

the dawes act of 1887 worksheet answers

The Dawes Act of 1887 Worksheet Answers are essential for understanding the impact of this significant piece of legislation on Native American tribes and their lands. The Dawes Act, also known as the General Allotment Act, was signed into law by President Grover Cleveland and aimed to assimilate Native Americans into American society by allotting them individual plots of land. This article will provide a comprehensive overview of the Dawes Act, its effects, and how to analyze the worksheet answers related to this critical historical document.

Understanding the Dawes Act of 1887

The Dawes Act of 1887 represented a pivotal shift in U.S. policy regarding Native Americans. Prior to the act, Native American tribes were recognized as sovereign nations with collective landholdings. However, the Dawes Act sought to change that by promoting individual land ownership among Native Americans, which was seen as a way to facilitate their integration into American society.

The Main Objectives of the Dawes Act

The Dawes Act aimed to achieve several key objectives:

1. Assimilation: The U.S. government believed that individual land ownership would encourage Native Americans to adopt Western lifestyles and abandon their communal ways.
2. Reduction of Tribal Land: By allotting land to individuals rather than tribes, the Act aimed to reduce the overall land held by Native Americans. This would free up land for white settlers and expansion.
3. Economic Independence: The government hoped that individual land ownership would lead Native Americans to become self-sufficient farmers, thus promoting economic independence.
4. Cultural Change: The act was part of a broader strategy to change the cultural practices of Native

Americans, promoting Western values over traditional tribal customs.

The Provisions of the Dawes Act

The Dawes Act contained several important provisions:

- Allotment of Land: Each eligible Native American male was granted 160 acres of land, while females received 80 acres. Families could receive additional land based on the number of dependents.
- Trust Period: The allotted land was held in trust by the government for 25 years, during which the Native Americans could not sell or transfer the land. After this period, they would receive full ownership.
- Citizenship: Native Americans who accepted the allotments and agreed to abandon their tribal affiliation would be granted U.S. citizenship.
- Surplus Land: Any land not allotted to Native Americans would be declared surplus and made available for settlement by white Americans.

The Impact of the Dawes Act

The Dawes Act had profound and lasting effects on Native American communities:

1. Loss of Land: The Act resulted in the loss of millions of acres of tribal land. Native American tribes lost about 90 million acres of their original land holdings.
2. Fragmentation of Tribes: The emphasis on individual land ownership undermined tribal cohesion and identity, leading to a breakdown of traditional social structures.
3. Economic Struggles: Many Native Americans were not familiar with farming practices or land management, leading to economic difficulties and increased poverty.
4. Cultural Erosion: The push for assimilation resulted in the loss of languages, customs, and traditions as Native Americans were pressured to adopt Western ways of life.

Analyzing the Dawes Act Worksheet Answers

When examining the **Dawes Act of 1887 worksheet answers**, it is important to consider various aspects of the Act and its implications. Here are some key points to focus on:

Key Questions to Consider

- What were the primary goals of the Dawes Act? Understanding the intent behind the legislation can help contextualize its impact.
- How did the Dawes Act change the relationship between the U.S. government and Native American tribes? This question explores the shift from recognizing tribes as sovereign entities to viewing them as individuals.
- What were the immediate and long-term effects of the Dawes Act on Native American communities? Analyzing these effects helps to grasp the broader consequences of the policy.
- How did the Act affect land ownership and economic viability for Native Americans? This question allows for a discussion on the practical implications of land allotment.

Worksheet Activities

To engage students or learners with the Dawes Act effectively, consider incorporating the following activities into the worksheet:

1. **Timeline Creation:** Have students create a timeline of key events related to the Dawes Act, including its passage, major consequences, and subsequent policies affecting Native Americans.
2. **Comparative Analysis:** Ask students to compare the Dawes Act with other policies aimed at Native American assimilation, such as the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.
3. **Debate:** Organize a debate on the effectiveness of the Dawes Act in achieving its goals, encouraging students to research and present various perspectives.

4. Reflective Essay: Encourage students to write an essay reflecting on the cultural impact of the Dawes Act on Native American communities, emphasizing personal and societal changes.

Conclusion

In summary, the **Dawes Act of 1887 worksheet answers** serve as a gateway to understanding one of the most significant and controversial pieces of legislation in U.S. history. By examining the Act's objectives, provisions, and impacts, students and learners can gain insights into the complexities of U.S.-Native American relations. The Dawes Act not only reshaped the landscape of Native American lands but also had lasting effects on their cultures and communities. Understanding this pivotal act is crucial for anyone interested in American history and the ongoing struggles faced by Native American tribes today.

Frequently Asked Questions

What was the primary purpose of the Dawes Act of 1887?

The primary purpose of the Dawes Act of 1887 was to assimilate Native Americans into American society by allotting them individual plots of land and granting them U.S. citizenship, thereby promoting private land ownership.

How did the Dawes Act impact Native American land ownership?

The Dawes Act resulted in the loss of significant amounts of Native American land, as it divided communal tribal lands into individual allotments, leading to the sale of surplus land to non-Native settlers and a drastic reduction in Native American landholdings.

What were the consequences of the Dawes Act for Native American tribes?

The consequences of the Dawes Act for Native American tribes included the fragmentation of tribal lands, erosion of cultural practices tied to communal land use, and a decline in the economic stability of many tribes as they struggled to adapt to individual land ownership.

What was a significant criticism of the Dawes Act?

A significant criticism of the Dawes Act was that it undermined Native American cultures and social structures by promoting individualism over communal living, often leading to poverty and loss of identity among Native American populations.

Did the Dawes Act have any long-term effects on Native American communities?

Yes, the Dawes Act had long-term effects on Native American communities, including ongoing economic challenges, land loss, and a continued struggle for sovereignty and recognition of tribal rights, contributing to the complexities of Native American issues in modern times.

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