## American Genocide ER Name:

You are going to be investigating whether or not the treatment of American Indians can be considered a genocide. Use the United Nations definition of genocide to instruct your answers.

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| **U.N. Genocide Definition (reworded):** anything done in an attempt to destroy a group of people based on their race, religion, or other identity. |

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| **Disease** | |
| The greatest killer of American Indians by far was disease. Many estimate that 90-95% of American Indians died of disease. This would count as a genocide if it was intentional on the part of Europeans to introduce these diseases to the Americans. | |
| **Evidence 1: Amherst:** There is only one direct evidence of this happening. Sir Jeffrey Amherst, Commander of all British forces in America gave an order in 1763 to give blankets to Native Americans that had been recently used on soldiers with small pox. He even says in his order that he hopes it will exterminate “these cursed people.” | **Why does this support the idea that Europeans committed genocide?** |
| **Counterevidence 1: Vaccination:** In 1801, the American President, Jefferson, gave an order to vaccinate all American Indians in the United States. Implementation of this order was not great and would not be finished for over a century but it did reduce fatality rates among American Indians. | **Why does this suggest that European-Americans were not attempting to commit genocide?** |
| **Did Europeans and European-Americans use disease as a method of genocide?** Support your answer. | |
| **Massacres** | |
| The story of America, especially the story of westward expansion, contained numerous slaughters of Native peoples. | |
| **Evidence 1: Massacres:** Wounded Knee is the most famous massacre. A US Army group arrived to disarm a Lakota warband. In the process of doing so, they killed not only all of the warband but also all of the old men, women, and children. 20 of those doing the killing were given the Medal of Honor. | **Why does this support the idea that Europeans committed genocide?** |
| **Evidence 2: Attitudes:** European-Americans by the 19th century firmly hated American Indians. Reverend William Crawford stated “Let them be exterminated—men, women, and children together.” Meanwhile General Sheridan stated “The only good Indians I ever saw were dead.” | **Why does this support the idea that Europeans committed genocide?** |
| **Evidence 3: Scalps:** Probably the most convincing example of genocide was the scalp trade. If someone killed a Native American, they would be paid a bounty for bringing in the scalp. You could be paid for killing people as young as 10 year old boys. | **Why does this support the idea that Europeans committed genocide?** |
| **Counter-Evidence 1: Government Efforts:** the US federal government generally tried to stop or discourage native killings. Many of the people in charge of massacres were tried for murder. Few were convicted but most were charged. | **Why does this suggest that European-Americans were not attempting to commit genocide?** |
| **Do these massacres represent genocide on the part of European-Americans?** Support your answer. | |

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| **Do you think America is guilty of genocide? Why/ why not?** |