

A Brief History of the Natchez Trace in Chickasaw Country
Lesson Plan – Grades 9-12

OBJECTIVES

This lesson will fulfill the following Oklahoma Academic Standards:

- (1) **Oklahoma History and Government Content Standard 1.4:** Compare and contrast cultural perspectives of Native Americans and European Americans regarding land ownership and trading practices.

LESSON SUMMARY

In this lesson, students will learn the historical significance of the Natchez Trace, specifically within the boundaries of the Chickasaw homelands. They will accomplish this by reading the provided reference material and completing the accompanying worksheet and discussion questions.

LESSON IMPORTANCE

The Natchez Trace was an important trading route for prehistoric and historic Native Americans, specifically the Chickasaws, as the Trace ran right through the heart of their homelands. It was also used by Europeans and later Americans for similar purposes. This history of the use of the Natchez Trace within Chickasaw territory will provide students a glimpse into its role as an important trading path and economic resource for Chickasaws while building reading comprehension, critical thinking and writing skills.

LESSON TARGET

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to explain how the Natchez Trace was used and why it was important to prehistoric Native Americans, Chickasaws, Europeans and later Americans making it a multicultural trading path, communication network and post road. Students will also gain an understanding of how it became an economic advantage to the Chickasaws through the provided activity.

PROCEDURE OBJECTIVES

1. The students will complete a guided note taking worksheet during a PowerPoint presentation.
2. Students will discuss how the Natchez Trace was an economic advantage to the Chickasaws.
3. Students will complete a creative writing activity.
4. Students will answer the discussion questions.

PROCEDURE MATERIALS / ATTACHMENTS

1. Pens/Pencils
2. PowerPoint (provided)

3. Guided note taking worksheet (provided)
 4. Discussion questions (provided)
 5. Test questions (provided)
-

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.

“Today, you will learn about one of the oldest roads in America, the Natchez Trace. The Natchez Trace has not always been a paved national parkway running approximately 444 miles from Nashville, Tennessee, to Natchez, Mississippi. Prior to the foundation of the United States, the Natchez Trace was a series of trails used by Native Americans for thousands of years! Another interesting bit of information is that the Trace went directly through the heartland of Chickasaw territory. Many large Chickasaw villages were situated right along the Trace. Now, imagine you are a Chickasaw during this time. What other way could you have used the Natchez Trace? [Allow students time to answer.] Yes! Hunting, communicating, serving as traveling guides and trading all took place on the Natchez Trace. Today we are going to learn the history of the Natchez Trace and how it was used by Native Americans, specifically in the homelands of the Chickasaws.”

[The student reference material is organized with the PowerPoint presentation. The teacher should utilize the student reference material as the script for the PowerPoint.]

POWERPOINT PROCEDURE (30 min.)

- a. The teacher will hand out the guided note taking worksheet.
- b. The teacher will read from the provided script to the students while going through the PowerPoint presentation.
- c. While the students listen and view the PowerPoint presentation, they will complete the worksheet.

MATERIALS

1. Guided note taking worksheet (provided)
2. PowerPoint (provided)
3. PowerPoint script (Student reference material provided)
4. Pens/Pencils

EVALUATION

The teacher will take up the worksheets and grade for completion.

DISCUSSION PROCEDURE (10-15 min.)

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

[The discussion questions may be answered in discussion, or the teacher may use them to make a free-response worksheet for the students.]

MATERIALS

1. Discussion questions (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of 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.)

- a. The teacher will introduce the activity to the students. "Now, imagine you are either a traveler along the Natchez Trace or a Chickasaw who owns a stand and sells needed goods to travelers. Choose one and create a story. If you choose a traveler, where are you going? Where are you coming from? What supplies do you have, and what might you need? Describe the Natchez Trace and your experience staying at one of the Chickasaw stands. If you choose a Chickasaw, describe the Natchez Trace and the people who travel it. How do you feel about people using this road? Describe your stand and what kind of supplies you offer to travelers.
- b. The teacher will break students into groups of equal size and will supervise them as they work in groups to create their stories.
- c. At the end of the writing period, the teacher will invite one member of each group to stand in front of the class and tell the group's story.

MATERIALS

1. Notebook paper
2. Pen/Pencil

EVLAUATION

The teacher will read and/or listen to the speeches, and grade them based on content, participation and creativity.

CLOSURE (5 min.)

"So, what have we learned today? What is the Natchez Trace? How was it used by Native Americans and European/American travelers? [Pause for brief answers.] Good! Native Americans, including the Chickasaws, have utilized the Natchez Trace for thousands of years as a trading path, exchanging goods and information. Europeans began using the Trace in the late

1600s to trade with Native American tribes. After the War of 1812 more settlers moved deeper into the southeast and more towns and roads were established. Eventually, by the 1820s, the Natchez Trace was no longer the only road servicing access to the region and the Trace would see a decline in use and the Chickasaws' lifestyle would be altered forever.”

REINFORCEMENT

1. Before the next class period, the teacher should hand the students' assignment back to them and discuss their answers to the reading questions. The teacher should especially elicit conflicting viewpoints from students and have those students explain their rationale.
2. The teacher should ask a couple of questions about today's lesson in the set of the next lesson, to reinforce the content.
3. There should be questions about today's lesson on the unit test. Options for true-false, multiple-choice, and short essay questions are included with this lesson plan.