

Name: _____ Period: _____

Cherokee Removal DBQ Essay

In the 1830s the United States government followed a policy of Indian Removal. What this meant was that the United States, through treaties and other actions, tried to remove all the Indian tribes from the states east of the Mississippi River to territory west of the river. The Cherokee were one of the tribes that were forced to decide how they would respond to this policy. The story of what happened to the Cherokee provides a *case study* of what happened among the Indian tribes, the United States government, and the white settlers who moved west from the original thirteen states.

Directions:

In Part I, Part II, and Part III, you will read and use information from both secondary and primary sources. You will learn what led to the government's demand that the Cherokee leave their land in Georgia, the situation of the Cherokee in Georgia at the time of the demand, and how the Cherokee responded to the government's demand that they move to territories west of the Mississippi River.

Your task in this assessment, is to examine the documents provided, and use them to write a argumentative essay in response to the following question:

By 1838, which would have been better for the Cherokee Indians: to finally accept or to continue to resist the U.S. government's demand they move to new tribal lands west of the Mississippi River?

Important Essay Dates

- 1/20 & 1/21 (Wednesday/Thursday) - Review Background Essay in class
- 1/22 (Friday) - Start document analysis in class
- 1/25 & 1/26 (Monday & Tuesday) - Document analysis in class
- 1/27 & 1/28 (Wednesday/Thursday) - Finish document analysis and start outlining in class
- 2/2 (Tuesday) - Writing time in class
- 2/3 & 2/4 (Wednesday/Thursday) - Writing time in class
- 2/8 (Monday) - Rough draft due/Peer review in class
- 2/12 (Friday) - Essay due

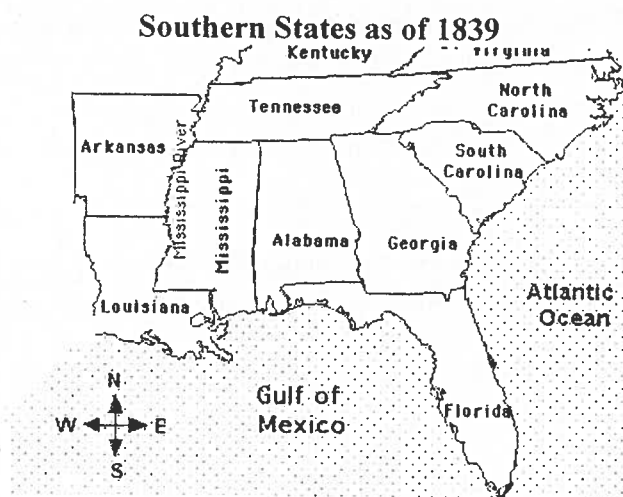
Part I

Background Information

Read the following passages and respond to the questions that follow each section.

A Brief Narrative of the events leading up to the government's demand the Cherokee leave their traditional land and move to the West.¹

The southern states (see below) were home to the Indian peoples that the whites called the "Five Civilized Tribes." One of these tribes, the Cherokee, lived on some of Georgia's richest farmland but white settlers wanted the Cherokee's land for their own use. In addition to being good farmland, gold was discovered on Cherokee land in 1829, drawing many white settlers into the region. Most of these white settlers wanted the Cherokee land and gold.



Previously, the Cherokee had responded to the westward movement of settlers by trying to fit in with the new ideas and culture the settlers brought with them. In fact, no other American Indian people had ever so thoroughly assimilated to and adopted the ways of white society. They built sawmills and factories for weaving cloth, they built public schools, and they built miles of good roads. Many Cherokee intermarried with whites. They had their own constitution, courts, and newspapers. Some even owned large plantations worked by African American slaves. But this did not make a difference to the Georgians who wanted their land. Cherokee people were denied many rights. Cherokee land titles were declared illegal. Cherokee were forbidden to testify in court against whites. They were even forbidden to dig for gold on their own land.

¹ Sources: The West: An Illustrated History, Geoffrey C. Ward (Little, Brown, and Company, 1996). Selected Case Studies in American History: Volume I, California State Series, 1972. The New American Nation, Marlene Smith-Barzini and Howard Egger-Bovet (Little, Brown, and Company, 1995).

1. Why did the white settlers want to take over the Cherokee's land? Provide at least two reasons. _____

2a. Explain how the Cherokee adapted to living close to the white settlers. _____

2b. Explain why you think the Cherokee responded in this way. _____

The Cherokee, living on 40,000 acres in the heart of Georgia, tried to resist this loss of their land through legal means. Led by Chief John Ross, they took their case to the U.S. Supreme Court - and won a limited victory. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall said that the Cherokee Indians were their own nation and



even though they must follow the laws of the United States government, the Cherokee were *not* subject to the laws of individual states, such as Georgia. This meant that as an individual state, Georgia could not make laws that simply took away the Cherokee's land. Marshall summed up his position in this way, "The Cherokee nation... is a distinct community, occupying its own territory...in which the laws of Georgia can have no force, and the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter, but with the assent [agreement] of the Cherokees themselves..."

3. Why do you think Chief John Ross took his case to the Supreme Court? _____

4. In your own words, summarize the Supreme Court/John Marshall's ruling on the state of Georgia and the Cherokee nation. _____

But President Andrew Jackson refused to enforce the Supreme Court ruling. He was famously credited for saying, "John Marshall has made his decision; now let him enforce it." Jackson believed that the Cherokee were in the way of American expansion and "progress." In addition, the settlers who wanted their land were the voters who had elected Jackson to office and he wished to keep their support. Jackson made it clear that no matter how hard the Cherokee tried to make their civilization match the whites surrounding them, they would still have to move. On May 28, 1830 President Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act. It gave him the power to make new treaties with all the tribes east of the Mississippi. These treaties were written to force the tribes to give up their lands in the East for new lands in the West.



5. Why did President Andrew Jackson refuse to accept and enforce the Supreme Court/John Marshall's ruling? _____

6. What action did President Jackson take in order to force the tribes to give up their lands in the East for new lands in the West? _____

Two Choices for the Cherokee

These actions of the United States government forced the Cherokee into making a difficult decision that divided them into two groups.

One group argued that they should not give up the land “of their ancestors” and should continue resisting the demand that they leave. The resistance ranged from continued efforts to convince government leaders in Washington to save the Cherokee nation, to hiding out in the wilderness areas near the Cherokee homeland, hoping to avoid capture by the U.S. soldiers.

Other Cherokee, who came to be called the “treaty party,” (which was led by several members of the Ridge family), came to the conclusion that the longer they resisted the move, the more the tribe would be hurt. They argued that it was time to admit defeat, give up their lands, and move west. On December 29, 1835 the leaders of this party signed a treaty ceding [giving up] all of their lands in exchange for \$5 million. Additionally, the Treaty Party leaders were promised that the U.S. government would honor the title of the Cherokee Nation's new land west of the Mississippi River, and protect its tribe from future trespasses by white settlers.

After the treaty was signed, 80 percent of the tribe - almost 16,000 Cherokee - said that they did not support the treaty and that Major Ridge (left) and his supporters from the Treaty Party spoke only for themselves. John Ross (right) argued that the Cherokee who signed the treaty did not represent the entire Cherokee nation and had no authority to sign the treaty. He argued that the Cherokee should continue to find ways to resist removal. The U.S. Senate, after intense debate, ratified [approved] the treaty by a vote of 28-19.



7. Why did Major Ridge and the Treaty Party sign a treaty with the U.S. government?

8. In your own words, summarize the two choices facing the Cherokee at this time in American history.

2

In addition, write a brief statement about your thinking at this time (you may change your mind after reading the source documents) about the assessment question:

By 1838, which would have been better for the Cherokee Indians: to finally accept or to continue to resist the U.S. government's demand they move to new tribal lands west of the Mississippi River?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Part II

Sources

Below are a series of both primary and secondary sources.

We will complete the first source together in order to provide a model for how to complete the remaining documents. Note that, depending on your viewpoint, this source (as well as many of the other sources) can be used to argue either side of the debate.

Source #1

In a letter to the U.S. Government, John Ridge, a Cherokee, describes what is happening to the Cherokee in Georgia.



“You [U.S. Government] asked us to give up hunting and fighting. We did so. You asked us to form a republican government. We did so. We used your own government as a model. You asked us to cultivate the earth and learn the white man’s ways. We did so. You asked us to learn to read. We did so. You asked us to worship your God. We did so.

And what is happening? Our people are being hunted and thrown out of their own homes... The State of Georgia is planning to hold a lottery to divide the Cherokee lands among whites.”

-John Ridge, son of Major Ridge, 1832

1. How did the Cherokee adapt their culture in order to live peacefully among the white settlers?

2. Sourcing: Who wrote this letter? Who is the audience for this letter? _____

3. How did the U.S. government respond to the Cherokee's attempt to assimilate to white culture?

4. Analysis:

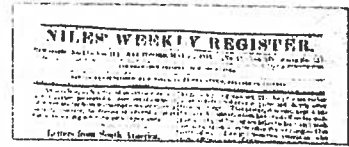
This document suggests that the Cherokee should (circle one) ACCEPT OR RESIST the U.S. government demand to move west of the Mississippi river.

Choose a quote from the document to support your answer:

Explain how the quote supports your answer:

Source #2

In this newspaper article, a Cherokee author writes about the problems the tribe would face if it left Georgia and moved to the territory west of the Mississippi river.



We wish to remain on the lands of our fathers... if we are compelled to leave our country, [then] we see nothing but ruin before us. The country to which we are told to go is unknown to us...All of the inviting parts of it are already occupied by various Indian nations, they would regard us as intruders, and look upon us with an evil eye...the greater part of the region is badly supplied with wood and water; and no Indian tribe can live as agriculturalists [farmers] without these articles.

-from Niles Week Register, 38 (August 21, 1839)

1. What are the possible problems the Cherokee would face if they left Georgia?

2. What does the author mean when he says the Cherokee "see nothing but ruin before us"?

3. Analysis:

This document suggests that the Cherokee should (circle one) ACCEPT OR RESIST the U.S. government demand to move west of the Mississippi river.

Choose a quote from the document to support your answer:

Explain how the quote supports your answer:

Source # 3

President Andrew Jackson advises a Cherokee Chief.



"It is better for you and your people to leave Georgia. Contact with the white men can only bring you trouble. We will pay you for the land and give you land in the West. If you insist on remaining, you will only be driven off."

- President Andrew Jackson, to Major Ridge, a Cherokee Chief, 1832

1. Why did Andrew Jackson want the Cherokee to move west of the Mississippi river?

2. What did Jackson offer the Cherokee if they moved west of the Mississippi river?

3. Sourcing: Who wrote this letter and what is his perspective on the Native American removal?

4. Analysis:

This document suggests that the Cherokee should (circle one) ACCEPT OR RESIST the U.S. government demand to move west of the Mississippi river.

Choose a quote from the document to support your answer:

Explain how the quote supports your answer:

Source # 4

This is a historian's account of outbreaks of cholera that occurred while southeastern tribes made the crowded journey westward.

Note: cholera is a disease that is caused by drinking contaminated water. This usually occurs when a large number of people are living in close contact without proper sewage disposal. This disease causes severe diarrhea, which could lead to death.



"Widespread were the tales [that the Cherokee might have heard] of hardships and many deaths from cholera during the removal of other southeastern tribes...Reports of [an outbreak of] cholera in the spring of 1834 reached the group of Cherokees who had agreed to be removed [to the lands west of the Mississippi]."

- Russell Thornton, in The Cherokees: A Population History. University of Nebraska Press, 1990

1. How might the tribes who planned to move west react to the news of cholera outbreaks in other tribes while journeying west?

2. Analysis:

This document suggests that the Cherokee should (circleone) ACCEPT OR RESIST the U.S. demand to move west of the Mississippi river.

Choose a quote from the document to support your answer:

Explain how the quote supports your answer:

Source # 5

The leader of the Treaty Party, Major Ridge, talks to members of the Cherokee nation about whether they should stay in Georgia or leave west of the Mississippi river.

“The white man now wants our lands. I know the Indians have been put here by God and they have the right to the land. But the white men are strong and we are weak. They are many and we are few. We cannot remain here in safety. We love the lands of our fathers. But we must leave. I would die to keep our lands, but if we use force, we will lose not only our lands, but our lives and the lives of our children. There is only one way we can remain a Nation. Sell the land. Give up these lands and go over beyond the Great Father of Waters, the Mississippi River.”

- Major Ridge, 1835

1. Why does Major Ridge think that Cherokee should sell their land and move?

2. Analysis:

This document suggests that the Cherokee should (circle one) ACCEPT OR RESIST the U.S. demand to move west of the Mississippi river.

Choose a quote from the document to support your answer:

Explain how the quote supports your answer:



Source # 6

A United States general's statement regarding the mistreatment of the Cherokee by the United States Army.

"If I could...I would remove every Indian tomorrow, beyond the reach of the white man, who like vultures are watching, ready to pounce upon their prey, and strip them of everything they have or expect to have from the Government. ...Ninety-nine out of every hundred will go penniless to the West "

-United States General John Ellis Wool, 1836

1. Vultures are birds that feed on dead and dying animals. Why would a U.S. general compare white men to vultures?

2. Sourcing: According to this author, who is he criticizing and why?

3. Analysis:

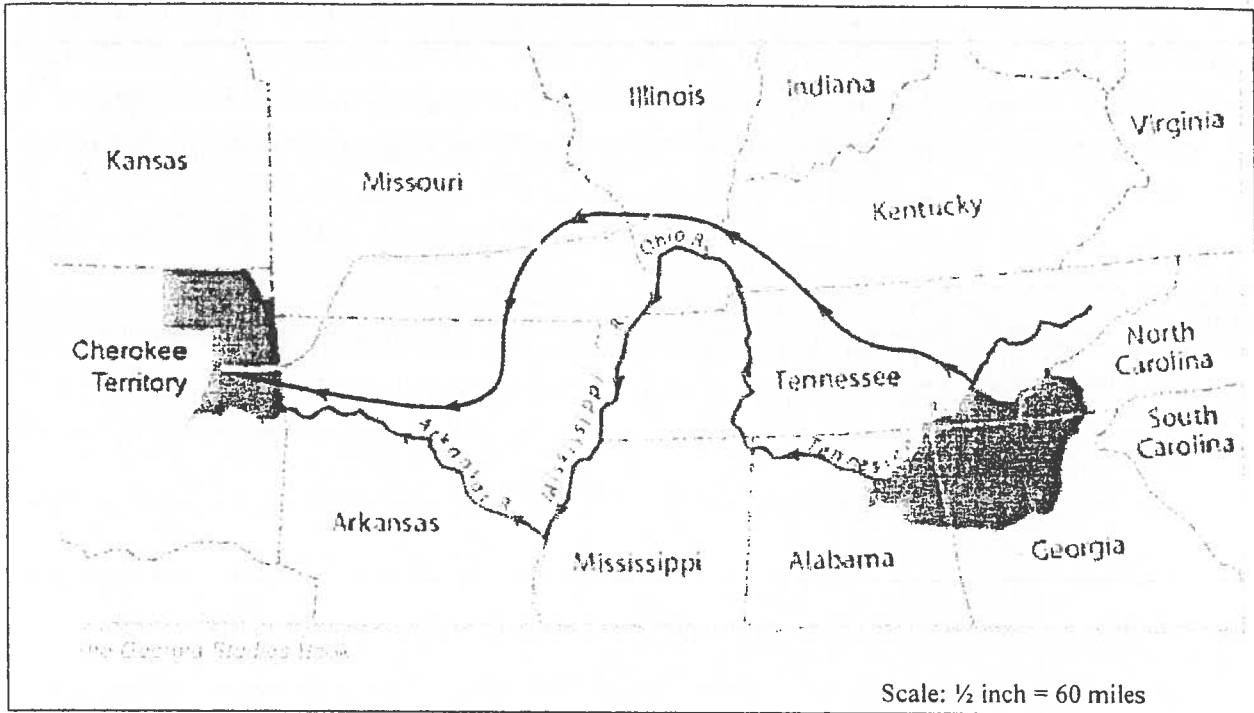
This document suggests that the Cherokee should (circle one) ACCEPT OR RESIST the U.S. government demand to move west of the Mississippi river.

Choose a quote from the document to support your answer:

Explain how the quote supports your answer:

Source #7

This map shows two different routes the Cherokee might have used to move from Georgia to west of the Mississippi River.



1. Use the scale to measure the approximate distance from the Cherokee territories in Georgia to the new Cherokee territory. What is the distance? _____

2. What possible obstacles and/or problems might the Cherokee encounter during this journey?

4. Analysis:

This document suggests that the Cherokee should (circle one) ACCEPT OR RESIST the U.S. government demand to move west of the Mississippi River.

Explain how this map supports your answer:

Part III

Preparing to Write

Review your answers to the “Analysis” questions for sources 1-7, and using the chart below, place a check ✓ in the box that best describes the source, and then provide a brief quote to support your opinion of the source. You can use this chart to help incorporate evidence in your essay.

Source	Supports the argument to ACCEPT OR RESIST the demand to move west.	Quote from the source
1. John Ridge, letter to the government, 1832	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPT <input type="checkbox"/> RESIST	
2. Newspaper article, 1839	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPT <input type="checkbox"/> RESIST	
3. Andrew Jackson, letter to the Cherokee, 1832	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPT <input type="checkbox"/> RESIST	
4. Historian Russell Thorton on spread of disease, 1990	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPT <input type="checkbox"/> RESIST	
5. Major Ridge to the Cherokee nation, 1835	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPT <input type="checkbox"/> RESIST	
6. General John Ellis Wool, 1836	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPT <input type="checkbox"/> RESIST	
7. Map of possible relocation routes	<input type="checkbox"/> ACCEPT <input type="checkbox"/> RESIST	(Describe the source.)

Part IV

Writing Assignment

Decide whether the best decision for the Cherokee, would have been to further resist or to accept removal.

Check ☒ the one box that represents your judgment:

☐ I think that at this point in time (1838), it was best for the Cherokee to finally accept removal.

☐ I think that that at this point in time (1838), it was best for the Cherokee to further resist removal.

Now that you have made your judgment, your task is to support this decision by writing an essay that responds to the following question:

“By 1838, which would have been better for the Cherokee Indians to finally accept or to continue to resist the U.S. government’s demand they move to new tribal lands west of the Mississippi River?”

Write a multi-paragraph essay that answers this question. Your answer should support your opinion with:

- Information you learned in class
- Evidence from the primary and secondary sources you have read
 - *Remember to include important quotations*
- Explanations of how the evidence you have chosen supports your thesis- this is your argument
 - *You may use your response to the analysis question following each source your analysis questions*
- A counterargument