicts Over Power

1. By 1828, many states had dropped property requirements for white male voters. More white men could vote, while women and most Black and Native people remained excluded. Andrew Jackson, a war hero who presented himself as a champion of the "common man," won the presidency. In 1832, South Carolina declared federal tariffs void within the state, arguing that states could reject harmful federal laws. Jackson feared that nullification could break apart the Union. He threatened force, but also supported a lower tariff; South Carolina backed down.

2. The crisis exposed a sectional split: many Southerners opposed tariffs they believed favored Northern industry. The Constitution's Supremacy Clause makes valid federal laws superior to conflicting state laws, while Article III gives federal courts authority to decide cases arising under federal law. Tribal sovereignty raised a different dispute. In Cherokee Nation v. Georgia (1831), the Supreme Court called tribes "domestic dependent nations," not foreign nations able to bring that case. In Worcester v. Georgia (1832), the Court ruled that Georgia's laws had no force within Cherokee territory.

3. Georgia claimed authority over Cherokee land, and federal officials did not consistently honor treaties protecting Tribal lands. Jackson backed removal and did not make Georgia obey Worcester. The 1830 Indian Removal Act authorized land exchanges, but coercion drove removals west. Cherokee leader John Ross fought removal through petitions and courts; Major Ridge signed a disputed removal treaty, hoping to limit losses. Both had fought alongside Americans. Davy Crockett and Christian missionaries opposed removal. In 1838, under President Van Buren, soldiers forced thousands of Cherokee to Indian Territory; many died on the Trail of Tears.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did changes in voting laws and Jackson's public image work together to help him win the presidency?

2. How did the Supremacy Clause and Article III challenge South Carolina's claim that it could reject a federal tariff?

3. How did the two Supreme Court rulings affect the Cherokee Nation's conflict with Georgia, and how did Jackson respond to Worcester?

4. How did John Ross and Major Ridge respond differently to pressure for Cherokee removal?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a five- or six-sentence museum label comparing Jackson's response to South Carolina with his response to Georgia's actions on Cherokee land. Use a detail from each conflict and explain one consequence for the Union or for Cherokee people.

ANSWER KEY

Whose Authority Counts?

GRADE 8 · 8.C.8

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline South Carolina's and Georgia's claims of authority, and circle Jackson's response to each. Write 1 and 2 beside the claim-and-response pairs so you can compare them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did changes in voting laws and Jackson's public image work together to help him win the presidency?	**More white men could vote after states dropped property requirements, and Jackson appealed to them by presenting himself as a champion of the "common man."**
2	How did the Supremacy Clause and Article III challenge South Carolina's claim that it could reject a federal tariff?	**The Supremacy Clause makes valid federal law superior to conflicting state law. Article III gives federal courts authority to decide cases arising under federal law, rather than leaving the final decision to South Carolina.**
3	How did the two Supreme Court rulings affect the Cherokee Nation's conflict with Georgia, and how did Jackson respond to Worcester?	**Cherokee Nation v. Georgia denied the Cherokee Nation's claim to bring its case as a foreign nation. Worcester ruled that Georgia's laws had no force in Cherokee territory, but Jackson did not make Georgia obey that ruling.**
4	How did John Ross and Major Ridge respond differently to pressure for Cherokee removal?	**Ross opposed removal through petitions and courts. Ridge signed a disputed removal treaty, hoping to limit losses as pressure for removal continued.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

South Carolina claimed it could cancel a federal tariff, but Jackson feared this could split the Union. He threatened force and supported a lower tariff, and South Carolina backed down. Georgia claimed authority over Cherokee land despite treaties and a Supreme Court ruling that its laws had no force there. Jackson did not make Georgia obey the Court and instead backed removal. He resisted South Carolina's challenge to federal law but did not resist Georgia's pressure on Cherokee sovereignty. Years later, soldiers forced thousands of Cherokee west, and many died.

Accept answers that distinguish the two court rulings and connect Jackson's different responses to their effects. Do not require students to claim that Jackson personally carried out the 1838 Cherokee removal.