



The Chickasaw Nation

Elementary Student Curriculum

Unit 1

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Lesson Plan

BENCHMARKS

This lesson will fulfill the following Oklahoma Academic Standards:

- ✓ **Oklahoma Studies Geography Literacy Content Standard 3, Items 2.A**
- ✓ **Oklahoma Studies History Literacy Content Standard 4, Items 3 and 5**
- ✓ **United States Studies *Creating the United States: The Foundation, Formation, and Transformation of the American Nation, 1607-1806* Content Standard 2, Items 1 and 4**
- ✓ **United States History *Creating the United States: The Foundation, Formation, and Transformation of the American Nation, 1754-1877* Content Standard 2, Item C.**
- ✓ **United States History *Creating the United States: The Foundation, Formation, and Transformation of the American Nation, 1754-1877* Content Standard 4, Items 2C.**
- ✓ **United States History *Creating the United States: The Foundation, Formation, and Transformation of the American Nation, 1754-1877* Content Standard 4, Items 6C.**
- ✓ **United States History *Creating the United States: The Foundation, Formation, and Transformation of the American Nation, 1754-1877* Content Standard 6, Item 4.**

Set (5 min.)

Note: The following is a suggested script for you, the teacher, to reference while discussing this lesson plan. Based on a number of factors, such as your students' age or maturity level, you may choose to deviate from the script as you see fit.

“Has anyone ever moved with their family to a different home? If you have, you know it can be difficult...packing up everything you own and driving it to a new place. Would someone like to talk about their experience moving? [*Listen to student experiences. If no one wants to talk, the teacher should feel free to relate an experience.*] So, moving can be hard.

Now imagine moving hundreds of miles, and doing it two hundred years ago. There were no cars – you would have to ride in a wagon, or ride a horse or just walk. It would take days to go as far as we can drive in an hour today. There wouldn't be any modern heating or air conditioning, so you would have to deal with cold winters and hot

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summers. Wild animals would be everywhere. If you were sick, there might not be a doctor or a hospital nearby. If you were hungry, you couldn't just stop at a McDonald's. Additionally, you would probably know nothing about the place you were moving to.

“That was the Chickasaw experience during the tribe’s removal from their Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee homelands. Do you know what that event is commonly called today? [*Pause for response.*] You are right! Lots of people and other tribes refer to it as the *Trail of Tears*; however, for us as Chickasaw people we refer to it as Chickasaw Removal. The journey was terrible, but the tribe stayed together through it—and though individual men and women died, the Chickasaw Nation survived.

“Today we will be talking about the events leading up to the Chickasaw Removal. Giving up your home is never an easy decision, especially with all those problems we talked about earlier. However, by the end of the lesson, you’re going to understand why the Chickasaws decided moving – even under those harsh conditions – was the best choice they could make.”

OBJECTIVES

1. The students will practice reading out loud.
2. The students will interact with the reading by answering discussion questions.
3. The student will draft and discuss a “packing list” of items to take west and take a knowledge quiz.

READING PROCEDURE (20 min.)

- a. The teacher will read the first paragraph of text to the students, and then ask the first discussion question. The students will answer.
- b. The students will continue the reading, with the teacher stopping them at appropriate points to ask the remaining questions.

If the student is uncomfortable with oral reading, the teacher may wish to consider reading the entire passage themselves to model good reading habits. For students who already display great comfort with oral reading, the teacher may wish to have the students read the entire passage. Teachers should feel free to stop the reading

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and pose knowledge questions about the text—e.g., asking students to define words or explain more. Similarly, the discussion questions may be answered in discussion, as intended, or the teacher may use them to make a free-response worksheet for the students.

MATERIALS

1. Reading text (provided)
2. Discussion questions (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of the following: their oral reading; their participation in discussion; and any comments they make that the teacher considers being particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher's discretion.

ACTIVITY PROCEDURE (20-30 min.)

- a. The teacher will introduce the activity to the students: “Now, imagine that you are one of the Chickasaws about to be removed to the west. Ask yourself: what can your family take? Remember that you can’t pack everything—some things will have to be left behind.” (Please see page 13 for the activity.) **Note:** *While the government did put a limit on the amount of items Chickasaw people could bring with them, our people ignored this limit because they knew that the Choctaws had reached Indian Territory and didn’t have any provisions that first winter. The Chickasaws wanted to make sure this didn’t happen to them.*
- b. The teacher will supervise the students as they draft their lists.
**[Example items for packing list:
Children: toys, clothing, bow and arrows, small animals, etc.
Adults: clothing, food, guns, small animals, horses, cattle, metal cookware, utensils, bells/metal objects, copper, etc.]**
- c. The teacher will then introduce the second activity to the students: “Now that you are familiar with the Chickasaw Removal, I am going to test your knowledge with a “Knowledge Quiz!”

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[Answers: C, B, D, A, C, B, C, C, D, A]

- d. At the end of the activity period, the teacher will select one to three students and have them present their lists. The class can then discuss why certain items should and should not be brought on the trail, and what should be done with the others. The teacher will then go over the quiz.

Materials

1. Notebook paper
2. Pen/Pencil
3. Knowledge Quiz

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade the packing lists using the following criteria: whether they adequately provide for a family's needs in Indian Territory, and whether they have a plan for disposing of items not selected. The teacher should keep in mind that creativity is encouraged, and that it is all right to pack a few luxuries or family heirlooms. The teacher should grade the quiz based on completion, correctness and effort. The teacher should go over the quiz with the students providing the correct answers. The quiz can be used for a pop quiz or test at a later date.

CLOSURE (5 min.)

“So, what have we learned today? Which president was most responsible for the Indian Removal Act? Why did Americans want the Chickasaws' lands? [*Pause for brief answers to questions.*] Good! The Chickasaws lived in their homelands for centuries, and the tribe considered their lands a part of their people. But when forced to make a choice between their lands and their people, they made the only choice they could—they left their lands and journeyed west. What they did when they got there is a subject for next time!”

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Reference Material

Today, we're going to learn why the Chickasaws had to leave their homeland they lived in for centuries. It all begins with President Thomas Jefferson and his plan to expand the borders of the United States. Nearing the end of his first term in 1804, Jefferson had taken great steps toward his goal. He had bought the territory of Louisiana from the French the previous year, in what became known as the Louisiana Purchase. The territory was vast—over 800,000 square miles, containing land that now belongs to fifteen different states. Jefferson commissioned two explorers, William Clark and Meriwether Lewis, to lead an expedition through the new American territory and learn about it.

President Jefferson wanted all American land to be opened up to settlers. The problem was that many Native Americans already lived on land America claimed. So, Jefferson developed a Native American policy to guide America's dealings with tribal nations. He said that the government should “intercede to give [Indians] a space to live undisturbed by white people as they gradually adjust to civilized ways.” In reality the actual effect of the policy was far different. Tribes became indebted to the federal government through trade, and then had to sell their land to the United States to pay their debt. The Chickasaws were the first tribe to cede land in this way with the Treaty of the Chickasaw Nation in 1805.

By the time Andrew Jackson became president in 1829, there were very few tribes left in the northeastern part of the country. On the other hand, in the southeast, despite having sold some of their land, the Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks and Seminoles still lived on large portions of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Florida. Our Chickasaw people lived on some of the richest farmlands in the southeast. The Natchez Trace, a 444-mile path extending from Natchez, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee, wound its way

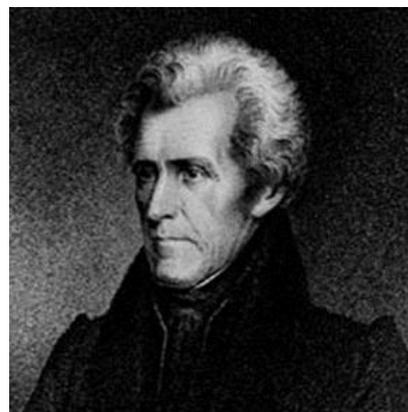


Figure 1: Andrew Jackson.

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through the heart of our dominant homelands. By this time our economy was primarily built on farming, ranching, trade and mercantile activities. Our planters exported over 1,000 bales of cotton during a year's time.

Jackson was determined to clear the southeast of Native Americans to make way for American settlement and the opening of more cotton lands. In his mind, native people should either be forced to assimilate to what he believed was the superior ways of American society, or be removed to new lands in the west out of harm's way. In his inauguration speech, Andrew Jackson promised Native Americans that his administration would give their rights "humane and considerate attention." Meanwhile, he worked closely with Congress to pass federal laws that would allow the federal government to negotiate with tribes to remove them from their homelands.

Jackson's solution called for setting aside land west of the Mississippi River that was not part of any U.S. state or territory, then giving that land to tribes in exchange for their homelands in the southeast. By moving Native American tribes west, Jackson would secure America's southern frontier. In the west, meanwhile, relocated tribes would once again find the freedom they enjoyed before the arrival of the Europeans. They could stay independent there. This fair exchange of land would show the "humanity and justice" of the government. Jackson made it clear that any Native American who elected to stay in the southeast would become a U.S. citizen.

After many months and much debate, the Indian Removal Act passed. It was signed into law on May 28, 1830. As it was written, the Act guaranteed the tribes ownership of their new land forever, and promised to pay them money for their homes and the things they had to leave behind. The American government agreed to pay the cost of moving the tribes west, and also agreed to pay for a year's worth of supplies after they arrived. A total of \$500,000 was set aside to cover our costs. If the government had kept its promises, the outcome would not have been particularly bad; unfortunately the reality of the situation was much different. The food and supplies the government provided us was rotten and undersupplied. Thus began the terrible period in time when we were uprooted and sent west to Indian Territory.

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As a group of Choctaws were waiting to be loaded onto boats to cross the Mississippi toward their new home, French writer Alexis de Tocqueville watched the tragic departure. “The sight will never fade from my memory,” he wrote. “All the Indians had already got into the boat that was to carry them across; their dogs were still on the bank; as soon as the animals finally realized that they were being left behind forever, they all together raised a terrible howl and plunged into the icy waters of the Mississippi to swim after their masters.” (From Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America*, 1835.)



Figure 2: This painting by Chickasaw artist Tom Phillips illustrates the Chickasaws’ Removal to Indian Territory.

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Discussion Questions

1. Why did the federal government want to sign treaties with Native American tribes? Why couldn't the tribes just say no?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *The federal government wanted to sign treaties with tribal nations because this would place tribes in a binding agreement releasing tribal ownership of land, rights and resources in exchange for land west of the Mississippi River. The federal government wanted tribes to relinquish their homelands in the southeast so land would become available for American settlement. Furthermore, Native Americans were not part of the idea or plan for American settlement and development; instead, they were deemed "in the way" and needed to be removed.*
2. What is the Indian Removal Act? How did it impact tribes living in the southeast?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *The Indian Removal Act was an act signed by Andrew Jackson that called for the removal of Native American tribes from their southeastern homelands to new lands promised in Indian Territory, present-day Oklahoma. The Act impacted tribes because it eradicated tribal sovereignty and displaced them from their traditional homelands. In addition, many tribes were forcibly removed from their homelands by military-style regimentation. This included individuals who were forced to walk the journey from the southeast to Indian Territory in shackles. Ultimately, many Native Americans lost their lives and loved ones during the Removal.*
3. Why did President Andrew Jackson sign the Indian Removal Act of 1830?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act because he was determined to clear the southeast of Native Americans in order to make way for American settlement and the opening of more cotton lands. He thought Native Americans needed to assimilate to what he believed was the superior ways of American society or remove them to the west out of harm's way.*
4. The ancient Natchez Trace is a 444-mile path extending from Natchez, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee. Why was this area so important to the Chickasaw Nation?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *This area was very important for the Chickasaws because it provided a means for communication and trade with neighboring tribes and later European settlers. In addition, the Natchez Trace provided some of the richest farmlands around, producing over 1,000 bales of cotton in a year's time. This ultimately increased the Chickasaws' economy and way of life.*

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5. What did President Andrew Jackson promise to the Native Americans? Were these promises kept?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *In his inauguration speech, Andrew Jackson promised Native Americans that his administration would give their rights “humane and considerate attention.” However, these promises were not met, and tribal sovereignty was ignored.*

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Children's Activity

1. Packing list:
2. Test Your Knowledge Quiz
 1. Who led the expedition up the Missouri River to the Pacific Coast?
 - a. Thomas Jefferson
 - b. The Chickasaws
 - c. William Clark and Meriwether Lewis
 - d. The Choctaws
 2. Which president developed a Native American policy?
 - a. George Washington
 - b. Thomas Jefferson
 - c. Abraham Lincoln
 - d. Barack Obama
 3. Which tribe(s) occupied large portions of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee and Florida in 1829?
 - a. Choctaws
 - b. Creeks
 - c. Seminoles
 - d. Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks and Seminoles
 4. What is the name of the path that extends from Mississippi to Tennessee?
 - a. The Natchez Trace
 - b. I-40
 - c. Highway 79
 - d. Chickasaw Parkway
 5. How many bales of cotton did the Chickasaw planter export in a year's time?
 - a. Over 500
 - b. Over 200
 - c. Over 1,000
 - d. Over 800
 6. Who promised the Native Americans that his administration would give their rights "humane and considerate attention"?
 - a. Abraham Lincoln
 - b. Andrew Jackson
 - c. Thomas Jefferson
 - d. George Washington

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7. What direction did Andrew Jackson want the Native Americans to move?
 - a. North
 - b. South
 - c. West
 - d. East
8. What Act was passed on May 28, 1830?
 - a. Indian Sovereignty Act
 - b. Indian Help Act
 - c. Indian Removal Act
 - d. Chickasaw Act
9. What type of animal swam after their masters in the Mississippi River?
 - a. Cat
 - b. Bird
 - c. Horse
 - d. Dog
10. What is the name of the French writer who witnessed the Choctaws crossing the Mississippi River?
 - a. Alexis de Tocqueville
 - b. Hernando de Soto
 - c. Piominko
 - d. Payamataha

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Reference List

For more information, see the following sources:

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