

Land, Laws, Lives

Trace how federal actions shaped settlement and Native communities.

USII.1.c “examining the impact of policies, legislation, and treaties associated with the growth of the nation; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each law or treaty named in the passage. Circle the effect each one had on settlers or Native peoples, then number the circles to match the law or treaty that caused the effect.

Federal Decisions and Westward Growth

- ① During the early 1800s, United States leaders wanted more land for farms, towns, and trade routes. In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. The law allowed the president to negotiate removal treaties with Native nations living east of the Mississippi River. Supporters said removal would open land to white settlers. Many Native communities opposed leaving their homelands. The law increased federal pressure on these nations and led to forced migration, loss of property, and death.
- ② One removal treaty was the Treaty of New Echota, signed in 1835 by a small group of Cherokee people. Most Cherokee citizens and their elected government did not approve it. Even so, the federal government used the treaty to claim that the Cherokee had agreed to leave. In 1838 and 1839, U.S. troops forced thousands of Cherokee west. This journey, called the Trail of Tears, caused thousands of deaths and separated people from homes, farms, and communities.
- ③ Later legislation encouraged settlers to move west. The Homestead Act of 1862 offered 160 acres of public land to eligible applicants who lived on and improved the land for five years. This policy helped many families establish farms and expanded U.S. settlement. However, much of the land had been taken from Indigenous peoples through earlier treaties, warfare, or removal. As settlers claimed homesteads, Native nations faced smaller territories, fewer resources, and greater pressure to change their ways of life.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 How did the Indian Removal Act help open land for white settlers, and what effect did it have on Native nations?

2 Why was the Treaty of New Echota disputed by many Cherokee people, and how did the federal government use it?

3 What did the Homestead Act require applicants to do, and how did the act expand U.S. settlement?

4 What shared effect did the Indian Removal Act and the Homestead Act have on Native nations, even though the laws worked in different ways?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write three sentences about a fictional federal land policy. Explain how it could support settlement, describe one likely effect on a Native nation, and judge whether the policy would be fair.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each law or treaty named in the passage. Circle the effect each one had on settlers or Native peoples, then number the circles to match the law or treaty that caused the effect. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the Indian Removal Act help open land for white settlers, and what effect did it have on Native nations?	It allowed removal treaties that pushed Native nations from land east of the Mississippi. It opened land to white settlers and led to forced migration, property loss, and death.
2	Why was the Treaty of New Echota disputed by many Cherokee people, and how did the federal government use it?	Most Cherokee citizens and their elected government did not approve it because only a small group signed it. The federal government used it to claim that the Cherokee had agreed to leave.
3	What did the Homestead Act require applicants to do, and how did the act expand U.S. settlement?	Applicants had to live on and improve 160 acres of public land for five years. The act helped families establish farms and encouraged settlers to move west.
4	What shared effect did the Indian Removal Act and the Homestead Act have on Native nations, even though the laws worked in different ways?	Both helped make more land available for U.S. settlement and increased pressure on Native nations. Removal forced people from homelands, while homesteads were claimed on land taken from Indigenous peoples.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A new land law could offer farm plots to settlers only after they receive permission from the Native nation that lives nearby. It could support settlement through agreements instead of forced removal. This would be fairer because Native nations would help decide what happens to their lands.

Accept answers that accurately connect a policy, law, or treaty to a result for settlement and a result for Native peoples. For the open response, accept reasonable fictional policies and judgments when all three requested parts are present.