



The Tribes Choose Sides

Student Name _____ Date _____

Analyze 2-3 documents from links in the list below, and consult the [Native American Tribes map](#) as well. Highlight phrases and issues in those documents that help you understand how Native Americans determined whether they would side with the British, ally with the Americans, or remain neutral, and then **add those reasons** to the appropriate portions of the **Venn diagram** on **page 2** of this document. Answer the questions on **page 3** of this document to help complete and summarize your research.

- [Journals of the Continental Congress, Speech to the Six Nations, July 13, 1775](#) This document, on the EDSITEment-reviewed [Avalon Project](#), is a request made by the Americans to the Iroquois, requesting their neutrality. It is interesting that in this document, while the Americans are officially asking the Native Americans to stay out of the conflict, they dedicate a great deal of the speech to making their case for independence. The symbolism of the "family quarrel" is repeated throughout many of the documents. The language, including the idea of a "covenant chain" and addressing the Iroquois as "brothers," is significant.
- ["The Oneida Indians to Governor Trumbull," 1776](#). The Oneida, one of the Six Nations, tried to remain neutral but eventually ended up on the American side, which split the Six Nations. This document is from early in the war and also refers to the "family quarrel," a fight that doesn't concern the Native Americans. Here, the [Native Americans are addressing the Americans](#) as "brothers."
- ["The Disturbances in America give great trouble to all our Nations": Mohawk Joseph Brant Comes to London to See the King, 1776](#), on [History Matters](#). This document has a helpful headnote. Mohawk leader Joseph Brant talks about the long-lasting alliance between the British and the Native Americans but also expresses the Mohawk feelings of anger and betrayal regarding the lack of British protection from the settlers.
- ["Conference with Indians at Fort Pitt," July 6, 1776](#). The Delawares and Shawnees focus on the issue of not allowing the combatants to march through Native American lands, not wanting the war to be fought on Native American land.
- ["Treaty with the Delawares: 1778"](#). The treaty between the Delawares and the United States of North-America raises issues of fair trade, rights for armies to cross Native American land, the desire for peace, and other issues.
- ["Chickasaw Peace Treaty Feeler - 1782"](#). The Chickasaw Indians had a long alliance with the British. When the Spanish replace the British in West Florida, the Chickasaw send a peace feeler to the United States that uses the language of family.
- [Chickasaw Chiefs, Message to Congress, July 1783](#). In this message to Congress, the Chickasaw desire a halt to encroachments on their land and regular access to supplies in order to appease their belligerent young warriors; they discuss the difficulties that the war has posed for Native American communities.

The Tribes, and their relation to the documents on page 1:

Iroquois (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8071>)

Seneca (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8071>)

Miami (http://www.gbl.indiana.edu/archives/miamis20/M74-77_19a.html)

Delaware (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/ntreaty.asp)

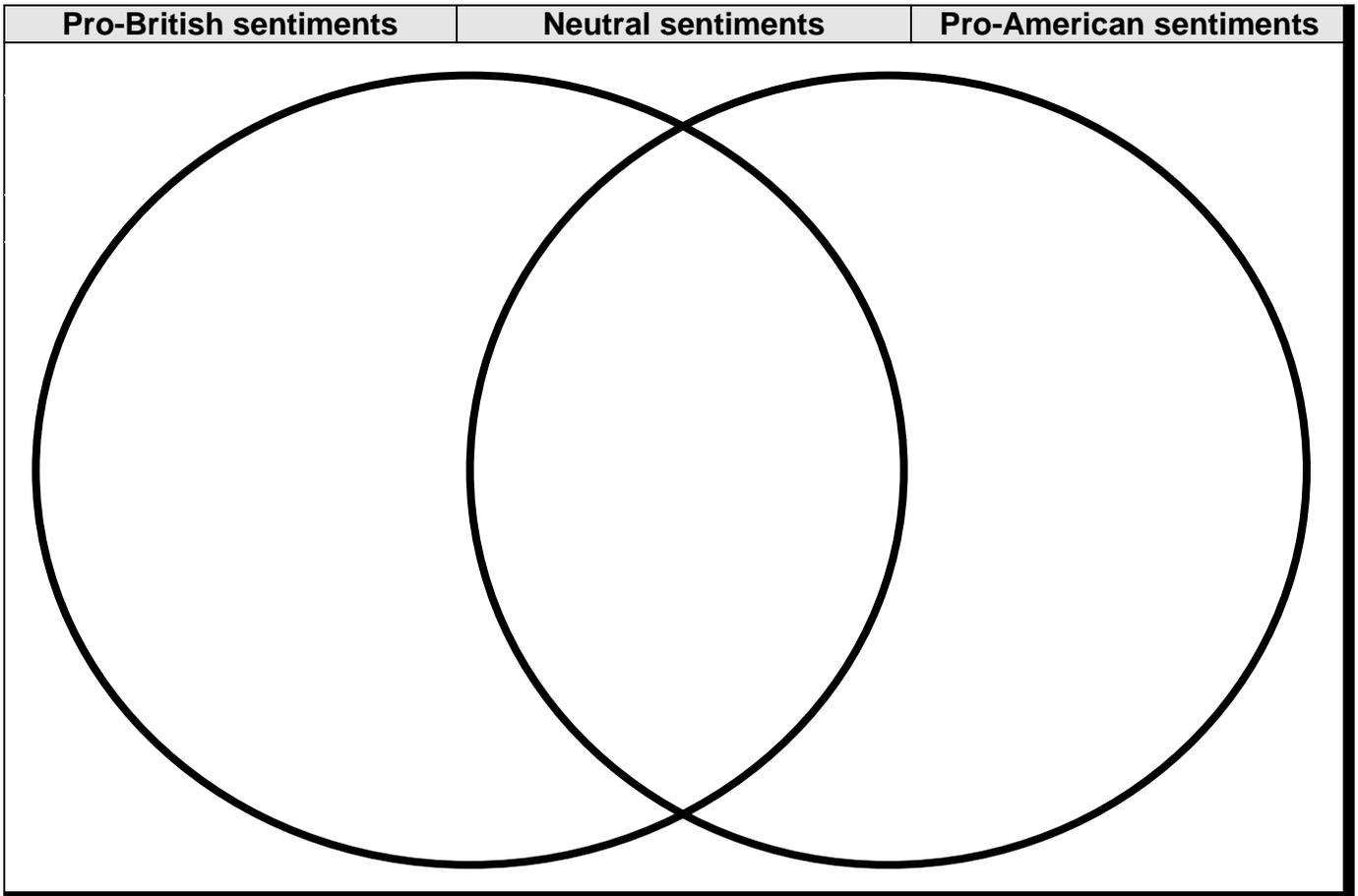
Oneida (<http://www.threerivershms.com/borderwarsch3.htm>)

Chickasaw

(http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/ntreaty.asp)

Mohawk (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/8071>)

Shawnee (http://www.gbl.indiana.edu/archives/miamis20/M74-77_19a.html)



Questions follow on page 3.

Related questions:

- What were the issues that the various Native American groups were facing?
- Did they share common goals with other Indians? Varied ones?
- Did the issues change over the course of the Revolutionary era? Why?
- What arguments did they make? Why?