

# Teaching Guide: Cherokee Removal

## Note for Teachers:

This is the Teaching Guide for the Cherokee Removal Case Study:

[museumofthenewsouth.org/schools/cherokee-removal/](https://museumofthenewsouth.org/schools/cherokee-removal/)

## Sections:

Background Information

Activity Instructions and Rubrics

Student Objectives

Relevant NC 8th Grade Social Studies Standards

## Background Information

Native Americans were an integral part of the formation of the United States from the time of the French and Indian War to the American Revolution. There has always been conflict over land ownership between the Native Americans and Europeans and eventually the United States. Treaties were often used to establish a right of use for land between Native American tribes, European governments, and the United States government. President George Washington used treaties with Native peoples as if they were a foreign government.

As the United States expanded, it pushed into Native American lands. The Native Americans responded in different ways; some used armed combat, while others chose to assimilate into white culture. The Cherokee Nation lived in much of what today is North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Alabama. The Cherokee were heavily influenced by the British and Americans and developed a written language, published a newspaper in both English and Cherokee, and established a government with a constitution.

During the 1830s, the United States government worked toward expanding through the whole American continent. Some termed this as Manifest Destiny, a god-given right to expand west, while others viewed this as a reaction to Europe's imperialism. The new country continued to grow and push westward, butting up against the boundaries established in treaties. White Americans viewed their form of government and way of life to be superior to those of Native peoples. In 1828, gold was discovered on Cherokee land in Georgia. Gold fever swept the nation and many white Americans flocked to the area with the hope of finding their fortune. Their belief in cultural superiority meant that they did not consider the Cherokee to have actual rights to their lands. The Cherokee in turn were angry at the ever-present invasion into their territory. Despite varying perspectives, the resistance met by the United States government from Native Americans during westward expansion was inevitable. Generally, the expansion of the United States meant that those who were white and male had power over the areas in which they lived. In response to these conflicts, President Andrew Jackson called for the removal of all Native tribes east of the Mississippi River to promote the growth and expansion of Southern states and to open up land for white Americans. In 1830, Jackson signed into law the Indian Removal Act. The law's terms stated that Native Americans who lived east of the Mississippi River would have to move to present-day Oklahoma and give up their previously held lands.

The removal included many tribal members who did not wish to give up their lands, culture, and way of life. The resistance included John Ross, Chief of the Cherokee Nation, who used the American legal system to resist the removal. In 1831, the Cherokee Nation sued the state of Georgia and in *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, Chief Supreme Court Justice John Marshall ruled that the federal court could not stop the removal of the Cherokee to Oklahoma. However, a year

later in the *Worcester v. Georgia (1832)* case, Marshall ruled that Georgia could not enforce state laws on the Cherokee's ancestral lands.

President Jackson then ignored the court's ruling and sent representatives to negotiate the *New Treaty of Echota (1835)*. Unfortunately, this treaty was decided without John Ross' knowledge and gave the United States military permission to forcibly remove the Cherokee Nation from their land. John Ross wrote a letter to Congress in protest of the treaty as he and more than 15,000 Cherokee opposed it. The government ignored the protest letter and approved the treaty. In 1838, thousands of United States soldiers and Georgia volunteers began the forced relocation. During removal, the military hunted, imprisoned, assaulted, and murdered Cherokee and other Native peoples. Those Cherokee who survived were moved onto "Indian reservations" in present-day Oklahoma in 1837. Nearly 16,000 Cherokee were forcibly removed and the 1,200 mile-journey was a long and brutal experience. There were not nearly enough supplies and many experienced starvation, disease, and exhaustion. About 4,000 Cherokee died on what would become known as the Trail of Tears.

The forced removal of the Cherokee is remarkable for several reasons. It is one of the first attempts of the United States government to use legal means to force the removal of a group of people that already had a treaty to establish their territory. The Cherokee used their knowledge of the American government to resist this legislation using the court system. In the end, the government ruled with the Cherokee. However, in an abuse of power, President Andrew Jackson ignored the ruling of the Supreme Court and used the military to forcibly remove the Cherokee from Georgia lands.

## Activity Instructions and Rubrics

### **Editorial**

- Students will either write a column or draw a cartoon from the perspective of an editor for the *North Carolina Gazette* during the 1830s that explains the events that led to the Trail of Tears and takes a position on the justification of the Indian Removal Act and the roles of President Jackson and Congress. Suggested student guidelines and optional rubric are below.
- The teacher should ensure that students are familiar with the premise of an editorial. The teacher may choose to show students political cartoons and assist them in analyzing the cartoons as a pre-activity.
- This assignment differentiates the product and process for students to demonstrate their learning. It provides choice for students in product and allows them to choose their process.

**Modification:** Find historic political cartoons about or relating to the Indian Removal Act for students to analyze or have them write an editorial paragraph taking a position on the Indian Removal Act.

**Extension:** Have students complete a political cartoon or write an editorial column taking an opposing viewpoint from what they took in the first activity.

### **Editorial Cartoon:**

- One drawing that uses symbols and words to convey an opinion and message on the topic
- Cartoon should be hand drawn. (No internet sourced images)
- Have students answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper to accompany their political cartoon:
  - What is your topic and reaction?
  - What facts and evidence from the primary sources support your stance?
  - What is the counter argument? Why is your position the right one?
  - What conclusion do you want your audience to take away?

### **Editorial Column:**

- 200 words (Google document, 1" margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt)
- Paragraph 1: Introduction and reaction
  - State opinion on the topic (1-2 sentences)
- Paragraphs 2-3: Supportive arguments
  -

- This is where students sell their opinion. They should use examples and facts from the primary sources and be as detailed as possible in explaining why they support their stance.
- Paragraph 4: The other side/counterargument
  - This is where students state the other side and then refute it. They should use examples, facts and explanations as to why it's not a valid argument.
- Paragraph 5: Suggestions, Solution or Conclusion
  - How do they propose to solve the issue?

### **Storyboard Timeline**

- Have students design a storyboard timeline that explains the events that led up to the Trail of Tears using facts, evidence, and information from the primary sources. They should choose 4 to 8 events (things that happened, words that were said, etc.) from the documents they think are most important to include in the storyboard. In each box, they will write about one specific event or thing that happened, create a symbol or drawing for it, and describe why that event is important or relevant.
- You may want to remind students that a source can have more than one important event or item to use, and you can provide them with the included template to use as a guide. An optional rubric is also below.

**Modification:** This assignment can be modified by making it a digital and/or just having students complete the drawing and description of each event.

**Extension:** Have students research and write about the populations of Cherokee people who were able to avoid removal and how they resisted.

**Cherokee Removal: Storyboard Template** (remember you can include up to 8 events)

Title of event:	Title of event:	Title of event:	Title of Event
<i>Drawing &amp; Description of event</i>	<i>Drawing &amp; Description of event</i>	<i>Drawing &amp; Description of event</i>	<i>Drawing &amp; Description of event</i>
Why relevant:	Why relevant:	Why relevant:	Why relevant:

Title of event:	Title of event:	Title of event:	Title of Event
<i>Drawing &amp; Description of event</i>	<i>Drawing &amp; Description of event</i>	<i>Drawing &amp; Description of event</i>	<i>Drawing &amp; Description of event</i>
Why relevant:	Why relevant:	Why relevant:	Why relevant:

### Cherokee Removal: Storyboard Timeline Rubric

Criteria	Advanced	Developing	Needs improvement
Required elements	Storyboard contains all required elements	Storyboard is missing 1 required element	Storyboard is missing more than 2 or more required elements
Content from primary sources	Contains factual, accurate and relevant evidence from at least 3 primary sources	Contains factual, accurate and relevant evidence from at least 2 primary sources	Contains factual, accurate and relevant evidence from at least 1 primary sources; or there are errors in the facts
Illustrations/symbols	Contains at least one attractive symbol/illustration for each storyboard box	Contains at least one attractive symbol/illustration for at least the majority storyboard boxes	Contains only one or two symbol/illustration for each storyboard box
Grammar/writing mechanics	Contains no errors in grammar, capitalization or punctuation	Contains 1-2 errors in grammar, capitalization or punctuation	Contains 3 or more errors in grammar, capitalization or punctuation

## Student Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain why the United States government pursued the removal of eastern Native Americans.
2. Students will be able to articulate how the Cherokee protested their removal.
3. Students will be able to describe the events that led to the removal of the Cherokee and the Trail of Tears.

## Relevant NC 8th Grade Social Studies Standards

**8.H.2.1** Explain the impact of economic, political, social, and military conflicts (e.g. war, slavery, states rights and citizenship and immigration policies) on the development of North Carolina and the United States.

**8.H.2.3** Summarize the role of debate, compromise, and negotiation during significant periods in the history of North Carolina and the United States.

**8.C.1.1** Explain how influences from Africa, Europe, and the Americas impacted North Carolina and the United States (e.g. Columbian Exchange, slavery and the decline of the American Indian populations).

**8.C&G.2.3** Explain the impact of human and civil rights issues throughout North Carolina and United States history.