

# THE DAWES ACT AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN

A re-creation of the conflict between pro and con factions,  
debating whether or not the Native Americans should be “Americanized”

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## Why was there a demand to solve the “Indian problem” in the 1880s?

This historical re-creation has students participate as members of Congress during the 1880s. They role-play members of three congressional factions debating how to deal with “the Indian problem.” The specific piece of legislation under consideration, the Dawes Act of 1887, was a controversial action taken by the federal government. As your students get deeply involved in the many issues related to how Indians have been treated in American history, they will experience the following:

### **Knowledge**

1. Learning that the Dawes Severalty Act was a move to break up Indian tribal autonomy, even on the reservations.
2. Realizing that the opinion regarding the Dawes Act was definitely not unanimous: strong arguments were advanced by sides favoring and opposing the act.
3. Understanding that the decision to “civilize” the Indian was brought about by the government’s belief that this was the greatest gift the white man could give the red man.
4. Learning that the growth of a nation is a long, slow process characterized by continual challenge and change.

### **Attitudes**

1. Recognizing the democratic alternatives that can be used to legislate a solution to a national problem.
2. Understanding the vast scope of “the Indian problem” and the many alternatives that could be tried as solutions.
3. Realizing the difficulty in solving problems when two powerful viewpoints are in conflict.

### **Skills**

1. Using various types of information and contrary points of view as sources for a specific purpose.
2. Working effectively with others in planning, executing, and evaluating a group activity.
3. Making individual and small group decisions.
4. Organizing and presenting information clearly and accurately.

## OVERVIEW



Four class periods—or days—are needed for this re-creation of the Dawes Act and the American Indian.

### Day 1

In the first hour students are given background information concerning events of this historical period. Students are divided into three congressional factions: Pro, Con, and Undecided. With the aid of general and specific information provided, these factions meet and assign specific arguments for members to present during the second hour. An overnight assignment is provided.

### Days 2-3


During the second and third hours the classroom is divided with the three factions seated to the left, right, and center of the chairperson. (You will likely be the chairperson.) The Pro and Con faction members speak alternately for and against Issue 1. After each side's argument is presented, the Undecided speakers will ask questions of the Pro and Con members. This sequence is followed for the remaining issues. After the debate has concluded, a vote is taken. An overnight assignment is provided.

### Day 4

The class is again divided in the final hour for debriefing/testing. Emphasis is placed on the contemporary relevance of the Indian problem in modern society.



## SETUP DIRECTIONS



**Note:** You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for *Interact* has provided different colored handouts for those students playing roles. If you choose to give the *PRE-TEST* and *POST-TEST* you will have to duplicate them. All other necessary items are in the *Student Guide*.

You will likely wish to divide the students so that each of the three groups has an equal number of capable students—particularly in their ability to speak.

1. **Decision about time** This re-creation was written to function within four class periods—one for preparation, two for the re-creation, and one for the debriefing. However, after carefully studying the *Student Guide* pages and the various handouts in this *Teacher Guide*, you may want to alter it significantly because of your students' abilities, the materials on hand, and the time pressures you feel.
2. **Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this *Teacher Guide*.
  - PRO LEADER (one: one page)
  - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 1 (one: one page)
  - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 2 (one: one page)
  - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 3 (one: one page)
  - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 4 (one: one page)
  - PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 5 (one: one page)
  - CON LEADER (one: one page)
  - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 1 (one: one page)
  - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 2 (one: one page)
  - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 3 (one: one page)
  - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 4 (one: one page)
  - CON ARGUMENT: Issue 5 (one: one page)
  - UNDECIDED LEADER (one: one page)
  - UNDECIDED QUESTIONS (one: three pages for five questioners—cut apart Issues 1 and 2, 3 and 4 on broken lines)

**Optional:**

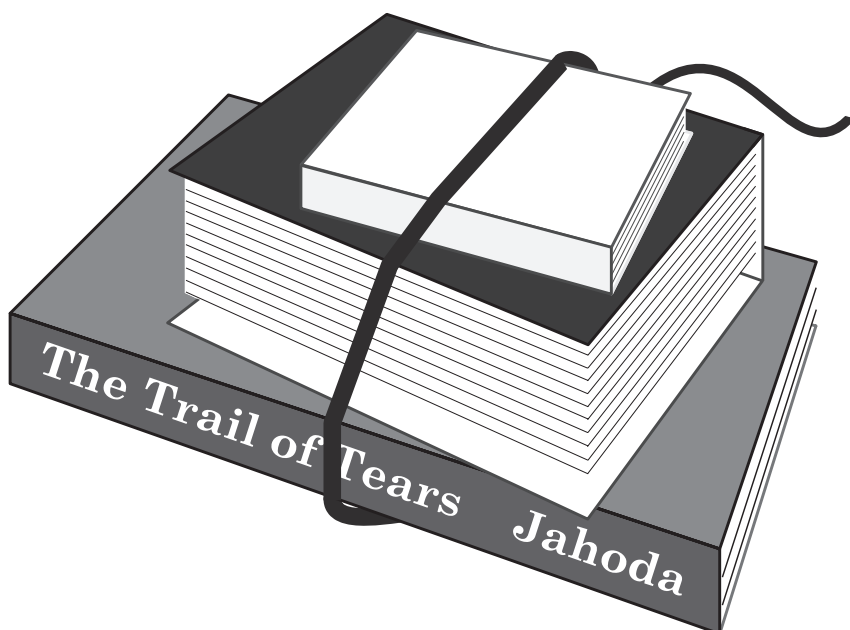
  - \* PRE-TEST (class set—see master in *Teacher Guide*)
  - \* POST-TEST (class set—see master in *Teacher Guide*)
3. **Grouping** Decide if you wish to assign students to groups or allow students to group themselves. Divide the class into one-third Pro, one-third Con, and one-third Undecided.
4. **Chairperson** As the teacher you may wish to assume the role of chairperson of the Congress to keep the Congress organized and the ideas flowing. However, you may wish to give a capable, experienced student this role.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY



Consider speaking to your friendly librarian. Ask him/her to set up a special DAWES ACT RESERVE bookshelf so that your capable students can check out books early in order to “flesh out” their identities.

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# DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



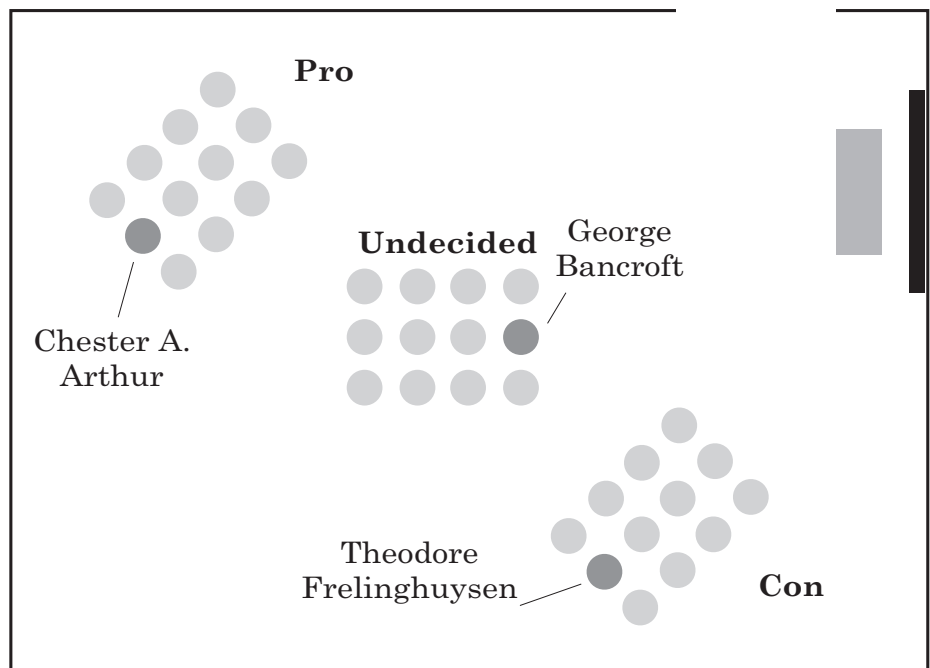
*Also assign your students to read the chapter(s) in their textbook covering the controversial 1880s ...*

**Before Day 1** Be sure you have thoroughly examined the Teacher Guide, the Student Guide, and the various handouts.

## Day 1

1. Pass out the Student Guides. Read aloud to your students the Purpose section on page 1. It is vital for you to establish interest in this period of history and the re-creation students are about to enter. You can do this in one of several ways: a) a lecture, reinforced by the reading of the Background Essay in the Student Guide; b) an audio-visual presentation (filmstrip, movie, or videotape); c) completion of the PRE-TEST on page 24; or d) any combination of the above. (If you use the PRE-TEST, here are the answers: 1. 0, 2. 0, 3. +, 4. 0, 5. +, 6. 0, 7. 0, 8. +, 9. 0, 10. 0, 11. +, 12. +, 13. +, 14. +, 15. 0.)
2. Have students read the Background Essay in the Student Guide. This will give each student the same background information to begin the re-creation. As an overnight assignment, have students answer the questions provided in the Student Guide concerning the information presented in the Background Essay. Refer them to the Procedure section on page 4 of the Student Guide, under Day 1, Assignment.
3. Divide the class into the three factions. Divide the students yourself or allow them to divide themselves.

*You will want to give all factions special places in the classroom where they regularly meet.*



## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



*Encourage your students to practice giving their speeches and asking their questions—aloud! Above all, insure that they do not simply read their material from the handouts you have given them.*

4. Give each faction the handouts for their faction. Each faction's handouts contain arguments, specific details, quotes, and questions. Be certain that each faction receives only the materials written for its point of view. Students may refer to the Arguments Outline: Pro and Con Factions in their Student Guides for an overall picture of all sides. Encourage this.
5. Allow students to meet in their factions to assign specific arguments/questions to present during the second and third hours. (Each student will present an argument, a specific detail, or question.) Have each group elect a faction leader to keep all the members on task and to role-play a powerful leader of the faction. Encourage other students to role-play other members of their faction. Names/quotes by famous persons included in the handouts should encourage such role-playing.

### Days 2-3

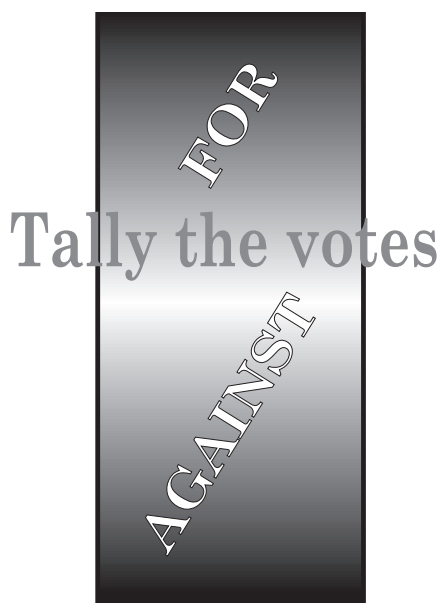
1. You should likely assume the role of chairperson of the Congress. This will put you in the role of controlling the flow of arguments on all sides. You will fulfill the same role that the faction leader does in the three factions.
2. Arrange students by factions facing the chairperson. Place the Undecided in the center between the other two factions.
3. On the first issue have the Pro speaker(s) speak first, the Con speaker(s) second, the Undecided questioner(s) third. It is important to keep things moving. Tell speakers to use about one minute for the argument, about one minute for the quotation when he/she either becomes the historical identity or quotes that person because he/she is absent. *Example:* The first Pro faction member stands and speaks to the first issue, summarizing the argument provided in the faction's handout. This summary should last about one minute. Next, this same student (or a second Pro speaker) reads aloud Chester Arthur's own words and reaction to the ideas in Issue 1. This should take about one more minute. The Pro speaker then may make a brief closing remark and invite a Con speaker response. The total time the first speaker(s) speaks should be kept to about two minutes. Then the first Con speaker stands. This speaker(s) speaks for about two minutes, using the arguments and quote found in the faction's handout. Lastly, the Undecided questioner(s) questions both the Pro and Con speakers on Issue 1. This question/answer process



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## DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3

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should last about two minutes. The chairperson will then move the Congress on to the next issue, following the suggested sequence.

4. At the end of the debate, allow the two opposing factions' leaders time to make statements summarizing their factions' key points.
5. As chairperson, now say that you are going to call the roll of the delegates to vote for or against the Dawes Act. Remind students that they are not committed to vote with their faction. They may vote for or against, depending on their free choice based on the arguments presented. You as chairperson may also be a voting member of the Congress.
6. After the vote, give students an overnight assignment such as that found in the Student Guide. Note: If you plan to give students the POST-TEST, refer them to the Testing section on page 8 in their Student Guides.

### Final Day

1. *Optional:* Pass out POST-TEST on page 25 and have students complete the objective part of the exam and/or the essay questions. (Key to Part 1: 1. 0, 2. +, 3. 0, 4. 0, 5. +, 6. 0, 7. +, 8. 0, 9. +, 10. +.)
2. If you plan to do the Debriefing activity, have students turn to the Debriefing section on page 8 in their Student Guides. The *situation* and *instructions* are clearly provided for the students. Be sure you are familiar with the situation before you present it to the students. The debriefing situation is a modern re-creation of a similar problem involving three factions. Divide the class into three factions: For, Against, and Undecided. Allow students to meet in groups and develop arguments pro and con on the situation. The Undecided faction must generate questions to ask each side. Allow students about one-half the period to prepare their arguments. Appoint a spokesperson for each side to present the arguments to the large group and other students to participate in a debate until it is time to take a vote. Allow enough time to answer the discussion questions provided in the Student Guide. If you run out of time, you may give these questions as an overnight assignment.
3. You may wish to do the Debriefing activity in this hour and the POST-TEST the following day.

## Introduction

You are **Chester A. Arthur**, the leader of the Pro faction. You feel that passing the Dawes Act will fulfill the nation's moral and legal responsibilities towards Native Americans. For too long the Indian problem has been placed in the background, and attempts throughout the decades to solve the problem have led to frustration and constant disputes. The Dawes Act is the inevitable conclusion to years of debate in response to the Indian problem. It alone can provide the basis of peaceful co-existence for the white man and the red man.



*Thank your group's members for choosing you to be their leader.*

*And now, having been chosen leader, lead!*

*Look everyone right in the eye and speak slowly as you present 2a through 2g.*

*To check for understanding, ask questions about 2a through 2g so that your members demonstrate that they understand specific responsibilities.*

## Instructions

1. Your faction has met and has selected you as the person most qualified to lead your faction.
2. Carefully explain the following responsibilities to your faction members. Lead your group so that all members live up to their responsibilities.
  - a. You must convince the Undecided faction of Congress that they should vote for the Dawes Act to help Native Americans assimilate into American life.
  - b. Present the best arguments you can to advance our point of view.
  - c. While preparing to speak, consider the argument, concerns, and the reinforcing quote.
  - d. You will have approximately two minutes to speak. Use your first minute to present your argument and concerns, your second minute to reinforce the concerns by reading the quote provided.
  - e. **Note well:** When you read the quote, you are not role-playing the individual whom you are quoting—unless he was a member of Congress at that time. If he was not in Congress, explain that you are quoting this person to reinforce your argument. In either case, whether you are the person being quoted or are only quoting him, point out the person's name/background before presenting the quote.
  - f. You will be questioned by a member of the Undecided faction. Answer this individual as clearly and forcefully as you can, for members of this faction represent the swing vote. We must win them over to our position in order to win this crucial debate.
  - g. **Note well:** This issue we will be debating was one that disturbed thinking Americans during the 1880s. Therefore, as you present your arguments or answer questions, don't speak blandly. Instead speak passionately!

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# PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 1

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Pro argument to Issue 1:

### The Indian must be civilized according to white society's standards

#### Concerns

1. The Indian problem has been with us since the infancy of our government. It has been passed over by each generation of Congress. It is time the government acted and reached a permanent, humane solution.
2. We whites can never become like the Indians, for we whites are in the clear majority and have a superior way of life. Therefore, the Indians must conform to our way of life. In the long run, the best thing we can do for them is to remove their savage inclinations and civilize them. We can do this by making them prosperous and industrious landowners and farmers.
3. We have two options: Option A: Let them remain on their reservations and grow further apart from our own civilization. Then, as technology increases, they will cling forever to their backward way of life. Option B: Blend them into our society by encouraging them to merge with our civilization and lifestyles. The very survival of their race demands that we carry out Option B.

**Quote** President Chester A. Arthur, 1830–1886, who had attempted to introduce legislation similar to the Dawes Act. “It has been easier to resort to convenient makeshifts for tiding over temporary difficulties than to grapple with the, great permanent problem, and accordingly the easier course has almost invariably been pursued .... It was natural, at a time when the national territory seemed almost illimitable and contained many millions of acres far outside the bounds of civilized settlements, that a policy should have been enacted which more than anything else has been the fruitful source of our Indian complications. I refer, of course, to the policy of dealing with the various Indian tribes as separate nationalities, of relegating them by treaty stipulations, to immense reservations in the west, and encouraging them to lead a savage life, undisturbed by any earnest and well-directed efforts to bring them under the influences of civilization. The results of this policy are increasingly unsatisfactory. White settlements have crowded the borders of reservations .... Indians transferred to new hunting grounds (which have soon be-come) new homes desired by adventurous settlers. Frequent and disastrous conflicts between the races have resulted ... thousands of lives have been sacrificed and ... millions of dollars expended to solve the Indian problem which exists today as it did half a century ago. The very future existence of the Indian prompts us to act now, to introduce among the Indians the cus-toms and pursuits of civilized life and gradually to absorb them into the mass of our citizens, with equal sharing of rights and responsibilities, before the very Indian culture itself evaporates ....”

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# PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 2

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Pro argument to Issue 2:

### The reservation system must be eliminated

## Concerns

1. The present system allows an inferior, backward, barbaric civilization to operate within the boundaries of a superior, progressive Christian civilization. To prevent any further clashes between the two, the Indians must be moved away from the reservations and encouraged to participate in the democratic process and the Christian world.
2. The government must enact legislation that encourages Indians to increase their feelings of self-worth. The reservations are too large and the Indian agents too few to help the Indian make any progress toward this goal.
3. By leaving Indians on the reservation, the government encourages the red man to be totally dependent upon the white man. The Indians, because they are given food and clothing on the reservations, are developing no incentive to work or contribute to their own well-being or that of this nation as a whole.

**Quote** President Grover Cleveland, 1837–1908, who supports the Dawes Act and plans to sign it into law once Congress passes it. “When the existing system was adopted, the Indian race was outside the limits of organized states ... beyond the immediate reach and operation of civilization. All efforts were mainly directed to the maintenance of friendly relations and the preservation of peace .... All this is now changed. Civilization, with the busy hum of industry and the influences of Christianity, surrounds these people at every point. None of the tribes are outside the bounds of organized government .... As a race, the Indians are no longer hostile, but may be considered as submissive to the control of the government. Except for fragments, all are now gathered upon reservations. It is no longer possible for them to subsist by the spontaneous productions of the earth. With an abundance of land, if furnished with the means and implements, their life of entire dependence upon the government rations from day to day is no longer defensible. Their inclination is to cling to the habits and customs of their ancestors and struggle against the change of life which their altered circumstances press upon them. But barbarism and civilization cannot live together. It is impossible that such incongruous conditions should exist on the same soil. They are a portion of our people, are under the authority of our government and ... are entitled to the fostering care and protection of the nation. The government cannot relieve itself of this responsibility until the Indians are so far trained and civilized as to be able wholly to manage and care for themselves. The paths in which they walk must clearly be marked out for them, and they must be led or guided until they are familiar with the way and competent to assume the duties and responsibilities of our citizenship.”

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# PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 3

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Pro argument to Issue 3: The Dawes Act treats the Indian fairly

### Concerns

1. The Dawes Act reaches beyond the bounds of an individual treaty or agreement with one small tribe or nation. This act binds all *Americans* to a plan to help all *Indians*. Thus, it is the solution to the Indian problem our nation has ignored for so long.
2. In 1871 Congress passed the Indian Appropriation Act which stated that "no Indian nation or tribe within the U.S. shall be acknowledged or recognized as an independent nation, tribe, or power with whom the U.S. may contract by treaty ...." These treaties of the past were simply agreements, not binding by law and open to changes as the country grew and evolved. The Dawes Act will put a stop to this tendency to negotiate one treaty after another.
3. The Dawes Act reaches beyond the need for further treaties and questions of legality. It ends once and for all the hundreds of quarrelsome and nagging questions involved in hundreds of agreements signed with individual Indian nations. It gives Indians more than promises; it insures and guarantees the Indian rights as members of civilized society. It is one, single, national law that will end the isolation of our Indian brothers on the reservation and make them one with their white brothers.

**Quote** Cook Meeker, 1818–1889, an author who has been an Indian agent and remains a national authority on agriculture. "The present system allows a class of people to do as they please, and at the same time be supplied with food, and this leads inevitably to demoralization. The Indians should be given land, and have it in cultivation, with tools ready, and be given the word that if they do not work they will get no rations. As to how much they would work and produce in such a case, and as to how fast they would adopt a civilized life, is merely speculation, but my impression is they would not starve.

"In the past on the failing reservation system, the Indian idea of an agency was that it should be a place where they get supplies, since no crops had ever been grown here, and they had only a vague idea what it is to engage in farming. All they wanted was their regular supply of rations and goods.

"In one case, something over 30 Indians have been at work, but the average of steady laborers is from 12 to 15. These are induced to work by the influence of their chief. They are more subject to him than they would be if they were slaves. He takes their rations and provides them regular means .... The remedy for this condition is to provide small allotments of land for each working Indian, whereby he will have a house of his own, and thus become independent of his chief, by which means this feudal system will be broken up and destroyed.

"The treaties of the past solved the immediate problem of the time. The reservation system gave birth to new problems creating a race of people who do not and cannot think, who have an imperfect idea of the value of money or in what wealth consists, who have neither literature nor history and who are without ambition or a necessity to exercise it, because the government feeds and clothes them .... Passage of this act will breed necessity and ambition into the Indian culture and end, once and for all, the great debates over the hundreds of Indian treaties of the past decades."



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# PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 4

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Pro argument to Issue 4:

### The total continent must inevitably be controlled by white civilization

## Concerns

1. Historically, the Indians have been wanderers and nomads. By their very temperament, they have demonstrated no desire to own or hold property. Indians cannot lay claim to something they never held themselves. It was inevitable that our superior race and civilization would take over this land and organize the chaos.
2. Indian tribes have never established boundaries. No one really knows where one Indian land ends and another tribe or nation's land begins. It is inevitable that a civilization must step in and establish order, law, and government for such a geographic area. There is too much land and too few Indians to have it any other way.
3. It is not just to keep putting Indians on land which, at the time, we deem unsuitable to white man's needs. The land, which has clearly been proven to be ours by the very sake of our superiority, should be allotted in severalty, a sole, separate and exclusive possession for each Indian to do with as he pleases. His success or failure then will be clearly his own doing.

**Quote** Theodore Roosevelt, 1858–1919, an energetic and scholarly eastern historian/writer who loves the outdoors and yearns for a political career. (Some feel he has the brains and charisma to someday become president!) His convictions about the Indians were shaped by the two years he recently spent on a cattle ranch in the Dakota Territory. "It was wholly impossible to avoid conflicts with the weaker race, unless we were willing to see the American continent fall into the hands of some other strong power; and even if we had adopted such a ludicrous policy, the Indians themselves would have made war upon us. It cannot be too often insisted that they did not own the land; or, at least, that their ownership was merely such as that claimed often by our own white hunters. If the Indians really owned Kentucky in 1775, then in 1776 it was the property of Boone and his associates; and to dispossess one party was as great a wrong as to dispossess the other. To recognize the Indian ownership of the limitless prairies and forests of the continent—that is, to consider the dozen squalid savages who hunted at long intervals over a territory of 1,000 square miles as owning it outright—necessarily implies a similar recognition of the claims of every white hunter, squatter, horse thief, or wandering cattleman .... Yet they certainly had as good a right to the country as the Sioux have to most of the land on their present reservations.

"In fact, the mere statement of the case is sufficient to show the absurdity of asserting that the land really belonged to the Indians. The different tribes have always been utterly unable to define their own boundaries. Thus, the Delawares and Wyandots, in 1785, though entirely separate nations, claimed and, in a certain sense, occupied almost exactly the same territory.

"Moreover, it was wholly impossible for our policy to be always consistent. Nowadays, we undoubtedly ought to break up the great reservations, disregard the tribal governments, allot the land in severalty, and treat the Indians as we do other citizens ... for their own sakes as well as ours."

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# PRO ARGUMENT: Issue 5

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Pro argument to Issue 5:

### We are legally and morally obligated to pass this act

## Concerns

1. Our very Constitution and system of government force upon us the responsibility to give the Indian equal justice and protection under the law. We cannot do this for him by forcing him into an isolated life on a reservation. By making him a responsible, civilized landowner, we will guarantee him his rights and introduce him into the mainstream of society.
2. When white men first came to this land, they found a race of people who resembled barbarians. They manifested reckless habits. Gradually, with the introduction of the Christian life and the laws of government, the red man has seen the light of civilization. We have met our legal and moral responsibilities in the past. Let us make the cycle complete by accepting them as our neighbors. We must welcome them not as persons we have to deal with but as persons we want to deal with.
3. The Creator never intended that one race of human beings occupy one continent, as the red man on the American continent or the black man on the African continent. The white man advanced at a quicker pace economically and spiritually. The white man developed finer forms of government and civilization. Therefore, the white man has a moral responsibility to advance the Indian race to a level equal to the white race's level.

**Quote** President Rutherford B. Hayes, 1822–1893, who remains a strong supporter of the Dawes Act. “The Indians are certainly entitled to our sympathy and to a conscientious respect on our part for their claims upon our sense of justice. They were the original occupants of the land we now possess. They have been driven from place to place. But a more powerful moral and legal argument is in operation here. As President John Quincy Adams said in 1802, ‘The Indian right of possession itself stands, with regard to the greatest part of the country, upon a questionable foundation. Their cultivated fields; their constructed habitations; a space of ample sufficiency for their subsistence, and whatever they had annexed to themselves by personal labor, was undoubtedly by the law of nature theirs. But what is the right of the huntsman to the forest of a thousand miles over which he accidentally ranged in quest of prey? Shall the liberal bounties of Providence to the race of man be monopolized by one of ten thousand for whom they were created? Shall the exuberant bosom of the common mother, amply adequate to the nourishment of millions, be claimed by a few hundred of her offspring?’ I see no reason why Indians who give satisfactory proof of having by their own labor supported their families for a number of years, and who are willing to detach themselves from their tribal relations, should not be admitted to the benefits and privileges of citizenship. It will be an act of morality and justice on our part.”

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# CON LEADER

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## Introduction

You are **Theodore Frelinghuysen**, the leader of the Con faction that is striving to prevent the Dawes Act from becoming law. The government is once again offering the Indian no choice by forcing him to become “civilized.” And why? White America wants the Indian lands. The Dawes Act is no better than past treaties which were full of promises and guarantees that were easily made and just as easily broken. The government has a long history of broken promises to the Indian. Furthermore, the Dawes Act is illegal and immoral. It slyly removes the Indian from the Indian past. In the process, it cruelly destroys an entire culture. The Dawes Act would be “the final solution,” a solution that would wipe out an entire civilization.



*Thank your group's members for choosing you to be their leader.*

*And now, having been chosen leader, lead!*

*Look everyone right in the eye and speak slowly as you present 2a through 2g.*

*To check for understanding, ask questions about 2a through 2g so that your members demonstrate that they understand specific responsibilities.*

## Instructions

1. Your faction has met and has selected you as the person most qualified to lead your faction.
2. Carefully explain the following responsibilities to your faction members. Lead your group so that all members live up to their responsibilities.
  - a. You must convince the Undecided faction of Congress that they should vote against the Dawes Act.
  - b. Present the best arguments you can to advance our point of view.
  - c. While preparing to speak, consider the argument, concerns, and the reinforcing quote.
  - d. You will have approximately two minutes to speak. Use your first minute to present your argument and concerns, your second minute to reinforce the concerns by reading the quote provided.
  - e. **Note well:** When you read the quote, you are not role-playing the individual whom you are quoting—unless he was a member of Congress at that time. If he was not in Congress, explain that you are quoting this person to reinforce your argument. In either case, whether you are the person being quoted or are only quoting him, point out the person's name/background before presenting the quote.
  - f. You will be questioned by a member of the Undecided faction. Answer this individual as clearly and forcefully as you can, for members of this faction represent the swing vote. We must win them over to our position in order to win this crucial debate.
  - g. **Note well:** This issue we will be debating was one that disturbed thinking Americans during the 1880s. Therefore, as you present your arguments or answer questions, don't speak blandly. Instead speak passionately!



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# CON ARGUMENT: Issue 1

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Con argument to Issue 1:

### The Indian should not be forced into accepting white “civilization”

## Concerns

1. The *problem* so often referred to by the white man is not the Indian problem. The real problem the Indians are having is dealing with the white man’s government and white man’s civilization.
2. The Indian has never had a problem dealing with the Indian way of life. It has survived for thousands of years. It is only a problem when it is placed next to a white civilization. It is foolish to assume that there is only one, universal, acceptable and just civilization, that of the white man. The Indian civilization is a civilization in itself, strong and unique. It has lasted for thousands of years before the white man *blessed* the Indian nations with their presence. *The Indian way of life must be saved!*
3. The Indian nations had no survival problems before the intrusion of the whites. The Indian nations are civilized by the standards of the Indian civilization. The very survival of the Indian race demands that the Indian be left alone to act out his ancestors’ civilization.

**Quote** Theodore Frelinghuysen, 1817–1887, an eloquent champion of Indian rights, whose political career includes being a senator and secretary of state. “I believe, it is not now seriously denied that the Indians are men, endowed with kindred faculties and powers with ourselves; that they have a place in human sympathy, and are justly entitled to a share in the common bounties of a benign Providence. And, with this conceded, I ask in what code of the law of nations, or by what process of abstract deductions, their rights have been extinguished? How can a government desire or attempt, and how can we quietly permit it, to invade and disturb the property, rights, liberty, and very civilization of the Indians? How can we tamely suffer the government to make laws, (whose) ... avowed purpose is to inflict the gross and wanton injustice of breaking up their government (older than our own), of abrogating their long cherished customs (older than our own) and of annihilating their existence as a distinct people, a distinct civilization?”

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## CON ARGUMENT: Issue 2

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### Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

### Con argument to Issue 2: The reservation system must be preserved

#### Concerns

1. It was at the government's insistence, usually by military force, that the Indians were placed on reservations where they could live according to their own culture in peace for all generations to come. The Indians participate in their own democratic process amid their own civilization. They follow a system of government thousands of years older than the white man's government.
2. Had the two cultures, Indian and white, been left to intermingle without the reservation system, some new dream might have been realized. The federal government, however, has taken everything the Indian has and has moved him to a place where he has nothing. On the reservation the government gives him food and clothing and tells him what he can do and what he should believe. Where is there any justice in this?
3. The Indian religion teaches that a spirit (God) is in everything: an animal, the grass, the wind, and even the bark of a tree. The Indians respect all parts of nature around them. They feel a part of a grand design. Such a belief increases the Indian's feeling of self-importance.

**Quote** Chief Seattle, c. 1786–1866, who died more than two decades ago and who is known as “a titan among Lilliputians.” His voice still haunts the American conscience. “The reservation is our last hope, our final hope. Today it is fair, but tomorrow it may be overcast with clouds. The white man has little need of our friendship, because his people are many. They are like the grass that covers the great prairies, while my people are few and resemble the scattering trees of the storm-swept plain. The great, and I presume also good, white chief sends us word that he wants to buy our lands, but is willing to allow us to reserve enough to live comfortably as long as there are fish in the waters and birds in the sky. This indeed appears generous, for we are no longer in need of a great country. There was a time when our people covered the whole land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor. But that time has long since passed away. Let us hope that hostilities between the red man and his pale-faced brother may never return. We would have everything to lose and nothing to gain.

“Your God seems to us to be partial. He came to the white man. We never saw him, never even heard his voice; he gave the white man laws, but he had no word for his red children, whose teeming millions filled the continent. No, we are two distinct races and must ever remain so. There is little in common between us. The ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their final resting place is hallowed ground, while you wander away from the tombs of your fathers seemingly without regret. Your religion was written on tablets of stone by the iron finger of an angry god, lest you forget it. Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors, given them by the Great Spirit, and written in the hearts of our people. Day and night cannot dwell together. The red man has ever fled the approach of the white man, as the changing mists of the mountain side flee before the morning sun.”

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# CON ARGUMENT: Issue 3

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Con argument to Issue 3: The Dawes Act treats the Indian unfairly

### Concerns

1. The Dawes Act is just another treaty. This time it is with Indians at large, not with an individual tribe or nation. It meets only the need of the white man to acquire Indian land just as all past treaties have done. It too will suffice and be legal only as long as it suits the white man.
2. Article III of the U.S. Constitution states that "all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the U.S., shall be the supreme law of the land." Also numerous federal courts have ruled that "treaties with native American nations are of equal legal standing with European nations." The Supreme Court decision of Worcester vs. Georgia states "they are U.S. law and are binding ...." The Dawes Act is not the end to this process but the beginning of the end for the Indian.
3. Aside from the argument of the treaties being legal, one overriding fact remains. If you do not sign, we will destroy you was the common threat or implication. If you do not sign, all rations will be cut off and your children will starve. If you do sign, we will give you each presents from the great white father. There were no real negotiations, no real spirit of fairness. Now, the Dawes Act does not even invite participation in the decision-making process. It ignores all the Indian believes in and respects.

**Quote** Sitting Bull, 1834–1890, a chief of the Sioux who has actively worked to get fair Indian legislation passed in Washington, D.C. (An Indian in the national consciousness, he is mainly remembered for leading the Sioux warriors who overwhelmed General George Armstrong Custer in his "last stand" at the Battle of the Little Big Horn in 1876.) "The commissioners bring a paper containing what they wish already written out. It is not what the Indians want, but what the commissioners want. All they have to do is to get the signatures of the Indians. Sometimes the commissioners say they compromise, but they never change the document. Our minds are again disturbed by the Great Father's representatives, the Indian agent, the squaw-men, the mixed bloods, the interpreters, and the favorite ration-chiefs. What is it they want of us this time? They want us to give up another chunk of our tribal land. This is not the first time or the last time. They will try to gain possession of the last piece of land we possess. They are again telling us what they intend to do if we agree to their wishes. Have we ever set a price on our land and received such a value? No, we never did. What we got under the former treaties were promises of all sorts. They promised how we are going to live peaceably on the land we still own and how they are going to show us the new ways of living. They even told us how we can go to heaven when we die. But all that we realized out of the agreements with the Great Father was this: we are dying off in expectation of getting things promised us. Something tells me that the Great Father's representatives have again brought with them a well-worded paper, containing just what they want but ignoring our wishes in the matter. It is this that they are attempting to drive us to. Our people are blindly deceived. Some are in favor of the proposition, but we who realize that our children and grandchildren may live a little longer, must look ahead and reject the proposition. I, for one, am bitterly opposed to it. The Great Father has proven himself an *unknown* (trickster) in our past dealings. When the white people invaded our Black Hills country, our treaty agreements were still in force, but the Great Father ignored it—pretending to keep out the intruders through military force. And, when the white men failed to keep the invaders out, they had to let them take possession of the best part of our tribal lands. Yet the Great Father maintains a very large standing army that can stop anything. Therefore, I do not wish to consider any proposition to cede any portion of our tribal land to the white people, I would feel guilty of taking food away from our children's mouths, and I do not wish to be that mean. There are things they tell us sound good to hear, but when they have accomplished their purposes, they will go home and not try to fulfill our agreements with them. Let us stand as one family as we did before the white man led us astray."

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# CON ARGUMENT: Issue 4

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Con argument to Issue 4:

### The total continent should not be controlled by white civilization

#### Concerns

1. Indians look to a higher order, higher than that established by white law or political boundaries. As a nomadic people, they lay claim to the soil, the water and the game of one region and then leave it unblemished for another passing band. All the land belongs to the Indians and was so well-treated and left in its natural order that white men have difficulty telling where an Indian has been.
2. It seems inevitable, judging from the white man's lust for the land, that the Indians, ever growing smaller in number, should be forced to yield the sacred mother earth to the hands of a "superior race." An Indian's boundary is the earth and the sky. If these new boundaries and restrictions are the white man's way, the Indians would be better to curl up and die as a race. Maybe this has been the white man's goal all along?
3. The Indian had the entire continent allotted to him by the Great Spirit. Perhaps the great Indian nations should allot sections of land to each white man, land judged unusable and unfit for Indian use. The white man's success or failure then would be clearly his own doing.

**Quote** Helen Hunt Jackson, 1830–1885, who recently died, wrote many articles and stories recording the wrongs the government inflicted on the Indians. Spoken by a great Indian chief: "It matters but little where we pass the remainder of our days. They are not many. The Indian's night promises to be dark. No bright star hovers about the horizon. Sad-voiced winds moan in the distance. A few more moons, a few more winters, and not one of all the mighty hosts that once filled this broad land, or that now roam in fragmentary bands through these vast solitudes will remain to weep over the tombs of a people once as powerful and as hopeful as your own.

"But why should I moan for my people? Tribes are made up of individuals and therefore are no better than they. Men come and go like the waves of the sea. Even the white man, whose God walked and talked with him as friend to friend, is not exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We shall see.

"Every part of this country is sacred to my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove has been hallowed by some fond memory or some sad experience of my tribe. Even the rocks that seem to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent seashore in solemn grandeur thrill with memories of past events connected with the fate of my people, and the very dust under your feet responds more lovingly to our footsteps than to yours, because it is the ashes of our ancestors and our bare feet that are conscious of the sympathetic touch, for the soil is rich with the life of our kindred .... At night when the streets of your cities and villages shall be silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled and still love this beautiful land. The white man will never be alone. Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not altogether powerless."

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# CON ARGUMENT: Issue 5

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## Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

## Con argument to Issue 5: The right thing to do legally and morally is to let the Indian be himself—not what others want him to be

### Concerns

1. The white man's government boasts freedom and equality, yet its legislation always restricts the Indians. This situation has frustrated the Indian because he has always been free and subject to his own system of law and justice. How many more injustices must the Indian suffer in the name of the white man's government? How many more "freedoms" will the white man impose upon the Indian?
2. By white standards the red man has always been an outcast of civilization. But by all the standards of the Creator, the Indian has the moral right to worship as he pleases and the legal right to own land or not to own land as he pleases. No white man is forced to believe one way or to live in one place. In what legal or moral sense does the government have the right to legislate servitude and morality?
3. The Great Spirit, the Creator, the white man's God never said that all red men must live here, all white men there, and black men there. But He did allow each race to advance at its own rate and grow in its own way, allowing all races to grow and learn from the others. It was never the Creator's intent to draw all races of men into one cultural mold or one civilization. To do so would destroy the culture and customs of one another.

**Quote** Pleasant Porter, dates unknown, an outspoken educated Creek Indian who constantly reminded white America of the importance of the Indian way of life. "The vitality of our race still persists. We have not lived for nothing. We are the original discoverers of this continent, and the conquerors of it from the animal kingdom. And on it we first taught the arts of peace and war; we first planted the institutions of virtue, truth and liberty.

"The European nations found us here .... We have given to the European people and passed on through them to the white Americans, our thought forces; the best blood of our ancestors having intermingled with their best statesmen and leading citizens. We have made ourselves an indestructible element in their national history. We have shown that what they believed were arid and desert places were habitable and capable of sustaining millions of people. We have led the vanguard of civilization in our conflicts with them for tribal existence from ocean to ocean. The race that has rendered this service to the other nations of mankind cannot utterly perish into the white man's world of justice and morality."



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# UNDECIDED LEADER

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## Introduction

You, **George Bancroft**, lead the Undecided faction, members of the Congress who have not yet made up your mind about how to vote on the Dawes Act. You spend much of your time evaluating arguments from the Pro and Con factions while you formulate your opinion. Your faction's members must listen and ask questions. Many of the members of the two opposing factions are highly respected people. You have been holding a middle ground between Pro and Con factions, but it is becoming increasingly apparent that you will be pressed into taking a stand for or against the Dawes Act.



*Thank your group's members for choosing you to be their leader.*

*And now, having been chosen leader, lead!*

*Look everyone right in the eye and speak slowly as you present 2a through 2g.*

*To check for understanding, ask questions about 2a through 2g so that your members demonstrate that they understand specific responsibilities.*

## Instructions

1. Your faction has met and has selected you as the person most qualified to lead your faction.
2. Carefully explain the following responsibilities to your faction members. Lead your group so that all members live up to their responsibilities.
  - a. Your goal is to explore the Pro and Con arguments and weigh their validity. To help you find the truth, you will ask questions of both factions.
  - b. Questions have been provided, but we can add questions of our own if our teacher expands the amount of time available for the re-creation.
  - c. Don't give a speech as you ask your question. Simply spend 30-60 seconds asking a question of one faction.
  - d. Here is a recommended sequence. First mention briefly how you are troubled, caught between the logic and force of the Pro and Con viewpoints. Point out who your acquaintance is outside Congress, a person also deeply concerned about the Indian problem in the U.S. Finally, end by directing your question to a specific Pro or Con speaker. The person you have questioned will then have one minute to answer you.
  - e. Next ask a question of the other faction. This faction will then have a member give a brief answer.
  - f. How many questions your faction's members can ask will depend upon the time available.
  - g. *Keep in mind that your major responsibility is to act as the swing vote. Both the Pro and Con factions will be courting you with their arguments. They want to influence you to vote for their positions. Consequently, listen carefully during the debate, evaluating both sides' speeches and answers to your questions.*

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# UNDECIDED QUESTIONS - 1

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Cut apart on broken lines.

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## Issue 1: Should the Indian be civilized according to white society's standards?

Your questions have been influenced by the ideas of George Bancroft, 1800–1891, a public official and historian, a secretary of the navy, and an American historian.

### Questions for Pro faction

1. Would not a “permanent, humane solution,” as you put it, ultimately destroy the Indian? You say your solution will insure the Indian’s survival. But is the survival you talk about really going to allow any Indian to “survive”?
2. Are you not actually legislating the destruction of one civilization and culture, the Indian, under the pretense that the other civilization and culture, the white, is superior and ultimately must prevail? Do we dare take it upon ourselves as human beings to legislate such matters?

### Questions for Con faction

1. America is a nation of peoples from numerous foreign countries and cultures all integrated into one mass civilization and culture. Is it fair to expect the U.S. government to make an exception and let an entire culture operate outside the boundary of civilization as we know it?
2. How long can the Indian race expect to survive when placed alongside an ever-growing and expanding cultural and technological world? Why can’t the Indian be absorbed into the white man’s world and at the same time preserve those cultural practices that make his race of people different from another? Hasn’t this already been done in this country by Italians, Chinese, Negroes, and other groups?

## Issue 2: Should the reservation system be eliminated?

Your questions have been influenced by the ideas of Carl Schurz, 1829–1906, a politician, journalist, U.S. senator, secretary of the interior, and an avid follower of Indian affairs.

### Questions for Pro faction

1. The reservation system, as it was intended, has almost entirely eliminated clashes between the two races. By eliminating the reservation system and merging the two cultures, are you not inviting an inevitable confrontation?
2. Hasn’t the government on the one hand created the entire system of dependence by removing the Indian from his lands on to government reservations? Isn’t this proof that the government has never met its responsibilities to the Indian? Isn’t this legislation and all past legislation just another attempt to destroy any remaining self-worth the Indian might have?

### Questions for Con faction

1. The Indian culture has lasted hundreds of years. But it seems to resist change by clinging to the past while living in the present on the reservation. Now is it reasonable to expect a nation to operate two governments, two opposite cultures within its boundaries? Isn’t it time the Indian met change head on and accepted it?
2. Hasn’t recent history shown that the white man’s system, good or bad, will prevail? Indians have won battles but not victories. Isn’t it time for the Indian to face reality—to accept the government’s invitation and merge into the body of American culture?

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# UNDECIDED QUESTIONS - 2

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Cut apart on broken lines.

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## Issue 3: Does the Dawes Act treat the Indians fairly?

Your questions have been influenced by the ideas of Henry B. Whipple, 1822–1901, a clergyman and bishop. He is actively involved in attempting to force the government into much needed reforms to improve Indian life.

### Questions for Pro faction

1. Judging from past history, what guarantees do the Indians have that the white man will hold true to the provisions of the Dawes Act? Can you blame the Indian for being suspicious and distrustful?
2. When it comes to the Indian, our government has an established history of saying one thing and doing another. If one law passed does not suit the needs of a second generation, another law is passed changing the provisions of the first law. The very meaning of the Constitution itself is adjusted to meet the needs of the day. So I ask you: Tell me honestly what your true motives are in wanting the Dawes Act passed?

### Questions for Con faction

1. Isn't the Dawes Act really "a final solution"? Wouldn't passage of the Dawes Act end once and for all the numerous disputes between whites and Indians by removing the wedge set between them by the reservation system?
2. The Indians cannot remove themselves from the white world. They are dependent on the reservation, dependent on the white man's rations and even clothing. Many Indians already trade and relate well with whites outside the reservation. Therefore, isn't it time to end the isolation of the reservation and the demeaning dependence of the Indian on the white man?

## Issue 4: Should the total continent be controlled by white civilization?

Your questions have been influenced by the ideas of Hamlin Garland, 1860–1940, an American writer who is actively involved in questions of fairness in government dealings with Indians.

### Questions for Pro faction

1. Americans have historically been a nation of farmers. What effect would it have on the 90 percent of Americans living on farms to suddenly uproot them and force them to change their whole means of existence, their whole way of life? Can we expect it to have any less effect on the Indian as we ask him to uproot once again and change his whole way of life as he knows it?
2. Isn't this "make or break" attitude really a government attempt to eliminate the Indian problem once and for all by eliminating the Indian race altogether?

### Questions for Con faction

1. Granted it is difficult to disprove that Indians were here first and thus have basis for claim to the land. But what right do a handful of the population have to such a large area of land? We are all children of the Great Spirit. Wouldn't the Great Spirit want to share His land with all His children?
2. There are many advantages the white race has to offer the red race. Education, medicine, means to avert starvation are but a few. Don't the Indians have a responsibility to themselves and their children to take advantage of the good the white man's world has to offer?



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## UNDECIDED QUESTIONS - 3

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### Issue 5: What are the legal and moral issues?

Your questions have been influenced by the ideas of Frederick Jackson Turner, 1861–1932, a young Wisconsin historian whose district you represent. His interpretation of history strongly emphasizes the significance of the American frontier in developing our national character.

#### Questions for Pro faction

1. You state that you have helped the Indian evolve from a barbaric, reckless state to a level of civilization. In reality, though, you have placed tight controls on what he can do and where he can live. You have taxed his very existence, destroying his way of life—all on legal and moral grounds. How many white men, on any continent or in any lifetime, would allow this to happen to them without revolting?
2. In one sense you stand on a pedestal and offer the Indians the great gifts of the white world. Yet in the process you seem to be tearing down all that Indians have had on this continent. Why you even seem to be killing off the Indians. For isn't it true that since the white man arrived in America, the number of Indians has drastically declined? How do you therefore explain "the great gifts of the white world"?

#### Questions for Con faction

1. If it is the will of God or the Great Spirit that all races be allowed to advance at their own rate, isn't this just the natural order of things? Hasn't the Great Spirit sent the white man to help the Indian advance to a state equal with the superior white culture?
2. True, the white man isn't legislating freedom as the Indian knows it or has known it in the past. But the white man is offering freedom and equality with every white man on the continent. Isn't this just, taking into account the fact that the Indians are outnumbered 20 to 1 already?

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## PRE-TEST

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**Directions:** Either on your own paper or in the spaces at left, mark a + for **true** statements, a 0 for **false** statements.

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|--|---|
| _____ 1. The U.S. was never able to fulfill its dream of westward expansion because of the ever-present Indian problem.  | _____ 10. Most Indians became Christians and readily accepted the white man's way of life.  |
| _____ 2. The U.S. government avoided at all costs any confrontations with the Indians.                                   | _____ 11. For many years Indians were considered a menace to society; therefore, they were kept on reservations.                    |
| _____ 3. Indians were placed on reservations so that the Indians' more desirable lands could be opened up to settlement. | _____ 12. American leaders often spoke of a moral responsibility to "civilize" the red man.   |
| _____ 4. The reservation system worked; it solved the Indian problem for all time.                                       | _____ 13. The government's dealings with the Indians was a system of give and take, mostly take.                                    |
| _____ 5. Indian tribes had a great reliance on the buffalo.  | _____ 14. The Indians were never really given a choice in regards to legislation passed concerning them or treaties made with them. |
| _____ 6. The Indian, once given the right opportunity, easily fit into the white man's world.                            | _____ 15. The Indian offered no resistance to the white man since their plight was inevitable.                                      |
| _____ 7. The U.S. government was very generous to Indians on the reservations, protecting them from numerous abuses.     |   |
| _____ 8. It was not easy, but Indians were usually able to preserve their culture and civilization on the reservations.  |   |
| _____ 9. The government strictly upheld its promises in treaties made with the Indians.                                  |   |

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# POST-TEST

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**Directions:** Either on your own paper or in the spaces provided, write your answers to Part 1. Complete Parts 2 and 3 on your own paper.

## Part 1: True-False

Mark a **+** for **true** statements, a **0** for **false** statements.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Dawes Act was successful in solving the Indian problem once and for all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Many Indians felt the Dawes Act was just another treaty; they held little hope for its success.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Most white settlers opposed the Dawes Act as too liberal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Indians readily accepted the provisions of the Dawes Act and were eager to join the white society.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The arguments *against* the Dawes Act were generally unpopular with the white man.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. American presidents between 1865 and 1887 opposed the Dawes Act.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The arguments *supporting* the Dawes Act were popular among Americans who were seeking to meet their legal and moral responsibilities in regards to the Indian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Dawes Act gave Indians liberal land allotments on prime pieces of land.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Many Americans in the 1880s harbored strong anti-Indian feelings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Dawes Act contained no abuses, only guarantees to protect the Indian for all time.

## Part 2: Short answers

- 1. You heard powerful arguments *supporting* the Dawes Act. List the five strongest arguments you can think of to justify passage of the Dawes Act.
- 2. You also heard powerful arguments *against* the Dawes Act. List the five strongest arguments you can think of to justify the arguments against passage of the Dawes Act.

## Part 3: Essay questions

Depending upon your teacher's directions, write short or long answers to one or more of the following questions.

- 1. Explain why one set of arguments—those *supporting* the Dawes Act or those *against* the Dawes Act—seemed stronger to you.
- 2. Was the government honestly attempting to deal with the Indian problem or was the government committed in its efforts to destroy the Indian civilization once and for all?
- 3. Was passage of the Dawes Act really an exercise in the democratic process as far as both sides—white America and red America—were concerned?



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# THE DAWES ACT AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN

A re-creation of the conflict between pro and con factions, debating whether or not the Native Americans should be "Americanized"

## PURPOSE

During the next few classroom hours you will participate in a re-creation of history. You will take an active role in the events surrounding the United States government's decision during the 1880s to deal once and for all with "the Indian problem." As a member of one of three factions—Pro, Con, or Undecided—you will become involved in the swift rush of events that will have you role-play leading Americans who will give differing arguments to the question: *What should be done to solve the problems American Indians and white Americans face because of their conflicting value systems?*

## BACKGROUND ESSAY

**Ever-present problem** During the latter quarter of the 19th century, America was suffering growing pains. Embroiled in the expanding Western movement was the ever-present problem of what to do when white civilization was encroaching upon the Indians' lands. Most white Americans believed in the overriding spirit of "Manifest Destiny." This belief held that white Americans had been given by God the ability to develop a superior civilization and culture and that they should spread this culture across the vast North American continent. Further, it held that white Americans had a divine duty to replace any inferior culture they found as they moved westward with their own superior one. Because of their belief in this spirit of Manifest Destiny, many Americans sought to remove the red man (he was "an obstacle to the progress of Western civilization") or to change his value system to that of the white man.

**Reasons for westward expansion** Beneath this vision of ultimate destiny, which, admittedly, most white Americans felt rather than understood, were five major reasons why Americans left their homes in the East and sought the new frontiers in the lands west of the Mississippi River.

- Many Americans were consumed by an overwhelming desire to acquire wealth. They coveted the vast acres of western land because they could not afford the high price tags of eastern land. Still more adventurous Americans went West lured by the gold and silver strikes. A third group, land speculators, bought up huge parcels of land and resold them for quick profit.
- By 1880 the threats of interference by European nations and Mexico had ended; therefore, Western lands were open for settlement without fear of foreign reprisal.
- Many Americans at this time were dreamers. They experienced a feeling of *wanderlust*, a romantic need to travel to unknown places.
- American laborers, dissatisfied with conditions in the new industrial East, migrated west. This ability to move west has been called the *safety valve theory*, since persons believed that this migration of the labor force forced Eastern industrialists to grant many concessions to their employees in the hopes of keeping them from leaving. Thus, the American frontier acted as a defense against exploitation and protected the American economic system.
- The last reason for westward expansion was the most disastrous for Native Americans. Thousands of whites poured onto Indian land to homestead it. Since the Indian presence interfered with their agricultural goals, they urged the government to remove the Indians entirely from the fertile areas of the West. The Indian tribes resisted and won occasional battles, but ultimately they lost the war.

These five reasons, each in its own way, gradually eroded Indian possession of Western lands. The stage was set for a new government policy. This new policy, although attempting to solve the Indian



**Question for  
you to  
consider:**

*What was it  
like for Native  
Americans  
during the late  
19th century  
when they faced  
the uncertainty  
of not knowing  
what direction  
the United States  
was going to go?*

problem, eventually destroyed many tribal organizations. Governmental figures justified this policy on the basis that they were “civilizing” and “Americanizing” the red man.

**Cultural conflicts** Since the early 17th century, white governments had been in conflict with the Indians. Wars between the two cultures had taken place regularly all across the continent. The reason for the conflict was that the American government had gradually developed this philosophy: Break down any semblance of organization which holds a tribe together, but grant Indians individual land holdings. In this way the Indians would be “Americanized and civilized.” Native Americans detested this approach. They refused to submit and fought and died while defending their right to lands their tribes had lived on for centuries. Listing all the conflicts is impractical, but it is important to look at the efforts and reasons why some of the major tribes intensified their battles with the U.S. government between 1862 and 1876.

**Sioux resistance** Little Crow and the Sioux warriors waged war against the whites from 1862 to 1876. Ultimately 400 of his men were captured, and the president pardoned all but 38. These 38 were hanged before a gathering of settlers who came to enjoy the spectacle of justice. Red Cloud led his tribe in Wyoming and Montana in 1865 against the white men who had pushed a trail through Indian reservation lands and destroyed the last of the Indian buffalo herds. However, in this case, the government did step in and close the trail. Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, objecting to white miners who had invaded the Black Hills in search of gold, ambushed the forces of General George Custer at the Little Big Horn and annihilated them. Soon after this victory, government forces defeated the Indians, sent them back to their Dakota reservations, and did little to prevent miners from invading lands that had been promised the Indians in “perpetuity.”

**Arapahoe and Cheyenne uprising** Led by Chief Black Kettle, the Arapahoe and Cheyenne tribes staged an uprising in the Colorado region. Ultimately Black Kettle surrendered and led his people to the reservation. Angered because he felt his government had not forcefully punished these “savages,” Colonel J. M. Chivington, the local army commander, massacred all these Indians and mutilated their dead bodies.

**Apaches shattered** Geronimo led the last great Indian war but failed in his attempt to protect the buffalo, which his people needed for food and clothing. By 1890 his entire nation had been shattered, spread out across various lands to live subject to the whims of white man’s laws. *(If you would like to read a fascinating account of some of these conflicts with Native Americans, read the earlier sections of James Michener’s popular novel, Centennial.)*

## 3 Basic Problems

- **Treaties**
- **Buffalo**
- **Indian Policy**

**Three basic problems** The Indians experienced three basic problems which were directly caused by actions of the white man.

• **Treaties made and broken** Governments of the federal, state, and local levels constantly broke treaties and agreements with the Indians. Treaties were good only as long as they suited the white man’s needs. Ultimately Native Americans refused to accept the white man’s word.

• **Slaughter of the buffalo** Every part of the buffalo was used by the Indians: the skin for shelter and clothing; the horns, bones, and sinew for weapons and bow strings; the meat for food; the dung for fuel. The white man moved in and killed thousands of buffalo for sport, forcing the Indian to fight back for self-preservation.

• **Weak Indian policy** Corrupt Indian agents on reservations sold Indians rotten supplies, cheated them on their hand-crafted goods, and made certain that Indians were relocated on lands usually unsuitable for habitation.

**Government solution** In 1865 the government created a Committee on the Condition of the Indian Tribes. The committee’s goal was to devise a plan for establishing

a real peace between the Indian and the white man. Not until 1887, however, were committee recommendations written into law. The nucleus of this law, to be known as the Dawes Severalty Act of 1887, was that Indians would have to renounce tribal citizenship, thus leading to the ultimate dissolution of tribes as legal entities. The solution proposed by the government fit well into the white man's scheme of things, but for the Indians it meant the destruction of their whole value system.

**The Dawes Act** The white man's solution to "the Indian problem" was based, first, on conquest and removal; then, confinement on a reservation; finally, gradual assimilation into the white man's world. The Dawes Act put this final step into law. Reservations were divided into allotments of land, 160 acres for the heads of families, with comparable allotments for unmarried Indians. To protect the Indians from white land speculators, Indians could not sell their land for 25 years. After 25 years they were to be granted full citizenship and then were free to sell their land.

After the 160-acre allotments were parceled out, the remaining reservation land was to be sold to white men with the resulting money to be held in trust by the government. The government hoped that these Indian homesteads would "civilize" the Indian by molding him into the body politic of the nation. It was honestly believed by government planners that owning real estate would foster Indian morality, would encourage thrift and industry, and would enhance wealth and self-worth within individual Indian families. The government failed to note, however, that the Indian was a hunter, not a farmer; that his basis of land ownership had always been communal, not individual; that the last thing he wanted was to become a homesteader like a white man.

**Abuses of the Dawes Act** Although the idea of the Dawes Act seemed moral and democratic, abuses soon surfaced. When allotments were surveyed, parcels of 40 to 160 acres were assigned to heads of families, orphans, and children; the surplus lands were distributed to whites. Often whites with the help of the surveyors, acquired the best lands within the reservation, leaving the least suitable lands for allotment to the Indians. Further complicating the issue was the absence of any provision preventing an individual Indian from leasing his allotment to a white man for a period of years. So hundreds of Indians, unwilling homesteaders at best, leased their allotments to greedy white farmers and hoped to live well on the rent. As a direct result, in the half century following the Dawes Act, Indian holdings decreased from 138 million acres to 48 million acres. Even the Indian money held in trust, more than 100 million dollars, was diverted from its potential use to meet the costs of financing the Indian bureau, the very bureau that was responsible for cheating the Indians of their land!

**Proponents arguments** Very powerful and influential white men of the 1880s unified their forces so that they could legislate the final chapter and close the book on the Indians. The title of the final chapter was the Dawes Act. The passage of the act itself would meet the needs of the white families as they pushed westward to the Pacific in increasing numbers. The act would also, once and for all, legislate a moral and legal solution to the problem of the Indian and what to do with him. The red man's problems stemmed mainly from his inability to cope with the white civilization. But the whites felt the solution was quite simple: end the isolation of the reservation system, make Indians into farmers in order to civilize them, and then invite them to become true American citizens. The Indian would no longer be outside looking into the white democracy. Instead he would be a landowner, a farmer working at the side of his white brothers and fellow citizens. Supporters stressed that this would not be just another treaty. Instead it would be the ultimate treaty, a federal law guaranteeing responsibility after years of problems and broken promises. The Indian and the white man could now, finally and ultimately, reside in peace. Thus, persons favoring the Dawes Act moved along this course with an almost religious conviction and a sense of assuredness that they had found the ultimate solution.

**Opposing position** On the opposite side of the issue was an equally powerful group of statesmen, citizens, and Indians. These persons were frustrated with the government system of dealing with the Indians and were suspicious of what was now being called "the final solution." The members of the Con faction were also interested in the legal and moral treatment of the Indian. They felt that persons advocating the Dawes Act were supporting a legally and morally tainted piece of legislation. They stressed that "civilizing" the Indian according to the standards of the white man's government would destroy Indian "civilization" in the process. They fought long and hard to preserve the Indian way of life as a worthy entity in and of itself. These persons pointed out that the government was, after all, only attempting, as with all past treaties, to solve its own problems with regards to the Indians. No concern was ever spoken for the Indians' problems with the whites and the decades of abuses the Indians had been forced to suffer. The kind of peace being proposed in the Dawes Act was the peace imposed by a conquering



*If you had been a young person living in the United States at this time, which position do you expect you and your family members would most likely have accepted in the 1880s?*

nation when the defeated nation crawls to the peace table for scraps of appeasement. Members of the Con faction marshaled their arguments with a zeal and assuredness equal to their opponents’.

**An undecided faction** The middle ground between the Pro and Con forces was occupied by an equally powerful and fervent group of individuals. Unsure of just what course should be followed, they continually questioned both sides. Each member of the Undecided faction produced clearly defined options on individual points and arguments but sought an overall picture before considering a specific course.

## *And viewing the Dawes Act today?*

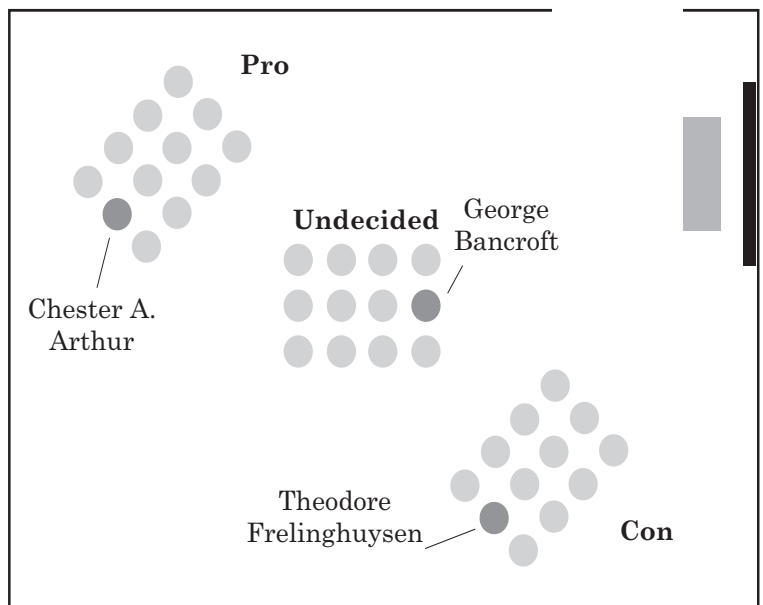
**Future course** And how is the Dawes Act viewed today? Persons opposed to it criticize it as an immoral attempt by a government to destroy a race of people and its civilization. Those supporting it, on the other hand, say the government’s intention was clearly moral and democratic. At best, the act itself echoed the demands of citizens who, expanding to new frontiers, sought a final end to the Indian problem. Until the Dawes Act, president after president, administration after administration, and Congress after Congress had failed to deal effectively with the Indian. The results of these early attempts were bloody Indian wars and flagrant abuses of Indians on reservations by greedy agents and white settlers. The Dawes Act did not fail because of its framers’ intent, for their desire to allow Indians citizenship was fair and just. It failed because of the act’s provisions that attempted to forge Indians into the role of white farmers and homesteaders. By so doing, the act ignored their culture and their whole history. Ultimately, the government’s responsibility of undoing a century of wrongs, a century of dishonor, rests with future presidential administrations, with future congresspersons, and with the conscience of all Americans, including you and your classmates.

### PROCEDURE

This re-creation of events concerning the Dawes Act has been designed to fit within a specific framework of time. Your teacher will give you instructions for each day’s assignment and will detail what will be expected of you as an individual and as a member of one of three factions: Pro, Con, or Undecided.

#### Day 1

1. **Presentation** Your teacher may give you a lecture, or some kind of an audio-visual presentation, or the optional PRE-TEST.
2. **Background** You will next read the Background Essay in this Student Guide.
3. **Division of class** Your class will be divided into three factions: Pro, Con, and Undecided.
4. **Handouts** Each faction will receive a separate handout containing key arguments or questions representing one of the faction’s viewpoints. The Pro and Con factions will have arguments; the Undecided faction will have questions.
5. **Meeting** Each of the three factions will meet. Members choose a chairperson, who then assigns specific arguments to be presented during Days 2-3. Your faction leader will keep all persons working. He/she may choose to represent the viewpoints of a powerful Pro, Con, or Undecided person in history.  
*Examples:* Pro, Chester A. Arthur; Con, Theodore Frelinghuysen; Undecided, George Bancroft.





6. **Assignment** You will be given a two-part overnight assignment.
- Work on the argument or arguments you will present as a member of one of the three factions. Your faction leader should be certain that each member has a specific argument or question to present during Days 2-3.
  - Write the answers to the questions below. For help use the information given you in the Background Essay and in your history textbook.
    - What effect did the concept of Manifest Destiny have on the American attitude toward the Indian?
    - What were some of the reasons that Americans moved west?
    - What were the three major problems the Indian had to deal with that were directly caused by the white man?
    - Was the Dawes Act the idea of just one man, or was it the end product of years of debate regarding the Indian and his problem?
    - What were some of the abuses involved with the Dawes Act after it passed?
7. **Note-taking** Prepare note sheets to use during the congressional debates beginning on Day 2. You will need to take notes on the various factions' arguments. Take notes on each issue on one side of an 8-1/2" x 11" sheet of paper which you have divided in half with a vertical line. Place the heading Pro on one side of the line, Con, on the other. Over the two columns created by the vertical line write the question/issue being debated.

Please take considerable notes, writing down what is said and your reactions to what is said during this mini-unit. You will then gain a great deal from this historical re-creation.

Research shows us that when persons write as they are learning, they retain considerable knowledge—and for a long time period.

You will write all your specific details in the spaces under the arguments.

### Dawes Act and the American Indian: 1880s

1: Should the Indian be civilized according to white society's standards?

Pro Arguments	Con Arguments
1. Civilizing the Indian will be a permanent solution to the Indian problem.	1. Making the Indian civilized by white standards will create new problems for both Indians and whites.
2. The greatest gift the white man can give the Indian is to make him civilized.	2. White man's civilization is no gift; it is a heavy weight around the Indian's neck.
3. The survival of the Indian race demands that the Indian must be civilized.	3. The Indian civilization is unique; it must survive.



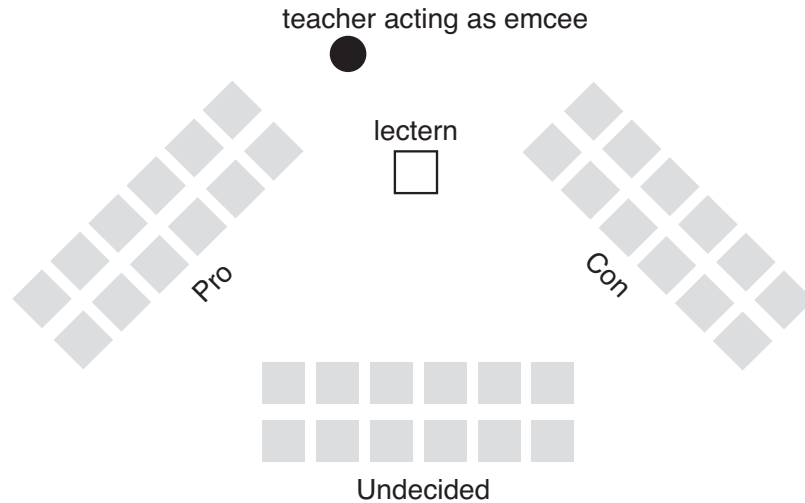
### Days 2-3

1. **Chairperson** Your teacher may assume the role of chairperson of Congress.
2. **Setup** You will seat yourselves as follows:
  - Pro faction on one side of room facing chairperson
  - Con faction on opposite of room facing chairperson
  - Undecided faction in the center of the room with an aisle on each side to set it off from the Pro and Con factions.



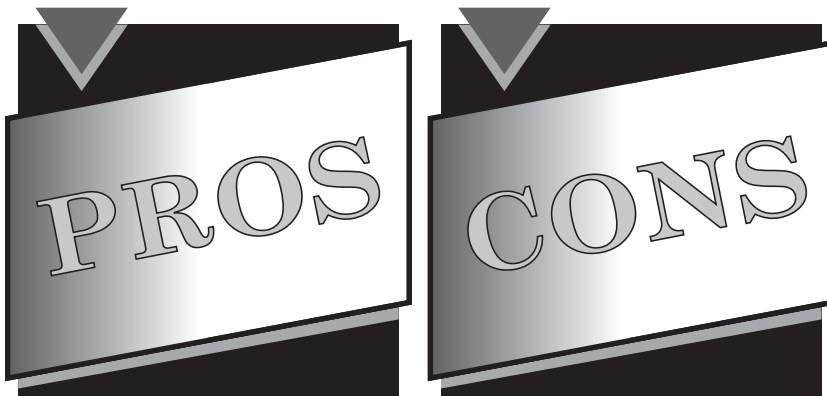
*Adopt the scholar's attitude during your debate. How?*

*Try to imagine how the historical age influenced persons.*



3. **Speakers** The speakers for the Pro and Con factions move to the front of their faction and stand sideways, half facing the chairperson and half facing the Congress. Undecided faction members can then ask either speaker a question from a standing position by their desks.
4. **Debate** Faction members speak alternately, covering the five issues outlined on the next page. Pro members present their arguments on Issue 1 first; the Con members answer with their arguments; finally, the Undecided will question both sides. As the debate takes place, students record arguments on their note sheets. When all points of view have been expressed on one issue, Congress moves on to the next issue. This sequence will continue until all issues have been covered that your Congress is debating.

the



of the  
Dawes Act

5. **Vote** When all issues have been debated, the proceedings will end and the chairperson will call for a vote. The vote will determine if the Dawes Act should or should not be enacted. (The Undecided will be the swing vote, voting either for or against the Dawes Act.) The chairperson may be a voting member of the Congress.
6. **Assignment** As an overnight assignment your teacher may ask you to complete the following statement in a short essay. "As a member of this Congress, I voted \_\_\_\_ because ...."

### Day 4

1. **Post-Test** Your teacher may give you a POST-TEST. If so, refer to the Testing section on page 8 in this Student Guide.
2. **Debriefing** Your teacher will divide you into groups for the debriefing activity. See the Debriefing section on page 8 in this Student Guide.

# ARGUMENTS OUTLINE: PRO AND CON FACTIONS

**Problem** The decade is the 1880s. Numerous politicians, citizens, and Indians have expressed strong feelings about the proposed Dawes Act. Two major groups have appeared. The group favoring passage of the Dawes Act legislation has been labeled the Pro faction; the group opposing the Dawes Act has been labeled the Con faction. Positioned in the middle ground between these two strong viewpoints are the members of the Undecided faction who are unsure as to the proper course of action. It is ultimately the Undecided point of view which could decide the outcome of this important congressional debate.

**Instructions** Below is an outline of the Pro and Con arguments about five questions: Each side's arguments are presented in *general* statements. Specific historical details supporting the general statements can be found in the handouts your teacher will give persons belonging to each faction. Be prepared to write down these details in the manner explained to you under Day 1. Doing so will help you decide how to vote when you must vote for or against the Dawes Act.

## BASIC PRO ARGUMENTS

## BASIC CON ARGUMENTS

### Issue 1: Should the Indian be “civilized” according to white society’s standards?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Civilizing the Indian will be a permanent solution to the Indian problem.     | 1. Making the Indian “civilized” by white standards will create new problems for both Indians and whites. |
| 2. The greatest gift the white man can give the Indian is to make him civilized. | 2. White man’s civilization is no gift; it is a heavy weight around the Indian’s neck.                    |
| 3. The survival of the Indian race demands that the Indian must be civilized.    | 3. The Indian civilization is unique; it must survive.  |

### Issue 2: Should the reservation system be eliminated?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. The present system allows a barbaric civilization on reservations to operate within a civilized one. | 1. It was at the government’s insistence that Indians were placed on reservations to live their own culture in peace. |
| 2. The present reservation system fosters a life of dependence on the white man.                        | 2. The white man has never left reservation Indians alone long enough to let them grow.                               |
| 3. Ending the reservation system would allow Indians to assume a level of self-worth.                   | 3. The Indian religion itself fosters self-worth among individuals.   |

### Issue 3: Does the Dawes Act treat the Indian fairly?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. The Dawes Act is the ultimate treaty.   | 1. The Dawes Act is just one more treaty that is an example of the white man’s false words.   |
| 2. The Dawes Act will end for all time the need to negotiate treaties and it will eliminate misunderstandings. | 2. The Dawes Act spells the beginning of the end for the Indian culture.  |
| 3. The Dawes Act gives Indians more than promises; it gives them legal guarantees.                             | 3. The Dawes Act, like other treaties, gives the Indian no chance to decide his own fate. Once again the white man tells the Indian what is good for him. |

### Issue 4: Should the total continent be controlled by white civilization?

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. As a nomadic people, the Indians have no claim to the land.                                       | 1. For hundreds of years the Indian has treated the land with respect, wandering freely about the earth provided by the Great Spirit. |
| 2. The continent is too large for a handful of Indians who are unable to establish clear boundaries. | 2. The Mother Earth needs no boundaries other than the mountains and waters.  |
| 3. The Indian must be given a chance for success by owning and cultivating his own land.             | 3. The entire continent was given to the Indian by the Great Spirit.  |

### Issue 5: What are the legal and moral issues?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. The Constitution bids us to treat the Indian with equal justice and to provide equal opportunities.                                      | 1. The white man’s government boasts freedom and justice, yet it legislates restrictions.                                |
| 2. The Dawes Act fulfills our legal and moral responsibilities.   | 2. The Dawes Act condemns the Indian morality, but in a true sense this act is immoral because of how it treats Indians. |
| 3. The creator has given the white race certain advantages; the white race is morally obligated to pass on these advantages to the red man. | 3. If the Great Spirit had wanted all men to be alike, He would have made all men alike and given them the same culture. |

# TESTING

Your teacher may choose to give you a three-part POST-TEST. Part 1 includes 10 true/false questions which deal with the issues of western expansion and its impact on the Indians. Part 2 asks you to list specific arguments for or against the Dawes Act as presented by the factions during the debate. Part 3 has three short essays in which you state your opinions regarding the Dawes Act and immigration.

## DEBRIEFING



*This culminating activity will be enjoyable and a real learning activity if you have studied the pro and con arguments carefully during the re-creation.*

*Good luck!*

By now you have experienced a re-creation representing two powerful viewpoints. Respond to the imaginary situation below by taking sides in a modern re-creation that could divide Americans in much the same way as the Dawes Act divided Americans during the 1880s.

### Situation

Presently, in the 1990s, many Native Americans continue to live on reservations throughout the United States. Most of the reservation land, however, is arid or in some other way unsuitable for farming or mining and, hence, most Indians on reservations are very poor. Unemployment and alcoholism rates are very high when compared with the general population.

Recently, a number of tribal councils have discovered a way to make large amounts of money by setting up gambling halls on reservation land. Since this land is controlled by federal law only, and is not subject to state law, the effect of the establishment of these gambling centers is to make Las Vegas-type gambling available to citizens of states which do not allow this type of gambling. Since payouts of \$100,000 or more for bingo games and slot machines is not uncommon, these centers are proving to be very attractive. However, two big problems have arisen. The first, because the money is so large and because the tribal councils are inexperienced in running gambling casinos, the councils have hired white companies from outside the reservations to run them. These companies take a large percentage of the profits, plus—in some instances—have been proven to have organized crime connections and have illegally skimmed money off the top of proceeds. The second problem is with the states, themselves, who object to activities which if held on state land would be illegal and who object, perhaps even more loudly, that this activity, because it is so lucrative, should be subject to state taxes. The effect of these problems has been to stimulate a number of white politicians to call for a restructuring of reservation laws to allow state police to enter and enforce state law on the reservations and to allow states to tax any Indian business activity as though it were a regular business outside the reservation. If a law were proposed to allow states to regulate reservation territory in its boundaries, how would you vote?

### Instructions

After your teacher has divided you into five or six groups, discuss with other members of your group the following questions. Try to reach agreement on what should be done, if anything. Appoint a spokesperson to present your group's view to the class.

### Questions

1. List possible reasons for modifying the reservation system to allow more state regulation.
2. List possible reasons against modifying the reservation system.
3. After considering both sides, try to reach consensus for reporting to the class as a whole.