



The Chickasaw Nation
Secondary Student Curriculum
(Teacher Edition)
Unit 1: Lesson 4
Indian Territory Government

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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 1. 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, student quiz and reference list for convenience. The timespan of Unit 1 ranges from the Chickasaws' first European encounter in 1540 to the creation of the Chickasaw Nation Capitol in 1898. 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.

The Chickasaw Nation would like to thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Joe Thomas, special assistant to the secretary of the Chickasaw Nation Department of Culture and 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 2014 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:*

Grades 9-12

- ✓ **Oklahoma History and Government: *The Foundation, Formation and Transformation of Oklahoma, Content Standard 3.1:*** Compare and contrast the development of governments among the Native American tribes, the movement for the state of Sequoyah, the proposal for an all-Black state and the impact of the *Enabling Act* on single statehood.
- ✓ **Oklahoma History and Government: *The Foundation, Formation and Transformation of Oklahoma, Content Standard 3.2:*** Describe and summarize attempts to create a state constitution joining Indian and Oklahoma Territories, including the impact of the Progressive and Labor Movements resulting in statehood on November 16, 1907.
- ✓ **United States History, *The United States: The American Nation in Transformation, 1878 to the Present, Content Standard 1.2A:*** Summarize the reasons for immigration, shifts in settlement patterns and the immigrant

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- experience, including the *Chinese Exclusion Act*, the impact of Nativism, Americanization and the immigrant experiences at Ellis Island.
- ✓ **United States History, *The United States: The American Nation in Transformation, 1878 to the Present*, Content Standard 1.2B:** Examine the rationale behind federal policies toward Native Americans, including the establishment of reservations, attempts at assimilation, the end of the Indian Wars at Wounded Knee and the impact of the *Dawes Act* on tribal sovereignty and land ownership.

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Lesson Plan

OKLAHOMA ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Grades 9-12

- **Oklahoma History and Government: *The Foundation, Formation and Transformation of Oklahoma*, Content Standard 3.1.**
- **Oklahoma History and Government: *The Foundation, Formation and Transformation of Oklahoma*, Content Standard 3.2.**
- **United States History, *The United States: The American Nation in Transformation, 1878 to the Present*, Content Standard 1.2A.**
- **United States History, *The United States: The American Nation in Transformation, 1878 to the Present*, Content Standard 1.2B.**

INTRODUCTION

“Something we usually take for granted in our lives is the presence of government. City, county, state, tribal or federal—government is always there. What is it that a government is supposed to do? [*Take a couple of minutes to talk about the question.*] Right! And a national government has the biggest tasks of all—the ones that impact all the people of the nation.

“Two of the most important tasks the Chickasaw people had upon arriving in Indian Territory were to draft a constitution and set up a government. This was made more difficult because, at the same time, the Chickasaws were transitioning away from their Mississippian style of government—one based on hereditary leaders or *minko'*—toward one that closely resembled the United States government.

“Today, we will be talking about how and why the current Chickasaw government came to be. We will also learn who the hereditary Chickasaw leaders were in Indian Territory and why the Chickasaws began to transition into a more modern-day government administered by a governor. By the end of the lesson, you will know how Chickasaws drafted a constitution and formed a new government in Indian Territory.”

OBJECTIVES

1. The students will analyze the reading by answering discussion questions.

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2. The students will defend their answers by answering follow-up questions.
3. The students will prepare an essay on the biggest differences between the two models of government discussed and how they affected the Chickasaw people.
4. The students will complete the student quiz.

READING PROCEDURE (20 min.)

1. The teacher will hand out the included text to the students and read the first two paragraphs aloud. The students will then read the rest of the text aloud.
2. The teacher will lead the students in a discussion of some, or all, of the included questions, asking the students follow-ups as appropriate. The students will answer the questions and are encouraged to pose questions of their own.

If the students are uncomfortable with reading out loud, the teacher may consider read the entire passage to model good reading habits. For students who already display great comfort with reading out loud, the teacher may have the students read the entire passage. Teachers should feel free to stop the reading and pose questions about the text—e.g., asking students to define words or explain more. Similarly, the 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: oral reading, 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.

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ACTIVITY PROCEDURE (20 min.)

1. The teacher will introduce the activity to the students: “Based on what you have learned, prepare an essay on how the 1856 Chickasaw Constitution affected the Chickasaw people in their new land.”
2. The teacher will supervise the students as they draft their essays.
3. At the end of the writing period, the teacher will ask one to three students to read their essays to the class. *[They should not have to read their essays unless they volunteer to do so.]*
4. The teacher will then hand out the student quiz.

MATERIALS

1. Pen/Pencil.

EVALUATION

The teacher will read and/or listen to the essays and grade them for content, prose or completion. The teacher should also go over the quiz with the students, providing the correct answers. The quiz can be used as a pop quiz or test at a later date.

CLOSURE (5 min.)

“So, what have we learned today? What were some problems the Chickasaws faced when they arrived in Indian Territory? *[Pause for brief answers to questions.]* That’s correct! The Chickasaws were bound to the Choctaw Nation’s laws and constitution after Removal. After ratifying their new constitution, they once again regained their ability to provide for their people. They reestablished their farms, businesses and schools, and they took the first steps toward making Indian Territory their new home.

However, only a generation after their arrival, another great disturbance would take place that affected not only Chickasaws, but people all across the American continent—the Civil War.”

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Reference Material

The Chickasaws were removed from their traditional homeland, including parts of present-day Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee, beginning in 1837 and continuing into the 1890s. Upon Removal, the Chickasaws found themselves limited and

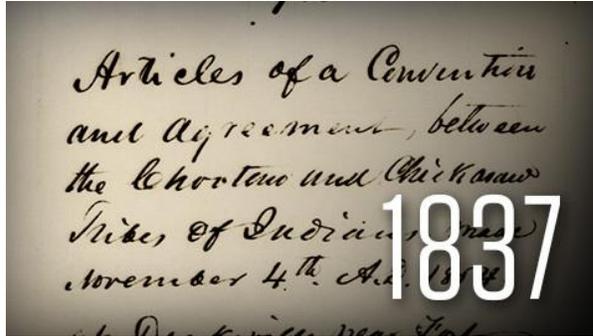


Figure 1: 1837 Treaty of Doaksville text.

bound to the Choctaw Nation's constitution and laws in their new land.

Chickasaw leaders had negotiated and signed an agreement with the Choctaw Nation in 1837, called the Treaty of Doaksville, which provided a western home for the Chickasaws. They

gained some control over part of the territory the Choctaws had received from the American government. This territory, which would be called the Chickasaw District, was roughly the western two-thirds of the Choctaw lands—with the other third being the Choctaw District. However, citizens of both nations could settle anywhere in the Choctaw or Chickasaw districts of the Choctaw Nation.

While in their new land of Indian Territory, Chickasaws continued to refer to their leaders as *minko'* (leader). At the same time, many leaders began to utilize the European title of district *chief*, though this was not a traditional title for the Chickasaws like *minko'*. The position of the *minko'* was commonly hereditary, meaning rank was passed down from generation to generation. Although a *minko'* inherited his rank, he had to earn his power and influence; it was never given to him at birth. However, not all Chickasaw leaders who served as the *minko'* were hereditary. Some leaders received their position through leadership and negotiating skills, a strong commitment to the Chickasaw people, culture and sovereignty, and possessing prowess and a fierce attitude on the battlefield.

Traditional Chickasaw leaders who served in Indian Territory included *Ishtehotopa* [ish-tee-ho-to-pah] and *Ishteukahtubby* [ish-tee-you-cuh-tubby], among others. Both men served as the Chickasaw leader during different years following

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Removal.

During the 1840s, the role of the *minko'*, and the title itself, in Chickasaw society began to decline in Indian Territory, and the Chickasaw Nation began to transition into a more modern form of government to adjust to the ever-changing times. Until 1856, this new form of government in Indian Territory would incorporate the title of district chief to oversee the operations of the Chickasaw Nation. The transition would allow them greater opportunities to compete with their non-Indian counterparts and help reestablish themselves in their new land.

At a time when the Chickasaw community seemed to be in dire straits, there was a renaissance of personal and group pride that produced a fresh sense of purpose and direction. They adapted to their new land and forged a new way of life to match the challenges they faced. A new group of Chickasaw leaders stepped forward—men like Edmund Pickens, Cyrus Harris and Winchester Colbert. These men were not hereditary Chickasaw leaders, but they each possessed strong leadership skills and devotion to Chickasaws, like a hereditary *minko'*. Pickens, Harris and Colbert, among others, would go on to serve the Chickasaw people in Indian Territory respectfully.

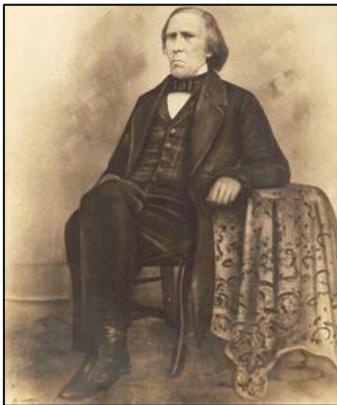


Figure 2: Edmund Pickens, the Chickasaw District Chief of the Choctaw Nation.

As the new leaders of the Chickasaw Nation emerged, the tribe sought to adopt a constitution to establish their government in the new land. On Nov. 4, 1848, the Chickasaw Nation adopted the Choctaw Nation's constitution at Boiling Springs near Fort Washita in the Chickasaw District. An official leader was needed to oversee the Nation, as outlined in the constitution. Pickens was appointed by the Chickasaw Council (later the Chickasaw Legislature) as the *Chief of the Chickasaw District of the Choctaw Nation*. The title of district *chief* was selected to reflect the Choctaw Nation's leader, a requirement of the adopted Choctaw constitution. Pickens' extensive service and dedication to the Chickasaw Nation helped lead the Chickasaw people toward progress and the signing of the 1856 Chickasaw Constitution. Pickens

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continued to serve the Chickasaw Nation as district *chief* until 1856. He is remembered as a leader who exhibited some of the finest qualities known to man: honesty, integrity, high moral values and common sense.

As the Chickasaws moved into their district, they found the Choctaw Nation laws oppressive. The laws further united the Chickasaws in opposing their unification agreement with the Choctaws. By 1853, after many lobbying trips to Washington, D.C., Chickasaws won official support for separation from the Choctaws. At Washington, in June 1855, Chickasaw and Choctaw commissioners met and negotiated an agreement dissolving their 1837 compact. The treaty permitted Choctaw and Chickasaw citizens to settle in the territory of either nation. It recognized Chickasaw sovereignty by guaranteeing them “unrestricted right of self-government and full jurisdiction over persons and property within their respective limits,” except trade and enterprise, which were to be regulated by the U.S. government.

On Aug. 1, 1856, the Chickasaw people met at Good Spring, present-day Tishomingo, on Pennington Creek. Leaders collected huge amounts of food, including 5,000 pounds of fresh beef, to feed their people. Under a large brush arbor, Chickasaws rested on log seats while the leaders conducted business on a crude platform. Old business was closed out. Then the assembled Chickasaws resolved into a constitutional convention. Jackson Kemp was elected convention chairman. After an extended discussion of constitutional rules, Kemp recessed the convention, and a drafting committee went to work. The convention re-assembled at Good Spring on Aug. 30 and ratified the new constitution for the Chickasaw Nation. The ratification of the constitution ushered in a new wave of resurgence for all Chickasaws in Indian Territory. Kemp would



Figure 3: Pennington Creek.

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go on to serve as the Governor Pro Tempore (Tem.) for the Chickasaw Nation in 1866 and as the president of the Chickasaw Senate in 1867.

The constitution provided for three branches of government (Executive, Legislative and Judicial). The constitution also provided the Chickasaws the opportunity to refer to their leader as they saw fit. The title of governor was selected to represent the supreme executive power of the Chickasaw Nation. The legislature had both a House of Representatives and a Senate. The Chickasaw judiciary, as defined by the 1856 constitution, consisted of a supreme court made up of a chief justice and two associate justices, as well as circuit courts and county courts. Additionally, the constitution defined the four counties (or districts) of the Chickasaw Nation—Panola, Pickens, Tishomingo and Pontotoc—and provided a structure for elected local governments, including a sheriff and constables.

Cyrus Harris was the first elected governor of the Chickasaw Nation. Harris was at the core of implementing the first Chickasaw government and constitution in Indian Territory. Through his formal education, he was fluent in both English and Chickasaw, and this helped bridge the gap with the U.S. government during legislative processes. Described as a man of “great generosity, integrity, patriotism and self-sacrifice,” Harris lived a noble life, dedicated to serving his fellow Chickasaws.

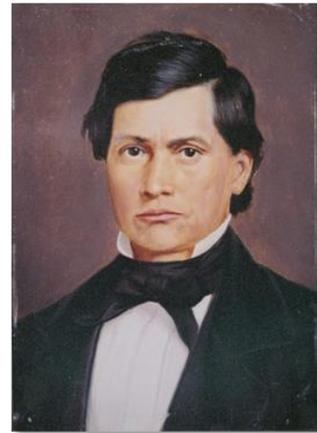


Figure 4: Governor Cyrus Harris, as painted by Chickasaw historian and author Juanita Tate.

Chickasaw schools and academies began to appear throughout their new land. Knowing that education was crucial to their survival and witnessing the bad treatment other American Indian children and families were facing, Chickasaws continued to educate their children and reestablished their boarding schools and academies in Indian Territory. The first tribal academy, McKendree Academy, was established in 1844 and would later become the Chickasaw Manual Labor Academy in 1852. Soon thereafter, additional schools were developed that would broaden the Chickasaws’ understanding of the changing world,

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including the Wapanucka Female Labor School and the Bloomfield Academy for Chickasaw Females in 1852, Colbert Academy in 1854 and the Burney Institute for Girls in 1859, among many others.



Figure 5: Chickasaw and Choctaw female students standing in front of Bloomfield Academy. Image courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

The Chickasaw Nation partnered with Methodist and Protestant denominations in their efforts to educate the children. All curricula within the schools had academic, social, domestic and religious components. Subjects that were taught included English, history, geography, writing, logic and rhetoric, arithmetic and algebra, and natural and mechanical sciences. The Chickasaw schools continued up into the 1900s with the Carter Seminary in 1932. Remarkably, these schools were established 20 years before the opening of the first federally operated, off-reservation boarding schools, such as the 1879 Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. While the Chickasaws were uprooted from their Homeland beginning in 1837, their determination for educating and providing for their own citizens remains unconquered.

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Most Chickasaws celebrated the new constitution, which created a government that would answer to the Chickasaw citizens and address their needs. Livelihoods, businesses, schools and farms were reestablished in Indian Territory, and it was the beginning of a new era of progress and success in the Chickasaw Nation. The Chickasaws were presented with many challenges in their quest for their own government in their new land. The determination and resiliency the Nation possessed in their homeland was transferred into Indian Territory, enabling the tribe to overcome the many challenges presented by their non-Indian counterparts. The Chickasaw leaders were instrumental in creating and organizing an independent Chickasaw government in Indian Territory, and their foresight and perseverance have helped create a strong Chickasaw Nation to this day.

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Discussion Questions

1. Explain what the Chickasaws faced when they arrived in their new land following Removal?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *Following removal, the Chickasaws found themselves limited and bound to the Choctaw Nation's constitution and laws.*
2. What did the 1837 Treaty of Doaksville mean to the Chickasaws?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *The treaty meant the Chickasaws gained some control over part of the territory the Choctaws had received from the American government. This territory for the Chickasaws would become their new western home, known as the Chickasaw District within the Choctaw Nation.*
3. Why did the Chickasaws want to end the Treaty of Doaksville?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *The Chickasaws wanted to dissolve the treaty because they found Choctaw Nation laws oppressive. In addition, they could not assert full control and oversight over their people while living within the constraints of the Choctaw Nation.*
4. What monumental event took place in August 1856 at Good Spring near present-day Tishomingo? Describe the work that was accomplished there.
 - a. **Sample answer:** *On Aug. 1, 1856, the Chickasaws met in convention at Good Spring, present-day Tishomingo, on Pennington Creek. Leaders had collected huge amounts of food, including 5,000 pounds of fresh beef, to feed their people. Under a large brush arbor, Chickasaws rested on log seats while their leaders conducted business on a crude platform. Old business was closed out, and a new style of government emerged. Later that month, the Chickasaws would ratify their new constitution that established a new branch of government, policies and procedures, and new ideas that would reestablish their businesses, farms, schools and livelihoods in their new western land.*
5. Why did Chickasaws begin to reestablish schools in their new land?
 - a. **Sample answer:** *Chickasaws saw the importance of an education. Shortly after their removal to Indian Territory, the Chickasaws began to reestablish their schools and academies. The first Chickasaw school established in Indian Territory was McKendree Academy in 1844. Soon after, additional academies were created. These schools were reestablished in their new land to ensure their survival and to broaden their understanding of the changing world around them. To this day, the Chickasaw Nation continues to value and support education for all Chickasaw citizens.*

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Student Activity

Based on what you have learned, prepare an essay discussing how the 1856 constitution affected the Chickasaw people in their new land in Indian Territory. Write your essay below.

Sample answer: *The 1856 constitution positively affected the Chickasaw people, establishing a formal government in their new land in Indian Territory. This new government provided for three branches of government (Executive, Legislative and Judicial), led by a governor. The legislature had both a House of Representatives and a Senate. The Chickasaw judiciary consisted of a supreme court made up of a chief justice and two associate justices, as well as circuit courts and county courts. The constitution also defined the four counties (or districts) of the Chickasaw Nation—Panola, Pickens, Tishomingo and Pontotoc—and provided a structure for elected local governments, including a sheriff and constables.*

While the constitution fully supported a new government in Indian Territory for all Chickasaws, the Chickasaw citizens benefitted from the reestablishment of Chickasaw businesses, schools, farms and livelihoods in their new home. Prior to the 1856 constitution, the Chickasaw people were bound to the laws and constitution of the Choctaw Nation. The constitution created the opportunity for the Chickasaws to remove themselves from under the constraints of the Choctaw Nation and establish a government that would answer to the Chickasaw citizens and address their needs—greatly affecting the Chickasaw people even to this day.

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Student Quiz

1. What tribe did the Chickasaws negotiate and sign a treaty with in 1837?
 - a. Choctaw
 - b. Cherokee
 - c. Seminole
 - d. Muscogee (Creek)
2. What was the name of the territory that covered the western two-thirds of the Choctaw land in which the Chickasaws first settled?
 - a. Chickasaw District
 - b. Seneca District
 - c. Oklahoma District
 - d. Comanche District
3. In 1848, the Chickasaw Nation was administered by whom?
 - a. Governor
 - b. *Minko'*
 - c. Chief
 - d. President
4. In 1848, who was selected to serve as the *Chief of the Chickasaw District of the Choctaw Nation*?
 - a. Winchester Colbert
 - b. Jackson Kemp
 - c. *Ishteukahtubby*
 - d. Edmund Pickens
5. At what present-day town did the Chickasaws meet to ratify the new Chickasaw Constitution in August 1856?
 - a. Ada
 - b. McAlester
 - c. Tishomingo
 - d. Ardmore
6. Which is not a county or district within the Chickasaw Nation?
 - a. Panola
 - b. Ardmore
 - c. Pickens
 - d. Tishomingo

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7. In 1856, who became the first elected governor of the Chickasaw Nation?
 - a. Edmund Pickens
 - b. Cyrus Harris
 - c. Jackson Kemp
 - d. *Ishtehotopa*

8. What was the name of the first Chickasaw school in Indian Territory?
 - a. Wapanucka Institute
 - b. Bloomfield Academy
 - c. McKendree Academy
 - d. Harley Institute

9. What political parties are represented by individuals running for governor of the Chickasaw Nation?
 - a. Democrat
 - b. Republican
 - c. Independent
 - d. No political parties

10. Who served as the Governor Pro Tempore (Tem.) for the Chickasaw Nation?
 - a. Cyrus Harris
 - b. Edmund Pickens
 - c. Jackson Kemp
 - d. Winchester Colbert

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