



The Chickasaw Nation
Elementary Student Curriculum
Fourth Grade

Unit 2: Chickasaw Removal and Resiliency

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Chickasaw Removal and Resiliency

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Unit Overview

Chokma (Hello),

Thank you for your interest in the Chickasaw Nation Student Curriculum. We are pleased to offer this curriculum that explores our deep history, culture and traditions. Started in 2010 with the development of the Chickasaw Cultural Center, the curricula are designed to inform and educate individuals about the dynamic history of our Chickasaw leaders, monumental events and culture. Chickasaw historians, researchers, archaeologists and other educators, as well as tribal elders, have worked tirelessly to develop this curriculum to share our story.

We are excited to offer Unit 2. Each lesson focuses on a specific event and/or individual throughout the Chickasaw Nation's history and is complete with its own lesson plan, reading material, discussion questions, student activity and reference list for convenience. All provided materials have been reviewed and approved by the Chickasaw Nation Department of Culture and Humanities and the Chickasaw Nation Department of Communications and Community Development. To further assist, we have worked with Oklahoma educators to outline the *Oklahoma Academic Standards each lesson addresses.

The Chickasaw Nation would like to thank you for your honored commitment and support. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Joe Thomas, special assistant to the secretary, at (580) 436-7258 or joe.thomas@chickasaw.net.

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Lesson Plan

BENCHMARKS

The following Oklahoma Academic Standards, as outlined in the Oklahoma State Department of Education's 2012 Social Studies guide, are to be used only as a basic guide. Other standards may be applicable that could be based on a teacher's own interpretation of the lesson material or ability/need to make a conceptual connection:

- ✓ **United States Studies *Regional Geography and History Content Standard 1.A:*** Locate landforms and bodies of water on a map of North America: the United States, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Gulf of Mexico; the major river drainage systems, including the Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, Arkansas, Colorado, Columbia and Rio Grande Rivers; the Great Lakes, the Great Salt Lake and the Chesapeake Bay; the Great Plains and the Continental Divide; and the Appalachian, Rocky, Sierra Nevada, Cascade and Brooks Mountain Ranges.
- ✓ **United States *Regional Geography and History Content Standard 1.2:*** Identify and analyze the cultural and historic features of the United States.
- ✓ **United States *Regional Geography and History Content Standard 1.5:*** Summarize how people interact with their environment to resolve geographic challenges including housing, industry, transportation, communication, bridges, dams, tunnels, canals, freshwater supply, irrigation systems and landfills. (CCRIT 2)
- ✓ **United States *Regional Geography and History Content Standard 2.1:*** Identify the major Native American groups and their ways of life in each region, including traditional housing and economic activities, customs and storytelling, viewpoints on land usage and ownership, and their contributions to American culture and history.

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.

“I would like for all of you to close your eyes. Imagine you live in a beautiful forest. You are surrounded by tall trees blowing in the wind. There's a nice flowing river beside your family's home. Your family has a garden where your mother and sisters gather fresh fruits and vegetables. Imagine that you live near a persimmon tree, so tall you can't even reach the lowest branch. You look around your home, and you see how happy and comfortable your family is. Your father was raised on this land, and his ancestors hunted in these forests for hundreds of years. Now open your eyes. This must

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have been how the Chickasaws and other Native American tribes felt about their homes, located in parts of Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee. Would anyone like to tell us about your home and why you love it so much?” *[Take a couple of minutes to talk about the question.]*

“Now, imagine strangers coming to your home, telling you and your family that you must leave. Imagine they told you it was time for you to move and forced laws that were impossible for you to follow. Imagine packing up your belongings and walking to a new state that you know little about, a land that is already occupied by other tribes who are strangers to you.

“This is what the Chickasaws and other southeastern tribes went through in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Sadly, they were removed from their homelands by the United States government. The Chickasaws had to pack up their belongings and leave their homelands by foot, wagon, horseback and steamboat. This journey from Mississippi to Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) was more than 500 miles! What’s the farthest distance you have walked? *[Take a couple of minutes to talk about the question. Answers will vary.]*

“Today we will be discussing the role the United States government played in the Chickasaws’ removal from their homelands. We will talk about how hard it would be if you were forced to leave your home, in addition to discussing how long the removal actually took.”

OBJECTIVES

1. The students will practice reading out loud.
2. The students will interact with the reading by answering discussion questions.
3. The students will complete the student activity.

READING PROCEDURES (20 min.)

- a. The teacher will read the first paragraph of text to the students, and then ask students to read the following paragraphs.
- b. The students will continue the reading, with the teacher stopping them at appropriate points to pose questions or to ask students to define specific words.

[If the students are uncomfortable with oral reading, the teacher may wish to consider reading the entire passage 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 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. Pens/pencils

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2. Chickasaw Removal and Resiliency text (provided)

EVALUATION

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

DISCUSSION PROCEDURE (30 min.)

The teacher will lead the students in a discussion of some or all of the included questions, asking the students follow-up questions as needed. The students will answer the questions and are encouraged to pose questions of their own.

[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. Pens/pencils
2. Discussion questions (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade the students based on some combination of the following: 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 (15-20 min.)

The teacher will introduce the activity to the students: "Imagine you are part of the Chickasaw removal, and you and your family have to leave your homes. The United States militia has firmly instructed the families that the children are only allowed to play with cornhusk dolls during removal. Given these firm instructions, you are only allowed to play with cornhusk dolls."

[Although cornhusk dolls were traditionally made and played with by girls, today boys can make cornhusk dolls and incorporate male clothing, designs and other features on the dolls.]

- a. The teacher will demonstrate how to make a cornhusk doll to the students.
- b. The students will make their own cornhusk doll, being as creative as possible.
- c. At the end of the student activity period, the teacher will invite one to three students to discuss with the class how they made their cornhusk doll and to explain any unique features or attributes on the cornhusk doll.

MATERIALS

1. Cornhusk (quantity depends on number of students)
2. Yarn (assorted colors)
3. Colored markers

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4. Chickasaw Removal student activity (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade the students based on participation and creativity.

CLOSURE (5 min.)

“Who can give me a general summary of the Chickasaw removal? [*Pause for answers.*] Yes, exactly! The removal was a sad time in Chickasaw history, but they survived and made the best out of their situation, like many other tribes. [*Make transition if possible.*] Ok class, next time we will discuss what life was like for the Chickasaws following their removal to Indian Territory in present-day Oklahoma.”

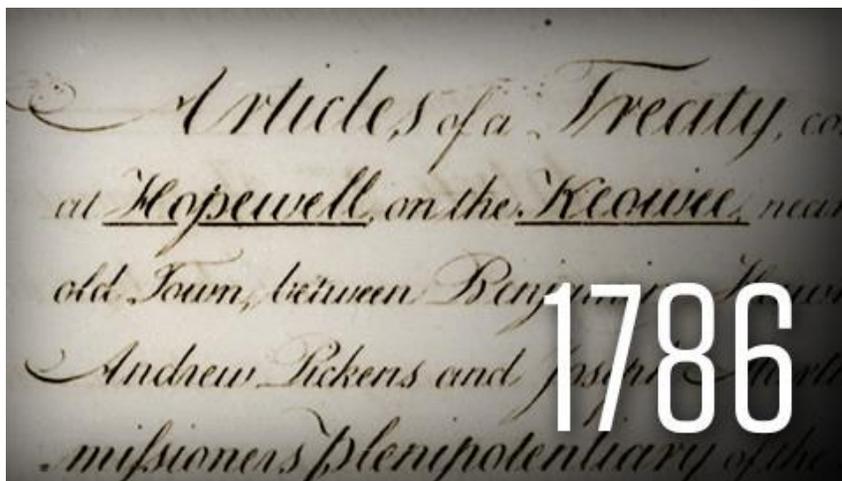
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Reference Material

On January 10, 1786, Piominko and other Chickasaw leaders signed the Treaty of Hopewell with the United States. This treaty marked the beginning of official relations between the Chickasaw Nation and the United States, in addition to recognizing the



Chickasaws as a sovereign, political nation. The treaty established three main connections between the Chickasaw Nation and the United States.

Those connections are (1) it created the official name, “the Chickasaw Nation;” (2) it solidified what is now known as the Chickasaw homeland boundaries, which consist of parts of southwestern Kentucky, western Tennessee, northwestern Alabama and northern Mississippi; and (3) it established peaceful relations between the United States and the Chickasaw Nation.

Piominko’s description of the Chickasaw Nation boundaries was as follows:

It begins on the Ohio at the ridge which divides the waters of Tennessee, and Cumberland, and extends with the ridge, eastwardly, as far as the most eastern waters of the Elk River; thence across the Tennessee, and a neck of land to Tenchacunda Creek, a southern branch of the Tennessee, and up the same to its source; thence to the waters of the Tombigby [*sic*]; that it, to the west fork of the Long Leaf Pine Creek, and down it to the line of the Chickasaws and Choctaws, a little below the trading road.

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Piominko went on to establish a personal relationship on behalf of the Chickasaw people with President George Washington, visiting with him officially in Philadelphia and at Mt. Vernon in Virginia. Piominko secured American support for the Chickasaws at a time when the Chickasaw population was very low in numbers, and the tribe was under attack from larger confederacies. In turn, the influential leader was awarded the George Washington Peace Medal for his loyalty and trust in the United States.

Unfortunately, both Washington and

Piominko died within the next five years, and promises were not kept. The succeeding presidents would not share the same views and likes towards the Native American tribes.

Forces that led to removal of numerous Native American tribes from their homelands in the 19th century had begun with Thomas Jefferson after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Between 1803 and 1820, the push for removal of the southeastern tribes, including the Chickasaws, gained momentum. On May 28, 1830, the Indian Removal Act became a law. The act provided southeastern lands for American settlement. This land was negotiated and/or taken from Native American tribes in



Figure 2: Statue of Chickasaw leader, Piominko, located on the Chickasaw Capitol grounds in Sulphur, Oklahoma.

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exchange for new lands west of the Mississippi River in Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma).

The states of Mississippi and Alabama had recently undermined the Chickasaw government by passing laws that made the Chickasaw people subject to state laws, did away with tribal laws and called for fines and imprisonment for leaders who presumed to carry out their duties. President Andrew Jackson turned a deaf ear to Chickasaw appeals for the federal government to intervene on their behalf according to treaty agreements. Federal officials immediately began to use the Indian Removal Act to pressure tribes to move.



Figure 3: Map of Chickasaw treaty cessions and removal routes.

The Chickasaws faced the reality of their situation and began negotiations quickly. They had one major fact in their favor: unlike other tribes, they did not split or follow different leaders. They faced the future as a unified people and were able to stall

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removal for several years, to negotiate better conditions and to lay the groundwork for the recovery of their people in the west.

The Chickasaws sought to ensure a speedy removal to their new home, and thereby prevent the many evils which they then suffered at the hands of their American neighbors. Chickasaws claimed that a large portion of their tribe would be ready to leave the first of May 1837. They agreed to a plan developed by William Armstrong, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Western district. They did not want private removal contractors. Instead, they wanted a government agent to supervise their removal. Given the bad roads west of the Mississippi, the Chickasaws wanted chartered steamboats to transport as many people as possible to the Canadian River in Choctaw country and also wanted transportation to be provided from there to their new district in the Choctaw lands. This is what they wanted, not what they received.

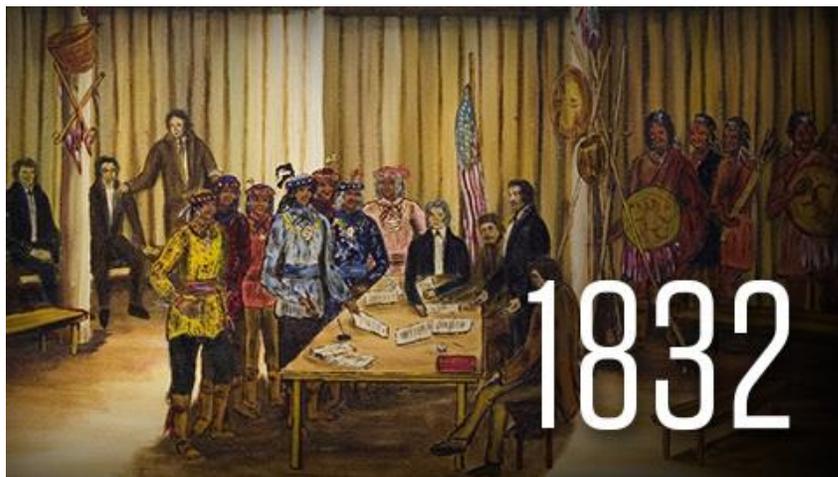


Figure 4: Chickasaw signing of Treaty of Pontotoc Creek.

The government officials read this plan differently from the way the Chickasaws meant it. The government assumed the entire Chickasaw

Nation would move in May after the signing of the 1832 Treaty of Pontotoc. This caused the government to make a number of mistakes resulting in a great loss of the Chickasaw

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National Fund and a great loss to the Chickasaw food supplies in their new territory.

By the time the Chickasaws' first group started west, the food began to spoil. Most of the barrels that held pork were defective and had leaked their brine (which kept the pork from going sour); thus, a large quantity of pork had been stored without brine. The last shipment had been exposed to high temperatures for a time at the mouth of the White River, where it had been delayed. The pork was undoubtedly rank, and the large stores of corn were also destined to spoil because the 1,000 sacks that were offloaded at the Agency landing got wet in two days of rain.

The Chickasaws gathered and started their journey from various places such as Luksihoma, Gray's Camp, Houlka, Tippoo Village, Vanderslice's Camp, Chickasaw Old Fields, Pontotoc, Carrollville and Bryant's Camp, where wagon trains formed and took to the roads feeding into the main road from Cotton Gin Port to Memphis. By the time the first group of Chickasaws traveled through Memphis on July 4, 1837, they were told that all provisions were well stored and in excellent condition, which was clearly false.

While on their removal trek, they faced disadvantages, such as horse thieves and the abovementioned rotten provisions, which forced them to hunt and made the removal even slower. Federal officials



Figure 5: Chickasaw artist Tom Phillips' painting entitled, "Chickasaw Removal."

tried to force the Chickasaws to keep up with supply wagons and march 8 to 10 miles a

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day, threatening them with the dispatch of infantries to force them along. The weather was hot, the terrain was changing, and the good hunting grounds were being used up. On August 21, the Chickasaws were allowed to stop and bury an infant who passed away during the removal process. Being able to stop and bury a loved one who perished on the trail was a rare occurrence.

The Chickasaws reached their destination on January 1, 1839. The Superintendent of the Chickasaw removal, Arthur Montgomery Upshaw, thought the Chickasaw removal had officially ended, so at Fort Towson on February 2, 1839, he made a roll of the Chickasaws who were in the west. There were 7,968, including slaves, consisting of 2,549 households. However, more Chickasaws arrived in waves to Indian Territory, with the last parties of Chickasaws arriving in the late 1890s.

The loss of horses during the removal was detrimental to the Chickasaws. Additionally, the rations that the government had expected them to consume continued to spoil. However, their removal made it clear that they were willing to pay whatever costs to keep their people together.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 solidified the fate of the Chickasaw's removal, coinciding with that of the Choctaw, Cherokee, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole tribes, into Indian Territory. This unfortunate time is not only Native American history but American history, for it pertains to the development of the United States. As we look back at the history, it is beneficial to understand the past events to be able to hold ourselves to a greater standard as American citizens. **[Portions of the narratives were taken from Daniel Littlefield's book *Chickasaw Removal*.]**

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Discussion Questions

1. What was the significance of the signing of the Treaty of Hopewell in 1786?
2. What president started the forces that led to the Indian Removal Act?
3. How did the Indian Removal Act negatively affect tribes, specifically the Chickasaws?
4. Where did the Chickasaws gather to start the removal in October 1837?
5. What happened to the food rations the Chickasaws received during removal?
6. When did the first group of Chickasaws travel through Memphis?
7. How many miles were the Chickasaws expected to walk daily?

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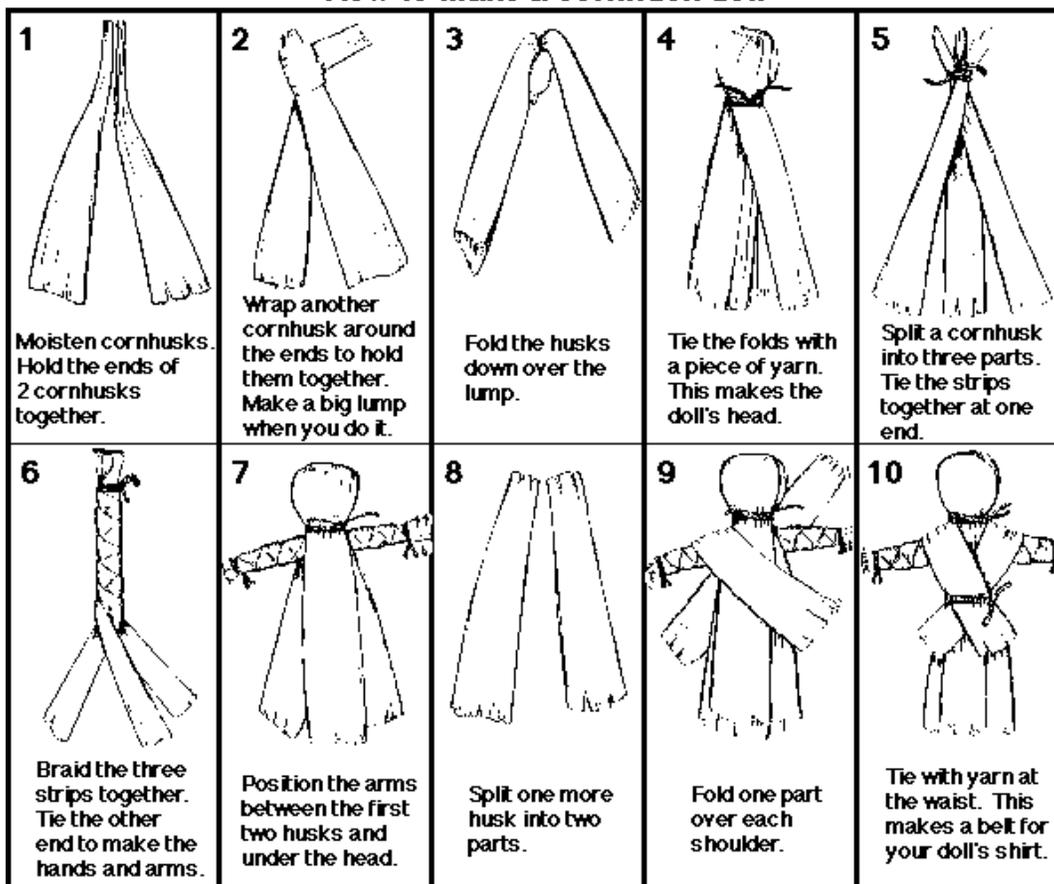
Student Activity

Use the information below to create your own unique cornhusk doll.

Instructions

1. Moisten cornhusks. Hold the ends of two cornhusks together.
2. Wrap another cornhusk around the ends to hold them together. Make a big lump when you do it.
3. Fold the husks down over the lump.
4. Tie the folds with a piece of yarn. This makes the doll's head.
5. Split a cornhusk into three parts. Tie the strips together at one end.
6. Braid the three strips together. Tie the other end to make the hands and arms.
7. Position the arms between the first two husks and under the head.
8. Split one more husk into two parts.
9. Fold one part over each shoulder.
10. Tie with yarn at the waist. This makes a belt for your doll's shirt.

How to make a cornhusk doll



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Reference List

For more information, see the following sources:

Bumpers, F., Littlefield, D. and Amanda Paige. (2010). *Chickasaw Removal*. Ada, Oklahoma: *Chickasaw Press*.

