Occupied for Change

Compare the goals, leadership, and results of two Native rights occupations.

USH.C.7.2.A "Describe the goals of American Indian civil rights efforts by evaluating the strategies of the American Indian Movement and the leadership of Dennis Banks (e.g...."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two goals, circle what protesters did at each site, and number one result and one limit of each occupation.

Taking a Stand on Federal Land

1. By the late 1960s, many Native communities faced poor housing, inadequate health care, and schools controlled by federal officials. Activists argued that federal agencies had ignored treaty promises and made decisions without the people affected. They sought stronger tribal control over land, schools, and public services, along with respect for treaty rights. Instead of waiting for officials to act, some chose occupations, taking over a site to draw public attention to their demands.

2. In 1969, a group called Indians of All Tribes occupied Alcatraz Island, a former federal prison near San Francisco. They proposed a Native cultural center and challenged federal control of Native land. The occupation lasted until 1971 and drew news coverage, though the group did not win the island. Alcatraz was not led by Dennis Banks or organized by the American Indian Movement, known as AIM. Still, its public occupation offered a model for later protests.

3. In 1973, Oglala residents and AIM members occupied Wounded Knee, South Dakota. They protested local tribal leadership and demanded that federal officials address treaty violations and their handling of Native affairs. AIM cofounder Dennis Banks helped lead the 71-day occupation. By holding a place tied to the 1890 massacre, protesters made their demands difficult to ignore. The standoff brought national attention and talks with federal officials, but it did not settle the larger disputes over treaty rights or tribal control.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did occupying Alcatraz advance activists' goals, even though they did not win the island?

2. Why was occupying Wounded Knee a strategic choice for the protesters?

3. How did Dennis Banks's role at Wounded Knee differ from his role at Alcatraz?

4. What does the outcome at Wounded Knee show about both the power and the limits of occupation?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a short advisory note to a Native rights organizer in 1973. Recommend whether to use an occupation to seek treaty rights or tribal control, using evidence from both Alcatraz and Wounded Knee to explain a likely benefit and a limitation.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · USH.C.7.2.A

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two goals, circle what protesters did at each site, and number one result and one limit of each occupation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did occupying Alcatraz advance activists' goals, even though they did not win the island?	**It drew news coverage to demands for Native control of land and a cultural center.**
2	Why was occupying Wounded Knee a strategic choice for the protesters?	**Its connection to the 1890 massacre helped draw attention to treaty violations and federal handling of Native affairs.**
3	How did Dennis Banks's role at Wounded Knee differ from his role at Alcatraz?	**Banks helped lead the AIM occupation at Wounded Knee. He did not lead the Indians of All Tribes occupation at Alcatraz.**
4	What does the outcome at Wounded Knee show about both the power and the limits of occupation?	**The occupation brought national attention and talks with federal officials, but it did not settle disputes over treaty rights or tribal control.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would recommend an occupation only if organizers also plan how to turn public attention into talks. The Indians of All Tribes occupation of Alcatraz drew news coverage but did not secure the island, showing that publicity alone cannot guarantee a concrete gain. At Wounded Knee, Dennis Banks and other protesters gained national attention and talks with federal officials, but the standoff did not settle treaty disputes. Organizers should use visibility to press for specific agreements.

Accept either recommendation if it uses accurate evidence from both occupations and explains a benefit and a limitation. Do not credit claims that Banks led the Alcatraz occupation.