



**The Chickasaw Nation
Elementary Student Curriculum**

Unit 2: Lesson 4

Douglas Johnston and the Chickasaw White House

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Lesson 4

Douglas Johnston and the Chickasaw White House

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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 & Humanities and the Chickasaw Nation Department of Communications & 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 commitment and support. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Joe Thomas, special assistant to the secretary of the Department of Culture & Humanities, at (580) 436-7258 or joe.thomas@chickasaw.net.

**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:*

Grade 3

- ✓ **SOCIAL STUDIES Oklahoma Studies Content Standard 4, Item 10:** Conduct short research projects and examine notable historic and present-day Oklahomans utilizing biographies and informational texts to describe their significant contributions including Sequoyah, Bill Pickett, Jim Thorpe, the Kiowa Six (formerly the Kiowa Five), Will Rogers, Wiley Post, Woody Guthrie, Clara Luper, Wilma Mankiller, Gordon Cooper, Shannon Lucid, Mickey Mantle, Carl Albert, and the Five Ballerinas. (CCW 7).

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Lesson Plan

BENCHMARKS

The following Oklahoma Academic Standards listed for each lesson 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.

✓ **SOCIAL STUDIES Oklahoma Studies Content Standard 4, Item 10.**

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' ages or maturity levels, you may choose to deviate from the script as you see fit.

“Did you know that the Chickasaws have a White House? They do, and today it is a museum that you can visit. Who lives in a White House in America today that is a very important person? [Allow for responses.] That's right! Our president lives in a White House in Washington, D.C. Well, a very important Chickasaw lived in this White House once. His name was Governor Douglas Johnston. Today you will learn all about Governor Johnston and his family. You will learn about the Chickasaw White House and why it is important to Chickasaw history.”

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 coloring page.

READING PROCEDURES (20 min.)

1. The teacher will read the first paragraph of text to the students, and then ask the first discussion question. The students will answer.
2. The students will continue the reading, with the teacher stopping them at appropriate points to ask the remaining questions.

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

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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. Reading text (provided)
2. Discussion questions (provided)

EVALUATION

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

ACTIVITY PROCEDURE (20 min.)

The teacher will introduce the activity to the students: “Now that you know about the Chickasaw White House and Douglas Johnston, here is a fun coloring page for you to complete.”

MATERIALS

1. Coloring page (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher can grade the color sheet based on completion.

CLOSURE (5 min.)

“So, what have we learned today? What is the Chickasaw White House? When was it built? Why is it important? [*Pause for brief answers to questions.*] Good! The Chickasaw White House is where Governor Douglas Johnston lived. It has historical significance due to its importance in the cultural heritage of the Chickasaw Nation, the home's architectural features and its interpretive value of Oklahoma domestic life in the early 1900s. It was built in 1895.”

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Reference Material



Figure 1: The Chickasaw White House around 1896

The Chickasaw White House is a Victorian home built in 1895 in Emet, Oklahoma. It was the private home of Chickasaw Nation Governor Douglas H. Johnston and his family. It has historical significance due to its importance in the cultural heritage of the Chickasaw Nation, the home's architectural features and its interpretive value of Oklahoma domestic life in the early 1900s.

THE DOUGLAS JOHNSTON FAMILY AND HISTORY

Douglas H. Johnston was Governor of the Chickasaw Nation from 1898 to 1902 and from 1904 to 1939. He was the leader that oversaw the Chickasaw Nation during the transition to Oklahoma statehood on November 16, 1907. He was born in Indian Territory on October 13, 1856 to Colonel and Mrs. John Johnston, Sr., and was named after Confederate General Douglas H. Cooper. However, Douglas was orphaned during

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Figure 2: Douglas H. Johnston

the Civil War and was raised by his half-brother Tandy Walker. He was educated in Tishomingo, Oklahoma and the Bloomfield Academy. After completing his education, Johnston worked as a farmer and cattleman.

In 1881, he married Miss Nellie Bynum, and in 1884, he became Superintendent of the Bloomfield Academy. Sadly, Nellie passed away in 1886, leaving one son, Llewellyn (1882), also known as “Ludie.”

On July 14, 1889, Johnston married Lorena Elizabeth Harper, a teacher at the Bloomfield Academy. She was known to friends and family

as “Bettie” and was educated at Savoy College in Texas. Bettie was the mother of Juanita Johnston (1890) and Douglas Johnston, Jr. (1895).

Johnston worked tirelessly for the Chickasaw Nation after his first election to the governor’s office in 1898 and made numerous ratifications to agreements, constantly working to maintain tribal control of our schools.

Oklahoma statehood was nearing in 1906, and the United States federal government was working to dissolve Native American tribal authority. Rather than hold new elections, the U.S. Congress appointed Douglas Johnston Governor of the Chickasaw Nation. He was to hold that office until his death in 1939. He is buried in Tishomingo, Oklahoma. Johnston County in Oklahoma is named after him.



Figure 3: Lorena Elizabeth “Bettie” Johnston



**Figure 4: Llewellyn Johnston
“Ludie”**

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Figure 5: Douglas H. Johnston, Jr.



Figure 6: Juanita Elihu Johnston

Johnston's administration had several legal victories that helped the Chickasaw Nation regain prosperity. Because of changes to the Atoka Agreement, the courts revoked nearly 4,000 fraudulent citizenship claims and saved the Chickasaw and Choctaw tribes approximately \$20 million. In 1924, the Chickasaw Nation, through Johnston's efforts, garnered permission to sue the federal government in the U.S. Court of Claims to reacquire funds that the government illegally obtained from tribal resources. Johnston believed in education for all tribal members to prepare them for the political, religious and social battles of life, and they thought with strong intellectual and moral training, the Chickasaw Nation would thrive.

CHICKASAW WHITE HOUSE HISTORY

Johnston became an important figure during the transition from Indian Territory to Oklahoma statehood in 1907. The Chickasaw White House served as both a family home and a site of political activity within the Chickasaw Nation. W. A. Waltham, who was also the architect for the Bloomfield Academy, designed the Chickasaw White House. The architectural elements of the Chickasaw White House are consistent with the Queen Anne Victorian style.

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The rich social history of the mansion includes tea parties, dances, receptions and weddings. The home also served as a place for political gatherings hosting dignitaries that represented both territorial and tribal interests. They discussed subjects such as Indian Territory, Oklahoma statehood and the future of the Chickasaw Nation. Governor Johnston's office at the White House was a necessity for the administration of the Chickasaw Nation's business after the forced evacuation of the Chickasaw Capitol Building in Tishomingo at the time of Oklahoma statehood in 1907.

Although it was named "Breezy Meadows" by Mrs. Johnston, newspaper articles of the day often referred to their home as "The Chickasaw White House." Today, the



Figure 7: The oak library table in parlor

house is listed as "The White House of the Chickasaws" on the National Register of Historic Sites. The historic structure and period furnishings give visitors a glimpse of life during the Victorian period of the late 1800s and the early 1900s. Mrs. Johnston originally planted the three crape myrtles in front of the house more than 100 years ago, and her lovely garden was known throughout Indian Territory.

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The parlor was perhaps the most important room in the house. One of the features of this room is the hand-blocked wallpaper with original pattern. Governor Johnston signed many historic legal documents on the oak library table. Another original piece is



Figure 8: The family piano



Figure 9: The Chickasaw White House before restoration

chair that belonged to Douglas, Jr.

The ceilings in much of the White House are more than 14 feet in height, and the wrap-around veranda is still supported by some of the original bois d'arc posts.

the settee, which was a wedding gift from Douglas Johnston to his wife. The original oak hall tree still stands in the parlor. Much of the furniture in the home was purchased in Fort Worth, Texas, and shipped by railroad into the Chickasaw Nation. The mantels originated from Tennessee, and the flooring throughout the home was shipped from Denison, Texas. William H. Murray, Oklahoma's ninth governor, married Alice Hearrell, Douglas Johnston's niece, in the parlor in 1898. Johnston Murray, Oklahoma's 14th governor, was born at the Chickasaw White House in 1902.

Music education was a prominent factor in Chickasaw schools, and this was reflected in the Johnston family's home life where live music was a frequent form of entertainment. There are many original items located in the dining room, including a wicker high

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RESTORATION

In March 1998, the Chickasaw Nation authorized the acquisition of the property and began planning the restoration. By 2000, plans for the restoration were in place. The house would once again look and feel the way it did around 1900, with the addition of a few modern conveniences.

By 2004, the tribe began the physical labor of the restoration process. After the stabilization of the foundation, workers took the house apart, saving all usable original components for the restored structure. Original doors, floors, hardware and woodwork were carefully separated from debris as the structure was dismantled. The salvageable material was restored, while unusable pieces became patterns for new counterparts. It took more than two years of steady work to complete the home. Now that it's repaired and rejuvenated, the Chickasaw White House is ready to continue into the next 100 years, helping to educate people about the history of the Chickasaw Nation.

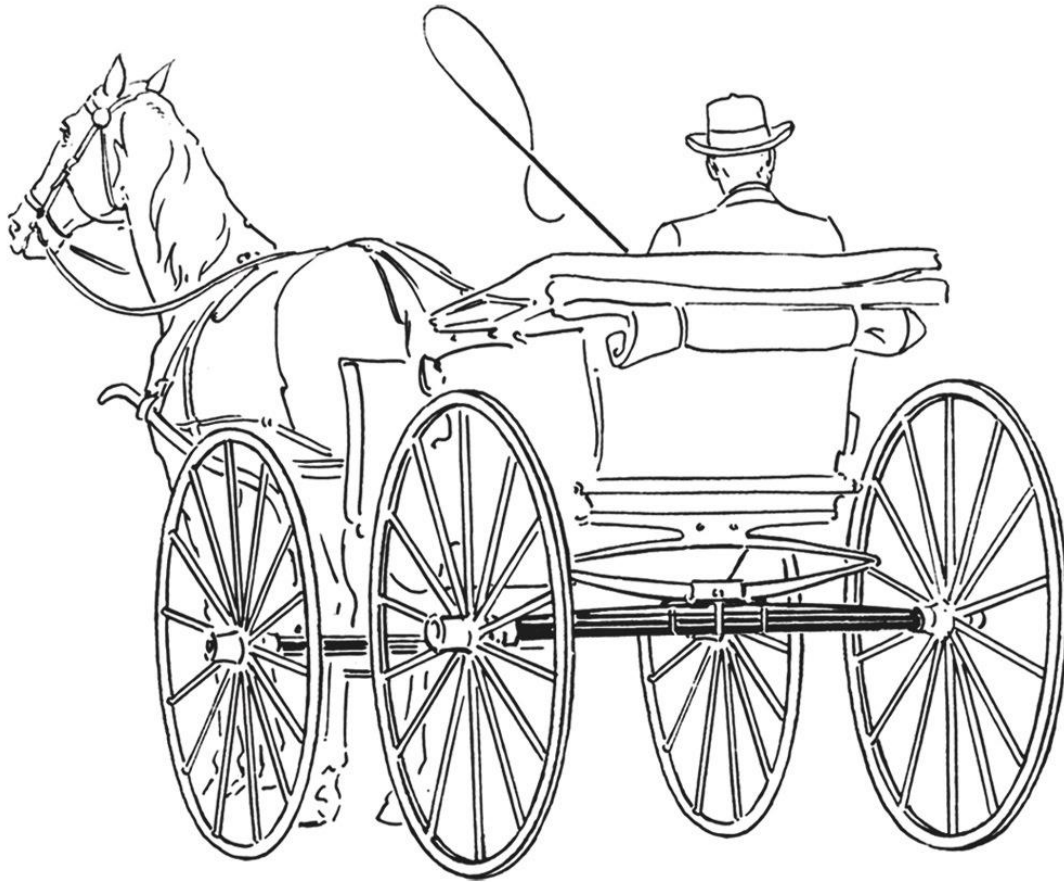


Figure 10: The Chickasaw White House today

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Student Activity

Color the horse and buggy.



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Discussion Questions

- 1) What historic event propelled Douglas Johnston into significance in Oklahoma history?

Sample Answer: Statehood. Douglas Johnston was the leader who oversaw the Chickasaw Nation during the transition to Oklahoma statehood.

- 2) When did Oklahoma become a State?

Sample Answer: Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory were merged into the State of Oklahoma on November 17, 1907.

- 3) Many settlers encroaching into Indian Territory lived in cabins, dugout sod homes and even tents. How might these people feel when looking at the comfort of a home like the Chickasaw White House?

Sample Answer: History shows that many people felt they were entitled to what belonged to someone else. Oklahoma statehood opened Indian Territory to settlement and ownership of what had been tribal land.

- 4) Why is it important to know that the Fine Arts were taught in Chickasaw tribally-operated schools before Oklahoma statehood?

Sample Answer: Knowing music and art were taught in Chickasaw Schools prior to statehood documents the tribe's commitment to providing the best education possible for its children.

- 5) What is a bois d'arc?

Sample Answer: The bois d'arc is a tree native to Oklahoma, used originally for bows and clubs; later for hedges and fence posts. The wood is very dense and contains chemical compounds that deter rot and insect infestation.

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Reference List

For more information, see the following sources:

A Nation in Transition: Douglas Henry Johnston and the Chickasaws, 1898-1939, by Michael W. Lovegrove (Ada: Chickasaw Press, 2009).

Leaders and Leading Men of the Indian Territory, by H. F. O’Beirne (Chicago: American Publishers Association, 1891).

“Douglas H. Johnston,” by Melven Cornish (*Chronicles of Oklahoma*, March 1940).

Juanita Johnston Smith Collection, Oklahoma Historical Society.

Maclura pomifera, by J. D. Burton (National Forest Service).