Background:*You are* ***Lewis Cass****, Governor of the Michigan Territory. You have travelled to many Indian villages and are considered an expert on Indians. You published the first public essay calling for Indians to be removed to the west.*

Dear President Andrew Jackson:

I believe it is in the Indians’ best interest to be removed from their land and moved to the territory west of the Mississippi River. The Indians are an uncivilized nation of savages. They behave like wild, untamed animals even though missionaries were sent to improve the Indians way of life. The civilization program has failed because Indians have refused to farm and to accept Christianity. Indian governments are not able to make good decisions but they also aren’t willing to follow the rules of the United States government. Yes, a few Indians have become civilized by learning Christianity and by learning to farm, but most Indians are poor and uncivilized and therefore must be removed.

If Indians move west of the Mississippi River, they will be safe and secure. The Indians have overhunted their present lands and overused their natural resources. Relocating the Indians will provide them with new resources so they can continue their own way of life. Removing the Indians from their lands will also provide more land for incoming white settlers so that economic progress can be made on Indian lands. Indians’ best choice is to move west.

We do not wish to force Indians to move but if they refuse the new lands and the help the government offers, we may be left with no other choice. Living on their present lands and continuing to remain uncivilized will result in the destruction of Indians which I do not want. Moving west is their only hope.

Guiding Questions

1. Who is Lewis Cass?
2. What is Lewis Cass’s view of Indian removal?
3. What are the benefits of Indian removal? What does Lewis Cass believe will happen to the Indians if they choose to continue living on their land?
4. How does Lewis Cass defend his ideas when people say it is wrong to move the Indians?