**Speech to Governor William Harrison,**

agreement

peace

disapprove of

divisions

**By Chief Tecumseh, of August 11, 1810**

(Excerpted)

Brother, I wish you to give me close attention, because I think you do not clearly understand. I want to speak to you about promises that the Americans have made.

You recall the time when the Jesus Indians of the Delawares lived near the Americans, and had confidence in their promises of friendship, and thought they were secure, yet the Americans murdered all the men, women, and children, even as they prayed to Jesus?

The same promises were given to the Shawnee one time. It was at Fort Finney, where some of my people were forced to make a treaty. Flags were given to my people, and they were told they were now the children of the Americans. We were told, if any white people mean to harm you, hold up these flags and you will then be safe from all danger. We did this in good faith. But what happened? Our beloved chief Moluntha stood with the American flag in front of him and that very peace treaty in his hand, but his head was chopped by an American officer, and that American Officer was never punished.

Brother, after such bitter events, can you blame me for placing little confidence in the promises of Americans? That happened before the Treaty of Greenville[[1]](#footnote-1). When they buried the tomahawk at Greenville, the Americans said they were our new fathers, not the British anymore, and would treat us well. Since that treaty, here is how the Americans have treated us well: They have killed many Shawnee, many Winnebagoes, many Miamis, many Delawares, and have taken land from them. When they killed them, no American ever was punished, not one.

It is you, the Americans, by such bad deeds, who push the men to do mischief. You do not want unity among tribes, and you destroy it. You try to make differences between them. We, their leaders, wish them to unite and consider their land the common property of all, but you try to keep them from this. You separate the tribes and deal with them that way, one by one, and advise them not to come into this union. Your states have set an example of forming a union among all the Fires, why should you censure the Indians for following that example?

But, Brother, I mean to bring all the tribes together, in spite of you, and until I have finished, I will not go to visit your President. Maybe I will when I have finished, maybe. The reason I tell you this, you want, by making your distinctions of Indian tribes and allotting to each particular tract of land, to set them against each other, and thus to weaken us.

You never see an Indian come, do you, and endeavor to make the white people divide up?

distributing

try

legal documents showing ownership

decision

give back

You are always driving the red people this way! At last you will drive them into the Great Lake, where they can neither stand nor walk. **…**

The only way to stop this evil is for all the red men to unite in claiming an equal right in the land. That is how it was at first, and should be still, for the land never was divided, but was for the use of everyone. Any tribe could go to an empty land and make a home there. No groups among us have a right to sell, even to one another, and surely not to outsiders who want all, and will not do with less.

Sell a country! Why not sell the air, the clouds, and the Great Sea, as well as the earth? Did not the Great Spirit make them all for the use of his children?

Brother, I was glad to hear what you told us. You said that if we could prove that the land was sold by people who had no right to sell it, you would restore it. I will prove that those who did sell did not own it. Did they have a deed? A title? NO! You say those proves someone owns land. Those chiefs only spoke a claim, and so you pretended to believe their claim, only because you wanted the land. But the many tribes with me will not agree with those claims. They have never had a title to sell, and we agree this proves you could not buy it from them. If the land is not given back to us, you will see, when we return to our home from here, how it will be settled. It will be like this:

We shall have a great council, at which all tribes will be present. We shall show to those who sold that they had no rights to the claims they set up, and we shall see what will be done to those chiefs who did sell the land to you. I am not alone in this determination, it is the determination of all the warriors and red people who listen to me. Brother, I now wish you to listen to me. If you do not wipe out that treaty, it will seem that you wish to kill all the chiefs who sold the land! I tell you so because I am authorized by all tribes to do so! I am the head of them all! All my warriors will meet together with me in two or three moons from now. Then I will call for those chiefs who sold you this land, and we shall know what to do with them. If you do not restore the land, you will have had a hand in killing them! **…**

**Text-Dependent Question Creation Worksheet**

*Please print legibly.*

Name of Text: Speech to Governor William Harrison, by Chief Tecumseh, of August 11, 1810

First and Last Names of the Question Composers: Denise Siri, Joan Mitchell, & Tierney Cahill

| Questions in Finalized Order | What is the point of this question? Why did you write it. Is there an overarching understanding you are trying to reach with students?  Include all answer**s** (words, phrases, sentences with line numbers) |
| --- | --- |
| 1. What do you learn from lines 1-5? | In answering this question, students will be oriented to the text by recognizing that it’s a speech. They should notice:   * The type of document * Who wrote it * Who it’s addressed to * That it’s excerpted and what that means * Line 5: Tecumseh explains the purpose of his speech is to talk about the promises the Americans have made. |
| 1. In lines 4, 18, 32, 48 and 61 Tecumseh uses the term “Brother”; who is he referring to as Brother? Why did he choose that term? | In answering this question, students should realize that the speech is directed at the Governor or the government as a whole; however, they should ponder why he would use the language of kinship rather than a more adversarial term or generic/formal title? |
| 1. Line 41 states, “The only way to stop this evil is for all the red men to unite in claiming an equal right to the land.” Using the text, cite 3 examples of “evil” Tecumseh uses to support his claim. | In answering this question, students will understand the level of desperation Tecumseh feels for the mistreatment of his people.  Lines 6-10: despite promises, Indians were being killed  Lines 16-17: Americans were not being punished for not following the treaty  Line 26: You do not want unity among tribes, and you destroy it.  Lines 32-36: distributing of land to set tribes against each other and weaken them.  Lines 37-40: driving Indians off the land until they have nothing left. |
| 1. Using lines 49-59, substantiate Tecumseh’s ideas that false claims were made. | In answering this question, students are looking back to prove that false claims were made by some chiefs and by the Americans. Additional probing may be needed to establish the Native belief that it’s absurd to claim ownership of the land. |
| 1. What evidence is provided in the text that proves Tecumseh has the power to speak on behalf of the other native tribes? | In answering this question, students should be able to cite lines  32-33 “I mean to bring all the tribes together”, infer his belief that he has the power to do this.  62-63 that Tecumseh claims, “I am the head of them all!” |
| 1. What consequences will occur if the American government does not restore the land mentioned in lines 57-67? | In answering this question, students should notice that Tecumseh is threatening to kill off the Chiefs that have sold off the land. On a deeper level, students should understand that by Tecumseh killing off the other Chiefs as punishment, is playing into the hand of the overall goal of the U.S. Government in reinforcing their policy of Indian removal from the lands that they would like to settle on.  (Lines 66- 67), “You will have a hand in killing them.” Cite evidence to support your conclusion |

If you were a newspaper reporter from the Boston Globe in attendance at Tecumseh’s speech, how would you present his claims to the readers of the Boston Globe? Be sure to include three meaningful quotes from his speech. See organizational chart below…

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cite |  |
| Time & Place |  |
| Key Events |  |
| Key People |  |
| 3 Main Points made by Tecumseh |  |

1. After General Anthony Wayne's decisive defeat of the Ohio Indian tribes at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, leaders of the Indian nations joined with Wayne on August 3, 1795 in signing A Peace Treaty, the Greenville Treaty.

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   This was an important event in the life of the infant nation since the Treaty established a definite boundary between Indian lands and those lands open to white settlement. For the first time in its young history the U.S. was able to govern all its territories. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)