Peace at What Cost?

Examine the goals of military posts in Indian Territory.

OKH.C.2.1.B "major peacekeeping goals of military posts (e.g., Fort Gibson, Fort Towson, Fort Washita) ensuring the success of forced removals and furthering the goals of western expansion."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions the soldiers took to limit violence, circle details about forced removal or federal control, and number the three forts as you find them. Use your marks to trace how peacekeeping and U.S. expansion were connected.

The Work of a Military Post

1 In the 1830s, the United States forced Native nations from homelands east of the Mississippi River into Indian Territory, much of today's Oklahoma. Federal officials described army posts there as peacekeeping sites. Soldiers could guard roads, watch borders, and respond to violence between groups with competing claims to land. Yet the army's presence also served a federal policy: making forced removal possible and keeping relocated nations in the territory assigned to them. A post might reduce an immediate threat while strengthening the government's control over Native land. To judge a post's purpose, ask whose safety it protected and whose plans it advanced.

2 Fort Gibson, established in 1824 near the Arkansas River, stood in a region where Cherokee newcomers and Osage residents faced growing conflict over land. Soldiers were ordered to limit fighting, and the post later served as a supply point during Cherokee removal. Farther south, Fort Towson stood near the Red River, close to lands assigned to the Choctaw. Troops there monitored the border and helped manage the arrival of Choctaw people forced west. These duties could prevent attacks and disorder, but they also helped federal officials carry out removal rather than allowing Native nations to choose whether to move.

3 Fort Washita was established in 1842, after the largest removal marches of the 1830s. Its location near the lands of the Chickasaw and Choctaw let troops respond to threats from raids and disputes on the western edge of settlement. It did not launch those earlier marches; instead, it helped the United States hold the new arrangement in place after removal. Together, these posts formed a military network that protected some people from violence while enforcing federal decisions about where Native nations could live. By upholding removal's results, the army supported expansion into Native homelands in the East and a stronger U.S. hold in the West.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Fort Gibson serve both a peacekeeping goal and the forced removal of the Cherokee?

2. How did Fort Towson's work near the Red River support federal plans for removal?

3. Why would it be inaccurate to say Fort Washita launched the largest removal marches, and how did it still support their results?

4. A visitor says that peacekeeping made these posts neutral. What two details from the passage challenge that claim?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence exhibit label titled “A Post Has Two Purposes.” Use Fort Gibson and Fort Washita to show how posts could offer protection while supporting federal control, explain how their roles differed in time, and connect their work to U.S. expansion.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.2.1.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions the soldiers took to limit violence, circle details about forced removal or federal control, and number the three forts as you find them. Use your marks to trace how peacekeeping and U.S. expansion were connected. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Fort Gibson serve both a peacekeeping goal and the forced removal of the Cherokee?	**Soldiers were ordered to limit fighting between Cherokee newcomers and Osage residents. The fort later served as a supply point during Cherokee removal.**
2	How did Fort Towson's work near the Red River support federal plans for removal?	**Its troops monitored the border and helped manage the arrival of Choctaw people forced west, helping federal officials carry out removal.**
3	Why would it be inaccurate to say Fort Washita launched the largest removal marches, and how did it still support their results?	**Fort Washita was established in 1842, after the largest marches of the 1830s. It helped protect the area and maintain the arrangement imposed after removal.**
4	A visitor says that peacekeeping made these posts neutral. What two details from the passage challenge that claim?	**Fort Gibson supplied Cherokee removal, and Fort Towson helped manage the arrival of Choctaw people forced west. Both actions supported federal removal policy, not just the prevention of violence.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A Post Has Two Purposes: Fort Gibson's soldiers were ordered to limit fighting between Cherokee newcomers and Osage residents, while Fort Washita's troops could respond to threats near Chickasaw and Choctaw lands. Fort Gibson also supplied Cherokee removal in the 1830s. Established in 1842, Fort Washita helped maintain the arrangement imposed after the largest removal marches. Both posts supported federal control of Native land, which furthered U.S. expansion even as the posts addressed threats of violence.

Accept answers that distinguish reducing violence from enforcing federal removal policy. For Fort Washita, students should recognize that it supported removal's results rather than the largest marches themselves.