Who Controlled the Land?

Congressional decisions and the opening of Tribal lands

OKH.C.3.4 "Explain how American Indians experienced decreasing control over Tribal lands through congressional action. Compare multiple points of view to evaluate the impact of the Dawes Act of 1877 (General Allotment Act) which resulted in the loss..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three congressional actions that changed control of Tribal lands. Circle two contrasting points of view, then number two ways land passed out of Tribal control.

When the Land Opened

1. At noon on April 22, 1889, settlers rushed into central Indian Territory to claim farms in the Unassigned Lands. The rush was not simply a race across empty ground. Federal decisions had first changed who could claim the land. The Creek and Seminole Nations had held interests in this area, and the United States negotiated payments to release those claims. The Indian Appropriations Act of 1889 authorized the president to open the area to non-Native settlement, leading to the land run. From a settler's view, the run offered a farm; from a Tribal view, it showed Congress directing the future of lands once under Tribal control.

2. Congress also changed its relationship with Tribal governments. The Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 ended the practice of making new treaties with Tribes, though it did not cancel existing treaty obligations. Congress could now use laws instead of new treaties to shape federal Indian policy. Under the Dawes Act of 1887, also called the General Allotment Act, federal officials divided land held in common by many Tribes into individual allotments. Land left after allotments could be sold to non-Native settlers. Some people supported allotments as a path to individual ownership; many Tribal members opposed the loss of communal land and self-government.

3. In 1893, another land run opened the Cherokee Outlet after Congress approved an agreement for the Cherokee Nation to cede the land in return for payment. Federal pressure shaped that agreement. The Outlet was not unclaimed land; it had supported Cherokee cattle leases and brought revenue to the Nation. A settler might see a new chance to farm, while a Cherokee leader might see the loss of income and power over land use. Other openings used lotteries instead of races, including a 1901 drawing for claims on former Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache lands. The methods differed, but federal actions repeatedly transferred control away from Tribes.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Indian Appropriations Act of 1889 help make the Unassigned Lands run possible, and how might a settler and a Tribal member view the run differently?

2. How did the 1871 act and the Dawes Act of 1887 change federal control over Tribal affairs in different ways?

3. Compare the two views of allotments in the passage. What effect of the Dawes Act mattered most to each side?

4. How did the Cherokee Outlet run and the 1901 lottery differ, and what did they have in common for Tribal lands?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word museum label titled “Who Controlled the Land?” Explain how two congressional actions changed Tribal control, compare a settler's and a Tribal member's views of one land opening, and make your own claim about whether a land run was a fair way to decide land ownership. Support your claim with evidence from the passage.

ANSWER KEY

Who Controlled the Land?

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.3.4

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three congressional actions that changed control of Tribal lands. Circle two contrasting points of view, then number two ways land passed out of Tribal control. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Indian Appropriations Act of 1889 help make the Unassigned Lands run possible, and how might a settler and a Tribal member view the run differently?	**The act authorized the president to open the area to non-Native settlement. A settler might see a chance to claim a farm, while a Tribal member might see Congress taking control of land decisions.**
2	How did the 1871 act and the Dawes Act of 1887 change federal control over Tribal affairs in different ways?	**The 1871 act ended new treaty making with Tribes, allowing Congress to use laws instead. The Dawes Act divided communal lands into individual allotments and allowed leftover land to be sold.**
3	Compare the two views of allotments in the passage. What effect of the Dawes Act mattered most to each side?	**Supporters valued a path to individual ownership. Many Tribal members opposed the loss of communal land and self-government.**
4	How did the Cherokee Outlet run and the 1901 lottery differ, and what did they have in common for Tribal lands?	**Settlers raced to claim land in the Cherokee Outlet run, while a drawing assigned claims in the 1901 opening. Both followed federal actions that transferred control away from Tribes.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Who Controlled the Land? The 1871 Indian Appropriations Act ended new treaty making with Tribes, giving Congress another way to shape land policy. The 1889 act authorized the opening of the Unassigned Lands to settlers. A settler might welcome the run as a chance to farm, but a Tribal member might object that Congress was deciding the land's future. A race was not a fair way to decide ownership: the Creek and Seminole Nations had held interests in the area, and federal negotiations had to release their claims before settlers could enter.

Accept answers that distinguish congressional decisions from the runs or lottery used to assign claims. Student claims about fairness may differ, but they should account for prior Tribal interests and use evidence from the passage.