Routes of Removal

Trace how forced removal changed Native homelands and communities.

OKH.C.2.2.B "Summarize and describe the process and experiences of the forced removal of southeastern Tribes from their homelands, including the establishment of Indian Territory."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one cause of removal, circle two details about the journeys, and number two details about what happened in Indian Territory. Use your marks to trace the process and its effects.

From Homelands to Indian Territory

1. In the 1820s and 1830s, white settlers and state governments pressed to take southeastern Native homelands for farms and cotton fields. The federal Indian Removal Act of 1830 gave the president authority to negotiate land-exchange treaties with Tribes east of the Mississippi River. Federal officials promised land farther west, but pressure, threats, and disputed agreements made many "choices" anything but free. The Choctaw signed the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830 and began moving in 1831. Many Cherokee opposed the 1835 Treaty of New Echota, signed by a small group, yet federal leaders treated it as permission to remove the whole Nation.

2. Removal did not happen in one march or in the same way for every Tribe. Choctaw families traveled west in groups, often without enough food or warm clothing. In 1838, soldiers rounded up many Cherokee people, held them in crowded camps, and forced them west in detachments. Disease, hunger, and exposure killed thousands during the Cherokee removal. Muscogee people also faced forced marches after land seizures and conflict in Alabama. Seminole resistance in Florida led to years of war; many were removed, while others remained. These journeys are often called the Trail of Tears, though each Tribe's experience differed.

3. Federal officials directed removed Tribes to Indian Territory, a region west of the Mississippi River that included much of present-day Oklahoma. It was not empty land: Native peoples, including the Osage, already lived in parts of the region. Through treaties and federal decisions, the United States assigned areas there to arriving Tribes. Families had to rebuild homes, fields, schools, and governments while grieving people and places they had lost. Removal broke ties to ancestral lands, but it did not erase Tribal nations. Their leaders worked to keep communities and governments together even as federal policies continued to threaten their control over land.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did settlers' demands for land and the Indian Removal Act work together to bring about removal?

2. How did the events leading to Choctaw removal differ from those leading to Cherokee removal?

3. What do the Muscogee and Seminole experiences show about the different ways removal unfolded?

4. What did the establishment of Indian Territory mean for arriving Tribes and for Native peoples already living there?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 100 word museum label for an imagined bundle carried by a family during removal. Using facts from the passage, explain why removal happened, describe one specific Tribe's experience, and explain what arrival in Indian Territory meant for both newcomers and people already there.

ANSWER KEY

Routes of Removal

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.2.2.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one cause of removal, circle two details about the journeys, and number two details about what happened in Indian Territory. Use your marks to trace the process and its effects. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did settlers' demands for land and the Indian Removal Act work together to bring about removal?	**Settlers and state governments pressed to take southeastern Native lands. The act gave the president authority to negotiate land-exchange treaties, which federal officials used to move Tribes west.**
2	How did the events leading to Choctaw removal differ from those leading to Cherokee removal?	**The Choctaw signed the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek in 1830 and began moving in 1831. Many Cherokee opposed the Treaty of New Echota, signed by a small group, but federal leaders used it to justify removing the Nation.**
3	What do the Muscogee and Seminole experiences show about the different ways removal unfolded?	**Muscogee people faced forced marches after land seizures and conflict in Alabama. Seminole resistance led to years of war in Florida; many Seminole were removed, while others remained.**
4	What did the establishment of Indian Territory mean for arriving Tribes and for Native peoples already living there?	**The United States assigned areas to arriving Tribes, whose families had to rebuild homes and governments after removal. The territory was not empty; Native peoples, including the Osage, already lived in parts of it.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

This imagined bundle stands for what a family might have carried when the United States pushed southeastern Tribes from their homelands. White settlers wanted land for farms, and federal policy supported westward removal. In 1838, soldiers rounded up many Cherokee people and held them in crowded camps before forcing them west. Hunger, disease, and exposure killed thousands during the Cherokee removal. In Indian Territory, families faced the work of rebuilding homes and governments. The land was not empty: Native peoples, including the Osage, already lived in parts of the region.

Accept accurate descriptions of any Tribe named in the passage. Museum labels should connect the cause, a specific removal experience, and the effects of establishing Indian Territory without presenting the imagined bundle as a real artifact.