Boundaries and Survival

Treaties, military force, and life on reservations

OKH.C.3.1.F "Describe the confinement of American Indians to reservations, including the significance of the Washita Massacre and explain the impact of the reservation policy."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the sentence naming the reservation assigned in 1867, circle two actions troops took at Washita, and number two effects of reservation policy in the last paragraph.

From Treaty to Reservation

1. For generations, Cheyenne families moved across the Plains to hunt bison and gather food. In the 1860s, United States officials pressed Plains nations to sign treaties that restricted them to reservations, lands with boundaries set by the federal government. The 1867 Medicine Lodge treaties assigned the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho a reservation in Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. Many families faced shrinking hunting grounds and pressure from settlers and soldiers even as they tried to negotiate peace.

2. At dawn on November 27, 1868, Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer's troops attacked a Cheyenne village led by Black Kettle beside the Washita River in Indian Territory. Soldiers killed Black Kettle and many other Cheyenne people, including women and children. They took captives and destroyed lodges, food, and horses. Black Kettle had sought peace, yet his village was attacked. The Washita Massacre showed that military force, not just treaty language, could drive Native peoples toward confinement on reservations.

3. After the attack, U.S. campaigns against Plains nations continued. Soldiers and federal agents pushed more communities onto reservations, where travel and hunting were restricted. With bison herds disappearing and access to traditional lands cut off, many families depended on government food rations, which could be inadequate. Reservation policy reduced Native control over land and daily life. Yet Cheyenne and other Native communities maintained family ties, languages, and traditions while challenging federal decisions about their futures.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the 1867 Medicine Lodge treaties change where the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho could live?

2. Why did the attack on Black Kettle's village matter to the effort to confine Native peoples to reservations?

3. How did reservation policy affect families' access to food?

4. How did reservation policy change Native control over land and daily life?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label explaining how the 1867 treaties and the Washita Massacre contributed to reservation confinement. Include two effects on Native communities and explain why the attack mattered.

ANSWER KEY

Boundaries and Survival

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.3.1.F

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the sentence naming the reservation assigned in 1867, circle two actions troops took at Washita, and number two effects of reservation policy in the last paragraph. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the 1867 Medicine Lodge treaties change where the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho could live?	**The treaties assigned them a reservation in Indian Territory and restricted them to land within its boundaries.**
2	Why did the attack on Black Kettle's village matter to the effort to confine Native peoples to reservations?	**It showed that U.S. troops used deadly force, not only treaties, to push Native peoples toward reservation confinement.**
3	How did reservation policy affect families' access to food?	**Limits on travel and hunting cut off access to traditional food sources. Many families depended on government rations that could be inadequate.**
4	How did reservation policy change Native control over land and daily life?	**Federal boundaries and restrictions on travel and hunting reduced Native control over land and daily life.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The 1867 Medicine Lodge treaties assigned the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho a reservation in Indian Territory. In 1868, U.S. troops attacked Black Kettle's Cheyenne village at Washita, killing people and destroying supplies. The attack mattered because it showed that military force could be used to push Native peoples toward confinement. On reservations, restricted hunting increased dependence on government rations, and federal rules reduced Native control over land and daily life.

Accept answers that connect treaty boundaries and military force to confinement. For effects, accept restrictions on movement or hunting, dependence on rations, or reduced control over land and daily life.