One State Path

Trace how two federal laws shaped Oklahoma statehood

OKH.C.4.3 "Explain how the Organic Act of 1890 and Enabling Act paved the way for the admission of Oklahoma and Indian territories into the Union as a single state."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline what the Organic Act established, circle what the Enabling Act authorized, and number the steps from writing a constitution to admission. Use your marks to trace how the two areas became one state.

From Two Areas to One State

1. Imagine standing at a government office in the early 1890s. A sign says "Oklahoma Territory," but the land to the east is called Indian Territory. Those names did not describe two states waiting to merge. Congress passed the Organic Act in 1890, establishing a government for Oklahoma Territory with a governor, legislature, and courts. This gave people there a formal territorial system under federal law. Indian Territory remained outside that new territorial government. Many Native nations there retained their own governments, although federal policies increasingly limited their authority.

2. A territorial government did not automatically become a state government. The Organic Act did not join Oklahoma Territory with Indian Territory or grant either area statehood. By the early 1900s, Congress faced proposals about whether the lands should enter the Union separately or together. Congress chose a single-state route in the Enabling Act of 1906. That law authorized people from both areas to elect delegates to one constitutional convention. Rather than treating the existing boundary as a future state line, it gave delegates from both areas a legal way to draft one constitution for a proposed state named Oklahoma.

3. The Enabling Act also set conditions for the next steps. The proposed constitution would go to voters in both areas, and the president would determine whether it met the act's requirements before proclaiming admission. Delegates met in Guthrie and wrote a constitution; voters approved it in 1907. President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed Oklahoma's admission on November 16, 1907. The two acts had different jobs: the first established a government for Oklahoma Territory, while the second opened a process to unite it with Indian Territory as one state. Neither act alone made the entire area a state on the day it passed.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the Organic Act move Oklahoma Territory toward statehood without making it a state?

2. Why was the Organic Act alone not a way to admit both areas as one state?

3. How did the Enabling Act make a constitution for one state possible?

4. How did the vote and the president's action complete the path set out in the Enabling Act?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short newspaper editorial from 1906 with a headline. Explain why one state is now possible, and predict what legal step would be missing if the Enabling Act had authorized delegates from Oklahoma Territory alone.

One State Path

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline what the Organic Act established, circle what the Enabling Act authorized, and number the steps from writing a constitution to admission. Use your marks to trace how the two areas became one state. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Organic Act move Oklahoma Territory toward statehood without making it a state?	**It established a territorial government with a governor, legislature, and courts, but did not grant statehood.**
2	Why was the Organic Act alone not a way to admit both areas as one state?	**It left Indian Territory outside Oklahoma Territory's government and did not join the areas or grant either statehood.**
3	How did the Enabling Act make a constitution for one state possible?	**It authorized people from both areas to elect delegates to one convention to draft a constitution for a single state.**
4	How did the vote and the president's action complete the path set out in the Enabling Act?	**Voters approved the constitution, and the president determined that it met the act's requirements before proclaiming Oklahoma's admission.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

One State, Two Starting Points. Readers should not mistake a territorial government for statehood. The Organic Act gave Oklahoma Territory its own government, but it left Indian Territory outside that system. Now the Enabling Act permits delegates from both areas to write one constitution. That plan must then go before voters and meet federal requirements before admission. If Congress had invited delegates from Oklahoma Territory alone, this law would not authorize a joint convention for both areas. Congress would need to provide that authority before they could follow a single-state path.

Accept explanations that distinguish the Organic Act's territorial government from the Enabling Act's joint statehood process. For the editorial, the predicted missing step should be federal authorization for both areas to participate in a single-state process.