

INDIAN REMOVAL

Performance Standard (14E/16BUS).H

Write a letter about the movement of Native Americans during the time of the Trail of Tears accordingly:

- *Knowledge*: identify the people, destination, events, conditions, descriptions and timeframes;
- *Reasoning*: explain details of the Trail of Tears; and
- *Communication*: write a letter that is well-organized, well-focused and well-detailed; express all ideas in a manner that provides evidence of knowledge and reasoning processes.

Procedures

1. ***In order to understand United States foreign policy as it relates to other nations and international issues (14E), and to understand the development of significant political events (16B)***, students should experience sufficient learning opportunities to develop the following:
 - Analyze cases of changing diplomatic relations between the United States and other people or nations (e.g., changing relations with Native American tribes, changing relations with the Soviet Union during and after World War II), and
 - Describe the significant events and contributions of individuals or groups in the development of United States diplomatic history.
2. Have students review and discuss the assessment task and how the rubric will be used to evaluate their work.
3. Ideally this assessment is best used with a study of the Jacksonian Policy of Indian Removal during the 1830's.
4. Distribute copies of the three primary source readings describing the Cherokee people as they journeyed westward.
5. Read excerpts of the sources aloud with the students and discuss the main points.
6. Have students imagine they are a United States soldier assigned to lead these people on their journey. They are to write a letter home to their family describing their duties along the way, the conditions faced by the Cherokee, and some of the specific events occurring along the way.
7. The following issues should also be addressed in the context of the letter: who was being moved, why they were being moved, where was the destination, when was this event happening, descriptions of treatment of the Cherokee.
8. The letter should be 1-2 pages in length using one side of the page and have students follow rules of spelling and punctuation as best as possible.
9. Evaluate each student's work using the Social Science Rubric as follows and add the scores to determine the performance level:
 - *Knowledge*: the identification of the people, destination, events, conditions, descriptions and timeframes are complete and accurate.
 - *Reasoning*: the details in the letter supporting each topic are logical and well-reasoned.
 - *Communication*: write a letter that is well-organized, well-focused and well-detailed; the knowledge and reasoning were completely and effectively communicated.

Examples of Student Work follow

Time Requirements

- One class period for the reading and discussion of the source readings
- One class period for the draft of the letter

Resources

- Copies of the primary source readings
- Notebook paper
- Pencils
- Social Science Rubric

The Trail of Tears

On December 29, 1835, a small number of leaders from the Cherokee Nation signed the Treaty of New Echota, in which they agreed to give up their tribal homelands in Georgia and move to land west of the Mississippi River in exchange for \$5 million. Only a few Cherokee supported the treaty; most remained in Georgia. In May 1838 President Martin Van Buren ordered General Winfield Scott to force the remaining Cherokee to move.

More than 4,000 people-almost a quarter of the Cherokee Nation-died during the journey to Indian Territory, many from disease and lack of shelter. Those who survived the journey, which came to be known as the "Trail of Tears," found life difficult once they arrived in Indian Territory. Following are observations of people who participated in or witnessed the Trail of Tears. As you read the excerpt, consider the conditions under which the Cherokee made this journey.

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When the soldier came to our house my father wanted to fight, but my mother told him that the soldiers would kill him if he did and we surrendered without a fight. They drove us out of our house to join other prisoners in a stockade (fortification). After they took us away, my mother begged them to let her go back and get some bedding. So they let her go back and she brought what bedding and a few cooking utensils she could carry and had to leave behind all of our other household possessions.

My father had a wagon pulled by two spans (teams) of oxen to haul us in. Eight of my brothers and sisters and two or three widow women and children rode with us. My brother Dick, who was a good deal older than I was, walked along with a long whip which he popped over the backs of the oxen and drove them all the way. My mother and father walked all the way also.

The people got so tired of eating salt pork on the journey that my father would walk through the woods as we traveled, hunting for turkeys and deer which he brought into camp to feed us. Camp was usually made at some place where water was to be had and when we stopped and prepared to cook our food, other emigrants who had been driven from their homes without opportunity to secure cooking utensils came to our camp to use our pots and kettles. There was much sickness among the emigrants and a great many little children died of whooping cough.

-Rebecca Neugin, who made the journey at age three

One can never forget the sadness and solemnity (seriousness) of that morning . . .

I saw the helpless Cherokees arrested and dragged from their homes, and driven by bayonet into the stockades. And in the chill of a drizzling rain on an October morning I saw them loaded like cattle or sheep into six hundred and forty-five wagons and started toward the west . . .

Chief Ross led in prayer and when the bugle sounded and the wagons started rolling many of the children . . . waved their little hands good-bye to their mountain homes.

-Private John Burnett

We saw a detachment of the poor Cherokee Indians . . . about eleven hundred Indians-sixty wagons-six hundred horses, and perhaps forty pairs of oxen. We found them in the forest camped for the night by the road side . . . under a severe fall of rain accompanied by heavy wind. With their canvas for a shield from the inclemency (harshness) of the weather, and the cold wet ground for a resting place, after the fatigue (tiredness) of the day, they spent the night . . . Many of the aged Indians were suffering extremely from the fatigue of the journey, and the ill health consequent upon (resulting from) it . . . Several then were quite ill, and an aged man, we were informed, was then in the last struggles of death . . .

The sick and feeble were carried in wagons-about as comfortable for traveling as a New England ox cart with a covering over it-a great many ride on horseback and multitudes go on foot-even aged females, apparently nearly ready to drop into the grave, were traveling with heavy burdens attached to the back-on sometimes frozen ground, and sometimes muddy streets, with no covering for the feet except what nature had given them . . . We learned from the inhabitants on the road where the Indians passed that they buried fourteen or fifteen at every stopping place, and they make a journey of ten miles per day on an average.

-A traveler from Maine who had passed several Cherokee groups on the way west

From, "Memories of the Trail" by Rebecca Neugin from *Indian Removal* by Grant Foreman.

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Hello,

my travels are sad. Ever since the first day in May (1838) when we started evacuating the Cherokee from Georgia, I have been extremely depressed and deeply saddened. I try to let the families scurry to grab as much as needed of their belongings so they can at least stay healthy and somewhat content. Some of the other soldiers treat the Indians with harsh and inhumane treatment, waking them from their sleep with bayonets at their necks, telling them if they even attempt to fight or disobey them they will kill them. The long road to Oklahoma is still far, yet it has been many months. I still don't understand why we can't give them longer to move or assist them better? It's not like we don't have any money in this country, as a matter of fact we are moving them because of our country's greed and our need for more gold and land. Many people are dead. I watch the families have small burial ceremonies for the very young and extremely elderly who have died from sickness and disease, the main one

being Whooping Cough. Some don't even have time to bury their loved ones so they will leave them at the campsite and mourn while traveling. That is all I have to say right now. miss you all.

always,
Soldier

May 7, 1838

Dear mom,

We finally stopped for the night. I almost broke down crying several times, you wouldn't believe what's going on out here. We are required to move about 15,000 Cherokee Indians from Georgia to Oklahoma. When I heard that they had to march over 800 miles, bare foot, I couldn't believe my own ears. The reasons for their removal are ridiculous! The Cherokee Indians are being moved so there will be more room for the white man. Can you believe this, mom, uprooted from their home just for us!

The Cherokees lost 4,000 people along the way. They buried 14 to 15 people at each stop. There's no question why though, all they had for shelter was canvas and blankets. The young and old were the first to pass. Diseases, conditions, age, and the whooping cough claimed their lives. The weather is brutal; it's windy, rainy, snowy, and cold all at the same time, or at least it feels that way.

I counted the wagons today for the first time, there's 645 of them. Even with that many wagons some of the Indians still had to walk. Some of the soldiers are ruthless. They poke the Indians

with the bayonets, that they are supposed to keep them in line with.

I feel the Cherokee are going hungry. All they have to eat is salted pork. When we stop to rest some Indians go hunting. I wish I could help them, but I fear the other soldiers will think I'm betraying them.

That's all I have time for now. I need to get some sleep. We are leaving early tomorrow.

Love and miss you,

Mandy