



Many Trails of Tears

The Era of Indian Removal



Susan McHale

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Grade Level	9th – 10th Grade	Time Frame	4 class period(s)
Subject	Social Studies	Duration	200 minutes
Course	Oklahoma History		

Essential Question

What prompted the United States government to remove southeastern Native American tribes from their ancestral lands? How did the tribes react to the forced removal?

Summary

This lesson examines the systemic removal of the southeastern United States Native American tribes from their ancestral homes and each tribe's reaction to removal and relocation. Students will gain an understanding of how the policies of the American government about Native Americans changed over time, particularly with the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. This lesson requires student access to Internet-enabled devices and websites for research.

Snapshot

Engage

Students hypothesize what they would take if they were forced to leave their homes without advanced notice.

Explore

Students watch a brief video clip of the Cherokee removal from Georgia and examine the United States government's attitude toward Native Americans during the Jacksonian Era.

Explain

Students read, research, and analyze primary and secondary sources to contribute to an in-depth narrative of the relocation of southeastern United States Native American tribes to Indian territory and the governmental attitudes and policies that contributed to these removals.

Extend

Students discuss the experiences of various tribes and government officials through a Historical Mingle activity.

Evaluate

Students present their findings about Native American removal and relocation of their assigned topics to the class.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR401: Locate important details in somewhat challenging passages

CLR402: Draw logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages

IDT402: Identify a clear central idea or theme in somewhat challenging passages or their paragraphs

REL403: Identify clear cause-effect relationships in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards (Social Studies: Oklahoma History (9th through 12th grade))

OKH.2.3: Analyze the motivations for removal of American Indians and the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830; trace the forced removal of American Indian nations, including the impact on the tribal nations removed to present-day Oklahoma and tribal resistance to the forced relocations.

Attachments

- [Historical-Mingle-Cards-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Historical-Mingle-Cards-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Historical-Mingle-Cards-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Historical-Mingle-Cards-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Lesson-Slides-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pptx](#)
- [Presentation-Rubric-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Presentation-Rubric-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Presentation-Rubric-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Presentation-Rubric-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Cherokees-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Cherokees-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Cherokees-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Cherokees-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Cherokees-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Cherokees-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Chickasaws-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Chickasaws-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Chickasaws-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Chickasaws-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Chickasaws-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Chickasaws-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Choctaws-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Choctaws-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Choctaws-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Choctaws-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Choctaws-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Choctaws-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Creeks-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Creeks-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Creeks-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Creeks-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Creeks-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Creeks-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Indian-Removal-Act-of-1830-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Indian-Removal-Act-of-1830-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Indian-Removal-Act-of-1830-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Indian-Removal-Act-of-1830-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Indian-Removal-Act-of-1830-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)

- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Indian-Removal-Act-of-1830-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Seminole-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Seminole-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Seminole-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Seminole-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Seminole-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-Seminole-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Cherokee-Nation-and-Supreme-Court-Cases-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Cherokee-Nation-and-Supreme-Court-Cases-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Cherokee-Nation-and-Supreme-Court-Cases-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Cherokee-Nation-and-Supreme-Court-Cases-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Cherokee-Nation-and-Supreme-Court-Cases-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Cherokee-Nation-and-Supreme-Court-Cases-Response-Key-Many-Trails-of-Tears.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Federal-Government-and-Native-Americans-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.docx](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Federal-Government-and-Native-Americans-Many-Trails-of-Tears - Spanish.pdf](#)
- [Task-Sheet-and-Organizer-The-Federal-Government-and-Native-Americans-Many-Trails-of-Tears.docx](#)
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Materials

- Student devices with internet access
- Task Sheet and Organizer (attached; eight topics—one topic per group of 4 students) and corresponding answer keys
 - the Cherokee Tribe
 - the Chickasaw Tribe
 - the Choctaw Tribe
 - the Creek Tribe
 - the Seminole Tribe
 - the Indian Removal Act of 1830
 - the Cherokee Nation and Supreme Court Cases
 - the Federal Government and Native Americans
- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Chart tablet and markers (optional for research activity)
- Historical Mingle Cards (attached; one set)
- Presentation Rubric (attached; one per student)

20 minutes

Engage

Teacher's Note: Lesson Preparation

This lesson requires student internet access and devices for research.

Prior to the beginning of the lesson, print and review all eight versions of the attached **Task Sheet and Organizers**. Each Task Sheet and Organizer provides directions, sources, and guiding questions for a topic that different student groups will explore. A Response Key for each version is also included. Be sure to check that links on each topic's sheet are accessible through your school's server.

By previewing each topic's task sheet, you can better facilitate each group in their research efforts. The task sheets aid students in organizing the information they find by providing guiding questions.

Prepare enough materials to give each student group of four a different version of the Task Sheet and Organizer (with one Task Sheet and Organizer per student). If class sizes are large, you may want to assign the same topic to more than one group. Students will form groups in the Explore phase.

Additionally, print and cut out a set of the attached **Historical Mingle Cards** for use in the Extend phase. For each of the eight topics, there are four role cards.

Show **slide 3** of the attached **Lesson Slides** to introduce the essential questions:

- What prompted the government to remove Native American tribes from their ancestral lands?
- How did Native Americans react to this forced removal?

Show **slide 4** to identify the lesson objectives:

- Determine how the government changed its stance toward Native American settlements, leading to removal.
- Identify the impact of the passage of the Indian Removal Act.
- Construct a presentation about the motivation of the government and the effects of removal on the tribes.

Show **slide 5**, which shows a picture of a suitcase and backpack.

Present the scenario on the slide: *Your parents tell you that they have been given 24 hours by the government to leave their home. The government will relocate your family elsewhere, but your parents are unsure of exactly where the family will go. The family has been told by authorities that each person can only take what they can carry themselves. What would you take?*

Show **slide 6**. Ask each student to find a scrap of paper and write anonymously what they would take for the trip and why. Using the [Commit and Toss](#) strategy, have students crumple their answers and toss them into a basket or box. Mix up the responses and have students select a response that is not theirs from the box.

Randomly call on several students to read aloud the answer on their papers. Once a variety of responses have been read aloud, have students crumple their papers again, toss them back into the box, and select a second response that is not theirs from the box. Call on new volunteers to share responses.

After two rounds of Commit and Toss, have students discuss as a class what priority items individuals would take if they and their families were forced to leave in a hurry.

Explore

Connect the Commit and Toss exercise to the forcible removal of Native American tribes in the southeastern portion of the United States in the 19th century. These tribes were forced from their ancestral homes by the United States Army and relocated to Indian Territory, which is known today as the state of Oklahoma.

Show **slides 7-8**. To illustrate what happened during this forced removal, show the short PBS video, "[Trail of Tears](#)," linked on **slide 8**. As the video begins, ask students to consider how the United States government's attitude toward Native Americans change after Andrew Jackson was elected president. Students should observe and jot down their thoughts as they watch.

Sample Student Responses

Answers to the video question will vary but should reflect some briefer version of the following information.

Jefferson believed that Native Americans could become part of the US citizenry if they adopted lifestyles similar to white settlers. Many tribes did adopt farming, clothing, and lifestyles similar to whites. These tribes were called "civilized" because they mimicked the lifestyles of white European settlers, requiring them to abandon traditional ways of dress, food, religion, and daily activities. The Native American tribes hoped that this assimilation would allow them the same freedoms as white Americans.

Although Jefferson did not see Native Americans as equal to white settlers, under certain conditions, he believed the two cultures could co-exist. However, the lands of the tribes east of the Mississippi were valuable for crops and white settlement.

Unlike Jefferson, Jackson wanted all Native Americans immediately removed from this coveted property and relocated west of the Mississippi River, where land was less valuable.

Jackson expressed to tribes that they would face annihilation if they remained on lands coveted by white settlers. To Jackson, Native Americans were simple people who needed to be told what to do. He expressed no guilt or remorse at their removal or the confiscation of their land.

Explain to students that while the video depicted the Cherokee removal, all tribes experienced some form of forced removal from their ancestral homes in the southeastern United States. There were many "trails of tears," not just one.

Show **slide 9**, which shows a map of the removal trails of multiple tribes from the southeast United States to Indian Territory (Oklahoma).

120 minutes

Explain

Teacher's Note: Activity Preparation

Before beginning the below activity, create slips of paper, each listing one of the following topics. Be sure to make enough topic slips so that there is one slip per group. If the class is large, more than one group may investigate the same topic.

1. The removal of the Cherokees
2. The removal of the Chickasaws
3. The removal of the Choctaws
4. The removal of the Creeks
5. The removal of the Seminoles
6. The Indian Removal Act of 1830
7. The federal government and Native American Tribes
8. The Cherokee Nation and Supreme Court cases

Break students into groups of four. Invite each group to select a topic from the slips of paper you prepared in order to independently research the experiences of the removal of various tribes, the government's attitude toward Native Americans during this era of removal, and the tribes' responses to removal, including appeals to the Supreme Court, tribal treaties, and war.

Pass out the appropriate **Task Sheet and Organizers** to each group based upon the topic they are investigating (each student should receive their own Task Sheet and Organizer). Each task sheet contains instructions, research links, and a note organizer.

Explain that each Task Sheet and Organizer provides questions for the group to answer and links to websites for research. Have each group choose a leader to read aloud the directions for their group. Double-check with each group to ensure all students understand the task.

Teacher's Note: Additional Sources

Remind students that they are free to search for and use documents in addition to those listed on the Task Sheet and Organizer handout. Encourage them to find photographs, images, and original documents to support their research writing.

Teacher's Note: Student Research

During student research, circulate among the groups to keep students on task as much as possible and to answer questions. Answer keys for each topic note organizer are provided in the attachments.

Once groups have been assigned a topic, show **slide 10**, which outlines the general work of the group.

Show **slide 11** to guide students in their research efforts. This slide includes the following prompts:

- Where was the tribal ancestral home?
- What was the lifestyle there?
- How and when was the tribe removed from their homeland?
- What was it like for them on the Trail of Tears?
- Where in the new territory was the tribe relocated?
- How did the tribe and tribal leaders respond to removal and relocation?
- What additional information did you find during your research?

Show **slide 12** to guide groups in creating their group project. Students are given the choice of either a three-slide deck or a poster. Slide 12 includes the following prompts:

- After completing your research, use the questions on your Organizer to create either three slides OR a poster.
- Look for ways to use photos and images to illustrate your research.
- Name your document as instructed and upload to a designated shared file.
- If your group prepared a poster instead of slides, hang the poster in the designated place in your classroom.

Emphasize the need to divide up the work, to share information with each other, and to investigate their topics thoroughly. Let students know that research groups should be prepared to present their slides or posters to the class.

Allot one class period for student research, group collaboration, and note-taking. Allot another class period for creation of student slides. Do not have students present their projects yet—this should happen in the Evaluate phase.

Teacher's Note: Differentiation

In the interest of time or for students who may struggle with the scope of this project, you can have students create a group poster exclusively.

For the poster assignment, provide a chart tablet where students can write bullet points from their research. Have colored markers or other materials for them to use in creating the poster. Groups can use guiding questions to create their posters. Other modifications can include limiting the number of research links.

Optional Tech Integration: Class Slide Deck

Consider creating a shared space using [Google Sites](#) where each group can upload their slides to one single class slide deck. Add divider slides between topics.

30 minutes

Extend

Teacher's Note: Historical Mingle

While the Historical Mingle strategy is typically used at the beginning of a lesson, students are better suited for the activity here, as they have had sufficient time to complete their research.

Show **slide 13**. After students have completed their research, have them participate in a [Historical Mingle](#). For the Mingle, they will assume the role of either a tribal member or leader or government official during the era of removal and relocation. (The role is provided to them—they do not need to choose their own.) Encourage them to reflect on the research they have done for their presentation slides/poster.

Give each student a role card that identifies their historical figure. Ask students to think about their roles. Have them review their Task Sheet and Organizers. Have them consider the following questions in preparation for the activity: *What would that person believe? What have they experienced? What would they have talked about?*

As the Historical Mingle begins, ask each student to be sure to speak with at least three other classmates who were not a part of their research group. Invite them to discuss the issues and challenges from the perspective of their assigned roles. You may wish to set a timer for five minutes and have students change partners after every five minutes of conversation. Give students ample time to complete their discussions before calling time.

When students indicate they have mingled with at least three other individuals, have students return to their seats. Give them a few moments to reflect on the activity before calling on volunteers to share memorable parts of their conversations. You may also wish to share any significant conversations you overheard or witnessed during the Mingle.

60 minutes

Evaluate

Show **slide 14**. Pass out a copy of the attached **Presentation Rubric** to each student. Review the general presentation rubric guidelines. Have students join their research groups to further discuss their projects and how to present, and show **slide 15**. Review the rubric and answer any questions students may have. Although the rubric is provided for assessment purposes, you may prefer having students use the rubric for feedback as they present their slides in small groups. To manage the presentation times, determine in advance how much time each group is allowed.

Invite students to ask questions about the rubric before they present their research.

Have groups present their slides or posters to the whole class.

Resources

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