

Name:

Date:

Excerpt from President Andrew Jackson's Second Annual Message (1830)

Instructions: Read the primary source excerpt. Define the terms in bold using context clues or a dictionary, then answer the questions that follow.



The tribes which occupied the countries now constituting the Eastern States were **annihilated** or have melted away to make room for the whites. The waves of population and civilization are rolling to the westward, and we now propose to **acquire** the countries occupied by the red men of the South and West by a fair exchange, and, at the **expense** of the United States, to send them to a land where their existence may be prolonged and perhaps made **perpetual**.

Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they more than our ancestors did or than our children are now doing? To better their condition in an unknown land our forefathers left all that was dear

in earthly objects. Our children by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth to seek new homes in distant regions. Does Humanity weep at these painful separations from everything, animate and inanimate, with which the young heart has become entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source of joy that our country affords scope where our young population may range unconstrained in body or in mind, developing the power and faculties of man in their highest perfection...

Can it be cruel in this Government when, by events which it can not control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home to purchase his lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode? How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions! If the offers made to the Indians were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy.

And is it supposed that the wandering **savage** has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, **civilized** Christian? Is it more afflicting to him to leave the graves of his fathers than it is to our brothers and children? Rightly considered, the policy of the General Government toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous. He is unwilling to submit to the laws of the States and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.

Name:

Date:

term	definition
annihilate	
acquire	
expense	
perpetual	
savage	
civilized	

1. Who is Jackson speaking about in his message, and who is his intended audience?
2. What plan or policy is Jackson describing in his message?

Date:

3. What does Jackson say the U.S. government plans to do with American Indian land?
4. What do the words or phrases in Jackson's message suggest about his views of American Indians and U.S. expansion?
5. How does Jackson compare the experience of American Indians to the white American settlers?

Excerpt from President Andrew Jackson's Second Annual Message (1830)

Answer Key

term	definition
annihilate	<i>to destroy completely</i>
acquire	<i>to get (something)</i>
expense	<i>the amount of money that is needed to pay for or to buy something</i>
perpetual	<i>continuing forever</i>
savage	<i>a person who has a way of life that is simple and not highly advanced</i>
civilized	<i>marked by well-organized laws and rules about how people behave with each other</i>

1. Who is Jackson speaking about in his message, and who is his intended audience?
Jackson is speaking about American Indians living in the United States. His audience is Congress and the American public, especially white citizens.
2. What plan or policy is Jackson describing in his message?
Jackson is describing the policy of Indian Removal.
3. What does Jackson say the U.S. government plans to do with American Indian land?
Jackson says the United States plans to acquire American Indian lands in the South and East for settlement. In return, he claims the government will provide American Indians with new land in the West and pay for their removal and support.
4. What do the words or phrases in Jackson's message suggest about his views of American Indians and U.S. expansion?
Phrases such as "to save him from...utter annihilation," "liberal and generous," and "wandering savage" suggest Jackson's racist and discriminatory views of American Indians. He argues that U.S. expansion is part of the nation's "civilization" and "progress."
5. How does Jackson compare the experience of American Indians to the white American settlers?
Jackson compares the forced removal of American Indians to the voluntary migrations of white settlers who move west to find better opportunities. Even though they are not the same, he argues that American Indians should not be pitied for leaving their homes because, like settlers, they are supposedly being offered a chance for improvement and should be grateful.