

Discussion Questions

1. How was the Natchez Trace used by both European/American travelers and Native Americans, specifically the Chickasaws?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *From prehistoric times to the 1800s, the Natchez Trace served many purposes. Prehistoric Native Americans, along with the Chickasaw, used the Natchez Trace as a trading route and way to communicate quickly. Once the city of Natchez was established in 1716 and New Orleans in 1718, farmers and traders referred to as Kaintucks would float their goods down the Mississippi River, sell them at the markets, then trek back up the Natchez Trace to their homes. In 1800, the Chickasaws gave permission to the United States to use the Natchez Trace as a post road connecting Nashville to Natchez. At this time many Chickasaws including George Colbert built stands in Chickasaw country, supplying goods and a place to sleep to travelers and traders. The Natchez Trace was also briefly used as a military road by the United States after the battle of New Orleans, when General Andrew Jackson brought his entire army up this road on the way back to Nashville.*
2. How was the Natchez Trace economically advantageous to the Chickasaws?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *The Natchez Trace ran right through the heart of the Chickasaw homeland, and many important Chickasaw villages were located along it including Chokkilissa', which was the largest village of the Chickasaws. This made it possible to quickly travel, trade and spread information to each other, other tribes and European allies. Once Kaintucks began traveling home along the Trace, and the United States began using it as a post road, many others began to travel along it. Many Chickasaws maintained stands along the Natchez Trace to cater to travelers' needs. Small Chickasaw settlements also sprang up around some of these stands including Colbert's Ferry. People from these settlements would hunt, fish and produce goods to sell to travelers.*
3. Having the Natchez Trace run through the heart of your homeland may be economically advantageous; however, this greatly increases the frequency of non-native traders, travelers and potential non-native settlers within and around your boundaries. Please provide a short argument for and against this influx of people into your nation.
 - a. **Sample answer:** *While having the Natchez Trace run through your homeland may have been economically advantageous; there are pros and cons to having an influx of non-native traders, travelers and settlers in and around your nation. First, non-native travelers and traders along the Natchez Trace brought many beneficial European goods such as metal knives, axes, rifles and other utensils. They also brought clothing, ceramics and non-native fruits and vegetables. Travelers would pay to sleep and eat at the stands as well as purchase items from other Chickasaws who lived nearby. The downside is that many travelers and traders also brought unwanted items into the area, such as alcohol. Settlers on the periphery of the nation did not always cause problems and often traded with the Chickasaws, but as time passed they began encroaching on*

tribal land, using up resources and stealing cattle from the Chickasaws. This was one of the many problems that influenced treaty negotiations with the American government, which resulted in the Chickasaws giving up much of their land.

4. By 1821, the U.S. mail, along with many travelers, were using new roads navigating around Chickasaw country. Please provide one negative and one positive result of this interaction between Chickasaws and encroaching settlers.
 - a. **Sample answer:** *One negative result of travelers no longer using the Natchez Trace was the loss of the economic advantage it presented. Many of the stands closed, so the stand keepers along with the others who provided goods were no longer able to do so. One positive result is that traders brought fewer unwanted goods into Chickasaw territory.*
5. The Treaty of Pontotoc Creek was signed in 1832, giving the American government all that remained of the Chickasaw homelands. Please provide a response to how you and your family would feel if you had to leave your home and numerous personal items behind.
 - a. **Sample answer:** *(Answers may vary)*

The response should contain some of the elements listed below.

- *Dealing with being forced to leave your home, the land of your ancestors.*
- *Dealing with sadness and/or anger for having to do so.*
- *Dealing with feelings regarding the people who are forcing you to leave.*
- *Adjusting to a new, unknown land you are moving to.*
- *Determining how to maintain your identity.*