

Trail of Tears

Big Ideas of the Lesson

- To familiarize the 8th grade students with the Native American relocation called the “Trail of Tears”.

Lesson Abstract: (summary of main points)

Standard 9. [Understands the United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans.](#)

Content Expectations or Standards

8 – U4.2.3 **Westward Expansion** – Explain the expansion, conquest, and settlement of the West through the Louisiana Purchase, the removal of American Indians (Trail of Tears) from their native lands, the growth of a system of commercial agriculture, the Mexican-American War, and the idea of Manifest Destiny. (E2.1) (*National Geography Standard 6, p. 154*)

Integrated GLCEs

USHG ERA 4 – EXPANSION AND REFORM (1792-1861)

Key Concept(s)

That the people included in the Trail of Tears move were not just Native Americans, but also African Americans as well.

In 1838, the United States government forcibly removed more than 16,000 Cherokee Indian people from their homelands in Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia, and sent them to Indian Territory (today known as Oklahoma). The impact to the Cherokee was devastating. Hundreds of Cherokee died during their trip west, and thousands more perished from the consequences of relocation. This tragic chapter in American and Cherokee history became known as the Trail of Tears, and culminated the implementation of the Indian Removal Act of 1830, which mandated the removal of all American Indian tribes east of the Mississippi River to lands in the West.

Instructional Resources

Equipment/Manipulative

An overhead projector or a SmartBoard with a data projector.
Markers, maps, graphic organizer

Student Resource

Copy of same graphic organizer, computer access to LOC American Memory for predetermined pictures of the Native Americans on the move during the time period that included the infamous "Trail of Tears".

Teacher Resources

The Trail of Tears National Historic Trail commemorates the removal of the Cherokee and the paths that 17 Cherokee detachments followed westward. Today the trail encompasses about 2,200 miles of land and water routes, and traverses portions of nine states. The [National Park Service](#), in partnership with other federal agencies, state and local agencies, non-profit organizations, and private landowners, administers the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail. Participating national historic trail sites display the official trail logo.



Primary Documents in American History

Indian Removal Act

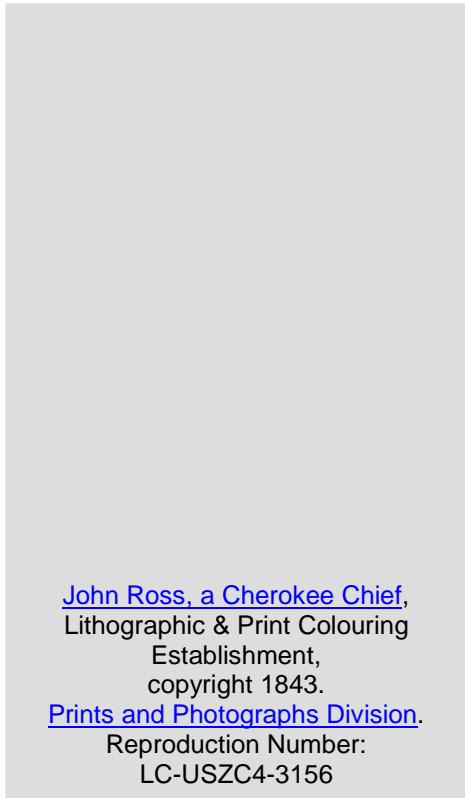
[The Indian Removal Act](#) was signed into law by Andrew Jackson on May 28, 1830, authorizing the president to grant unsettled lands west of the Mississippi in exchange for Indian lands within existing state borders. A few tribes went peacefully, but many resisted the relocation policy. During the fall and winter of 1838 and 1839, the Cherokees were forcibly moved west by the United States government. Approximately 4,000 Cherokees died on this forced march, which became known as the "Trail of Tears."

[Library of Congress Web Site](#) | [External Web Sites](#) | [Selected Bibliography](#)

American Memory Historical Collections

[A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation](#)

President Andrew Jackson outlined his [Indian removal policy](#) in his Second Annual Message to Congress on December 6, 1830. Jackson's comments on Indian removal begin with the words, "It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation. Two important tribes have accepted the provision made for their removal at the last session of Congress, and it is believed that their example will induce the remaining tribes also to seek the same obvious advantages." Additional copies of Andrew Jackson's Second Annual Message to Congress can be found in the [House Journal](#) and the [Senate Journal](#).



Written Document Analysis Worksheet

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|---|
| 1. | | TYPE OF DOCUMENT (Check one): | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> Letter <input type="checkbox"/> Patent <input type="checkbox"/> Memorandum | <input type="checkbox"/> Map <input type="checkbox"/> Telegram <input type="checkbox"/> Press release <input type="checkbox"/> Report | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement <input type="checkbox"/> Congressional record <input type="checkbox"/> Census report <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| 2. | | UNIQUE PHYSICAL QUALITIES OF THE DOCUMENT (Check one or more): | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting letterhead <input type="checkbox"/> Handwritten <input type="checkbox"/> Typed | <input type="checkbox"/> Notations <input type="checkbox"/> "RECEIVED" stamp | |

| | |
|----|--|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Seals <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| 3. | DATE(S) OF DOCUMENT: _____ |
| 4. | AUTHOR (OR CREATOR) OF THE DOCUMENT: _____ POSITION (TITLE): _____ |
| 5. | FOR WHAT AUDIENCE WAS THE DOCUMENT WRITTEN? _____ |
| 6. | DOCUMENT INFORMATION (There are many possible ways to answer A-E.) A. List three things the author said that you think are important: _____ _____ B. Why do you think this document was written? _____ C. What evidence in the document helps you know why it was written? Quote from the document. _____ D. List two things the document tells you about life in the United States at the time it was written: _____ E. Write a question to the author that is left unanswered by the document: _____ _____ |

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President Andrew Jackson offered similar rhetoric in his first inaugural address in 1829, when he emphasized his desire “to observe toward the Indian tribes within our limits a just and liberal policy, and to give that humane and considerate attention to their rights and their wants which is consistent with the habits of our Government and the feelings of our people.” Yet, only fourteen months later, Jackson prompted Congress to pass the Removal Act, a bill that forced Native Americans to leave the United States and settle in the Indian Territory west of the Mississippi River.

[Using Primary Sources](#) | [Why Use Primary Sources](#) | [Citing Primary Sources](#) | [Copyright and Primary Sources](#) | [Finding Primary Sources](#) | [Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tool](#)
Using Primary Sources

Primary sources are the raw materials of history — original documents and objects which were created at the time under study. They are different from secondary sources, accounts or interpretations of events created by someone without firsthand experience.

Examining primary sources gives students a powerful sense of history and the complexity of the past. Helping students analyze primary sources can also guide them toward higher-order thinking and better critical thinking and analysis skills.

Before you begin:

Choose at least two or three primary sources that support the learning objectives and are accessible to students.

Consider how students can compare these items to other primary and secondary sources.

Identify an analysis tool or guiding questions that students will use to analyze the primary sources

1. Engage students with primary sources.

Draw on students' prior knowledge of the topic.

Ask students to closely observe each primary source.

Who created this primary source?

When was it created?

Where does your eye go first?

Help students see key details.

What do you see that you didn't expect?

What powerful words and ideas are expressed?

Encourage students to think about their personal response to the source.

What feelings and thoughts does the primary source trigger in you?

What questions does it raise?

2. Promote student inquiry.

Encourage students to speculate about each source, its creator, and its context.

What was happening during this time period?

What was the creator's purpose in making this primary source?

What does the creator do to get his or her point across?

What was this primary source's audience?

What biases or stereotypes do you see?

Ask if this source agrees with other primary sources, or with what the students already know.

Ask students to test their assumptions about the past.

Ask students to find other primary or secondary sources that offer support or contradiction.

3. Assess how students apply critical thinking and analysis skills to primary sources.

Have students summarize what they've learned.

Ask for reasons and specific evidence to support their conclusions.

Help students identify questions for further investigation, and develop strategies for how they might answer them.

Analysis tools and thematic primary source sets from the Library offer entry points to many topics.

Lesson Sequence.

Lesson 1 (two days)

1. Discuss with students the subject, activities, and expected outcomes for this activity.
2. Introduce the [American Memory](#) collections to the students.
3. Introduce students to primary sources by using "[What are Primary Sources?](#)"
4. Use "[What Do You See?](#)" to model photo analysis. Students complete [Photo Analysis Worksheet](#) as teacher models.
5. Use "[How Does It Read?](#)" to model text analysis. Students complete [Document Analysis Worksheet](#) as teacher models



In 1838, as the deadline for removal approached, thousands of federal soldiers and Georgia volunteers entered the territory and forcibly relocated the Cherokees. Americans hunted, imprisoned, raped, and murdered Native Americans. Cherokees surviving the onslaught were forced on a 1,000-mile march to the established Indian Territory with few provisions. Approximately 4,000 Cherokees died on this "Trail of Tears."

A description of how some Cherokees settled in West Virginia can be heard in the audio recording [Plateau Region as Unofficial Refuge for Cherokee](#) from the [Tending the Commons](#) collection.

(need assistance in figuring out how to access this audio recording for the class)

Short class discussion on what is expected on the Audio Analysis sheet, which will later serve as their "exit ticket" on Day 1.

In 1838 and 1839, as part of Andrew Jackson's Indian removal policy, the Cherokee nation was forced to give up its lands east of the Mississippi River and to migrate to an area in present-day Oklahoma. The Cherokee people called this journey the "Trail of Tears," because of its devastating effects. The migrants faced hunger, disease, and exhaustion on the forced march. Over 4,000 out of 15,000 of the Cherokees died.

This picture, *The Trail of Tears*, was painted by Robert Lindneux in 1942. It commemorates the suffering of the Cherokee people under forced removal. If any depictions of the "Trail of Tears" were created at the time of the march, they have not survived.

(I would have the students access the LOC website to enable them to view this painting.)

Image Credit: The Granger Collection, New York

Photo Analysis Worksheet

| Step 1. Observation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| A. | Study the photograph for 2 minutes. Form an overall impression of the photograph and then examine individual items. Next, divide the photo into quadrants and study each section to see what new details become visible. <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 10px;"/> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B. | Use the chart below to list people, objects, and activities in the photograph. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"><u>People</u></th> <th style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"><u>Objects</u></th> <th style="width: 33%; padding: 5px;"><u>Activities</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td style="height: 30px;"></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 30px;"></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 30px;"></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 30px;"></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 30px;"></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 30px;"></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> | | <u>People</u> | <u>Objects</u> | <u>Activities</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Step 2. Inference

Based on what you have observed above, list three things you might infer from this photograph.

Step 3. Questions

A. What questions does this photograph raise in your mind?

B. Where could you find answers to them?

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This piece will be done using a Venn Diagram and will serve as the “exit ticket” on Day 2.

Assessment

Exit ticket on Day 1 would be completion of Sound Analysis Worksheet of a description of how some Cherokees settled in West Virginia can be heard in the audio recording Plateau Region as Unofficial Refuge for Cherokee from the Tending the Commons collection.

Exit ticket on Day 2 would be the Venn Diagram comparing the two paintings of the Trail of Tears.