Two Citizenships

Why the 1924 law passed and what it did not change

OKH.C.6.2.C "Explain the justification for passage of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 and the concept of dual citizenship."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two reasons supporters gave for passing the Indian Citizenship Act. Circle one detail showing that U.S. citizenship did not erase tribal ties, and number one limit of the act.

Citizenship and Tribal Nations

1. Imagine returning from military service to a country that still does not recognize you as a citizen. During World War I, thousands of Native Americans served in the U.S. armed forces, although many were not U.S. citizens. Before 1924, federal laws had granted citizenship to some Native people through specific routes, including allotment of tribal lands, while others remained excluded. Native people had also long pressed for recognition of their rights and political standing. Supporters of a nationwide law argued that military service and unequal treatment exposed a contradiction: the United States relied on Native people but did not recognize all of them as citizens.

2. Congress passed the Indian Citizenship Act in 1924, and President Calvin Coolidge signed it. The law declared all noncitizen Native Americans born within the territorial limits of the United States to be U.S. citizens. Its text also said citizenship would not impair their rights to tribal or other property. Supporters saw the act as a way to end uneven federal citizenship rules and recognize Native people's place in the nation, especially after wartime service. Yet citizenship was not a gift every Native person had requested. Some opposed a federal decision made without their consent, and citizenship alone did not guarantee access to voting.

3. A citizen of a tribal nation can also be a citizen of the United States. These are two distinct political relationships, often called dual citizenship. Tribal nations set their own citizenship rules and govern many internal matters. U.S. citizenship brings rights and responsibilities under federal law. The 1924 act did not erase tribal citizenship or make tribal nations disappear. Nor did it force states to remove barriers to voting: some states continued to block Native voters through discriminatory laws and practices. To evaluate the act, hold two ideas together: federal citizenship expanded, while tribal citizenship and the fight for full political participation continued.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Native Americans' World War I service help supporters justify the 1924 law?

2. Why did supporters see a nationwide citizenship law as necessary even though some Native people were already U.S. citizens?

3. How can someone be a citizen of both a tribal nation and the United States without those being the same citizenship?

4. Why would it be inaccurate to say the act instantly secured voting for every Native citizen?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum label claims, “In 1924, Native people traded tribal citizenship for U.S. citizenship and gained equal voting access at once.” Write a replacement label of 70 to 90 words that explains a reason for the act, how dual citizenship works, and one important limit of the act.

ANSWER KEY

Two Citizenships

HIGH SCHOOL · OKH.C.6.2.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two reasons supporters gave for passing the Indian Citizenship Act. Circle one detail showing that U.S. citizenship did not erase tribal ties, and number one limit of the act. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Native Americans' World War I service help supporters justify the 1924 law?	**Supporters argued that it was contradictory to rely on Native Americans for military service while denying many of them U.S. citizenship.**
2	Why did supporters see a nationwide citizenship law as necessary even though some Native people were already U.S. citizens?	**Earlier laws granted citizenship through specific routes, leaving other Native people excluded. A nationwide law would end that uneven treatment.**
3	How can someone be a citizen of both a tribal nation and the United States without those being the same citizenship?	**Tribal citizenship is a political relationship with a tribal nation, which sets its own citizenship rules. U.S. citizenship is a separate relationship with the federal government.**
4	Why would it be inaccurate to say the act instantly secured voting for every Native citizen?	**The act granted U.S. citizenship, but some states continued to block Native voters through discriminatory laws and practices.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In 1924, Congress made Native Americans born within the territorial limits of the United States who were not already U.S. citizens into citizens. Supporters pointed to uneven citizenship rules and to Native Americans who had served in World War I despite being denied citizenship. The act did not require people to give up citizenship in their tribal nations. A person could belong to a tribal nation and be a U.S. citizen. Yet the new law did not end discriminatory state barriers that kept some Native citizens from voting.

Accept explanations that distinguish tribal citizenship from U.S. citizenship and identify at least one justification for the act. For the museum label, check that students correct both the claim about losing tribal citizenship and the claim about immediate equal voting access.