



Andrew Jackson, Part 2

Indian Removal Act

Grade: 8, adaptable for all grades

Overview

Adapted from [Andrew Jackson and the “Children of the Forest”](#) from [Zinn Education Project](#)

This lesson is a critique of Andrew Jackson’s 1830 address to Congress. With statements like “a few savage hunters,” Jackson’s address is a perfect example of power exploiting ignorance. Many assumed that because Jackson was president, he must know best. It must be understood that you can—and should—critique, question, and logically judge all proclamations from the government, including the president. Similarly, it’s important to encourage the questioning of textbooks, newspapers, films, and speeches no matter the presenter—maybe even more so if the presenter is a highly powered political figure who may have something to gain from the outcome.

Oregon Common Core State Standards

Language Arts Standards: See below for a full list of applicable standards.

- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.6-8.8 Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

Social Studies Standards: See below for a full list of applicable standards.

- Historical Knowledge 8.1. Evaluate continuity and change over the course of U.S. history by analyzing examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, or nations.
- Historical Knowledge 8.2. Evaluate continuity and change over the course of U.S. history by analyzing key people and constitutional convention, the age of Jefferson, the Industrial Revolution, the Westward Expansion, and the Civil War.
- Historical Knowledge 8.3. Examine the social, political, and economic factors that caused the Westward Expansion from the American Revolution through Reconstruction.
- Historical Knowledge 8.4. Evaluate the impact of different factors, including gender, age, ethnicity, and class on groups and individuals during this time period and the impact these groups and individuals have on events of the time.

Materials

- Copies of Cherokee and Seminole roles for each student
- Copies of Andrew Jackson’s speech
- Andrew Jackson costume
- Access to the Internet

Key Vocabulary

- A list of key vocabulary and an activity sheet are provided below.

Lesson

- *Background information:* Give students background knowledge about the Cherokee and Seminole Indian groups.
 - History: Some background information about Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears from the [Seminole Tribe](#) and [Cherokee Nation](#) websites.
- *Introduction:* Students will play the role of either a Cherokee or Seminole. While they are in these roles, they will think critically about President Jackson’s speech—critique and argue it.
- *Research:* Give students time to research their parts in order to get a better understanding of who they are representing and/or have the students who played the part in the previous role-play exercise educate the class.
 - Additionally, you may want to include other Indian nations—Choctaw, Chickasaw, or Creek—to bring more variety to the role-play and critique.
 - Give students time to discuss in their groups. Most important is they should know how to argue that they should not be removed from their land.
- *Read aloud:* Read President Jackson’s speech in a dramatized manner.
- *Question:* After reading the speech, give students time to question the president.
- *Debrief:* Debrief students’ experiences in their role-play.
- Some debrief questions to consider:
 - What do you believe about Jackson’s speech? What don’t you believe?
 - What is Jackson’s definition of “savage”? Of “civilized”?
 - Is it feasible to represent the Cherokee or Seminoles as “a few savage hungers”? Why? Why not? Why would Jackson use this statement?
 - What parts of Jackson’s speech need ignorance?
 - How do you think black slaves would respond to this speech?
 - In what ways did the Indian removal policy affect black slaves?
 - What do you think Jackson’s definition of “progress” was?

- Is the comparison “Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers, but what do they do more than our ancestors did or than our children are now doing” fair?
- How does Jackson try to justify that policy “toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous”?
- What does the description “children of the forest” imply about the difference between Indian and white man?
- *Critique:* Give students time to brainstorm and reflect on the speech.
 - Once students are finished brainstorming, have them write out their critique.
 - Students may write a response to Jackson’s speech, or even write a letter to the president.
- A good closing could be to read:
 - [“The Indian School at Chemawa” from West Shore, January 1, 1887](#) (Note: the student newspaper from the Chemawa Indian School, the [Weekly Chemawa American \(1901-1910\)](#)/[Chemawa American \(1914-1915\)](#) are both available for searching and browsing on Historic Oregon Newspapers online.)

Andrew Jackson

On Indian Removal

[Message to Congress, December 6, 1830]

It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent policy of the government, steadily pursued for nearly 30 years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy consummation. Two important tribes have accepted the provision made for their removal at the last session of Congress, and it is believed that their example will induce the remaining tribes also to seek the same obvious advantages.

The consequences of a speedy removal will be important to the United States, to individual states, and to the Indians themselves. The pecuniary advantages which it promises to the government are the least of its recommendations. It puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the general and state governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. By opening the whole territory between Tennessee on the north and Louisiana on the south to the settlement of the whites, it will incalculably strengthen the southwestern frontier and render the adjacent states strong enough to repel future invasions without remote aid. It will relieve the whole state of Mississippi and the western part of Alabama of Indian occupancy, and enable those states to advance rapidly in population, wealth, and power.

It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the states; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community. These consequences, some of them so certain and the rest so probable, make the complete execution of the plan sanctioned by Congress at their last session an object of much solicitude.

Toward the aborigines of the country no one can indulge a more friendly feeling than myself, or would go further in attempting to reclaim them from their wandering habits and make them a happy, prosperous people.

Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country, and philanthropy has been long busily employed on devising means to avert it, but its progress has never for a moment been arrested, and one by one have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth. What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms, embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12 million happy people and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization, and religion?

The present policy of the government is but a continuation of the same progressive change by a milder process. The tribes which occupied the countries now constituting the eastern states were annihilated or have melted away to make room for the whites. The waves of population and civilization are rolling westward and we now propose to acquire the countries occupied by the red men of the South and West by a fair exchange, and at the expense of the United States, to send them to a land where their existence may be prolonged and perhaps made perpetual.

Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they do more than our ancestors did or than our children are now doing? To better their condition in an unknown land our forefathers left all that was dear in earthly objects. Our children by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth to seek new homes in distant regions. Does humanity weep at these painful separations from everything, animate and

inanimate, with which the young heart has become entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source of joy that our country affords scope where our young population may range unconstrained in body or in mind, developing the power and faculties of man in their highest perfection. These remove hundreds and almost thousands of miles at their own expense, purchase the lands they occupy, and support themselves at their new homes from the moment of their arrival. Can it be cruel in this government when, by events which it cannot control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home to purchase his lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode? How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions? If the offers made to the Indians were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy.

And is it supposed that the wandering savage has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, civilized Christian? Is it more afflicting to him to leave the graves of his fathers than it is to our brothers and children? Rightly considered, the policy of the general government toward the red man is not only liberal but generous. He is unwilling to submit to the laws of the states and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the general government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.

It is a duty which this government owes to the new states to extinguish as soon as possible the Indian title to all lands which Congress themselves have included within their limits. When this is done the duties of the general government in relation to the states and the Indians within their limits are at an end. The Indians may leave the state or not, as they choose. The purchase of their lands does not alter in the least their personal relations with the state government.

May we hope, therefore, that all good citizens, and none more zealously than those who think the Indians oppressed by subjection to the laws of the states, will unite in attempting to open the eyes of those children of the forest to their true conditions, and by a speedy removal to relieve them from all the evils, real or imaginary, present or prospective, with which they may be supposed to be threatened.

Black Seminoles

You are black and you are Indian, a member of the Seminole people in Florida. You are descended from enslaved Africans who ran away from British plantations in Georgia over a hundred years ago and came to settle with Indians, who left their lands farther north. This was before the United States was even a country. You are a free person. Some of the black people who live in Seminole communities ran away from slavery in the last few years. Others were bought from white slave owners by Seminoles. These people are still called slaves, but they are not treated as slaves. They can marry anyone, can travel where they want, have their own land, can carry guns, and can't be sold away from their families. But every year they must pay part of their crops to other Seminoles as a kind of tax.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 is now being considered by the U.S. Congress. It calls for all Indians east of the Mississippi River to be forced off their lands and moved to a place called "Indian Territory" west of the Mississippi River. Full-blooded Seminoles would be moved. But for you, a black Seminole, they would make you a slave and sell you in one of the Southern slave markets. You would be separated from your community, your friends, and your family. You will never allow this to happen.

White plantation owners in Georgia and throughout the South feel threatened by Indians, free blacks, and escaped slaves living peacefully side by side. They know their slaves hear about the Seminole communities and want to run away to join them. The Seminoles are a symbol of freedom to enslaved black people throughout the South. In the past, you have freed slaves on those plantations and brought them to Florida to live with you and become Seminoles. Whites also want to steal your land so that they can grow cotton with slave labor.

President Jackson is one of the biggest slaveholders in Tennessee. Some years ago, when he was a general in the army, he ordered his troops to attack your people and destroy your farms and homes. You know in the debate on Indian removal, he is not on your side.

He also wants to move the other Indian nations in the Southeast, especially the Cherokee. You don't have much to do with the Cherokee. You know they own black slaves, although they say they treat them better than white plantation owners do. But if this law passes, they will try to move them, too.

The U.S. government and white plantation owners call the Seminoles "savages." But you have farms and raise horses, cattle, hogs, and chickens. Unlike white plantation owners, you know what freedom means. What is "civilized"? What is "savage"?

["Real Aborigines in Florida Wilds" from *Sunday Oregonian*, February 20, 1916](#)

Cherokee

Your people have lived for centuries in the area the white men call “Georgia.” This is your land. At times you’ve had to fight to keep it.

You’ve had a hard time with the white men. Ever since they began settling in Georgia, they have continued to push west, plowing the land and growing cotton and other crops. As early as 1785, the Cherokee Nation won the right to their land by a treaty with the U.S. government. The United States recognized the Cherokee people as part of an independent country and not subject to the laws of the United States. After the U.S. Constitution was approved, the U.S. government signed another treaty with the Cherokee—in 1791, when George Washington was president. Article seven of the Hopewell Treaty says, “The United States solemnly guaranty to the Cherokee nation all their lands not hereby ceded.” In other words, the U.S. government agreed not to push the Cherokee out of the land where they were living.

But now the U.S. government is about to break its own treaty and steal Cherokee land. Many white men have already bribed and tricked some of your people out of their land. These white men say you have no right to the land, that you’re savages. Last year, in December 1829, the state of Georgia passed a law saying you are under *its* control and must obey *its* laws, which forbid anyone with any Cherokee blood from testifying in court or protesting the plans to move you from your land. But you didn’t vote for this Georgia government, and besides, you have a treaty with the federal government that says you are citizens of an independent country. When the U.S. government made a treaty with you, it proved you are a nation.

The Cherokee are one of the five “civilized tribes.” You have well cultivated farms. By 1826, Cherokee owned 22,000 cattle, 7,600 horses, 3,000 plows, 2,500 spinning wheels, 10 saw mills, and 18 schools. Like southern whites, some of you also owned black slaves. In 1821, Sequoya, a brilliant Cherokee Indian, invented an 85-character alphabet and now most Cherokee can read and write. It’s said that more Cherokee are literate than whites in Georgia. You even have a newspaper, the *Cherokee Phoenix*. You’ve adopted a written constitution very similar to that of the U.S. Constitution. Many of your leaders attended white schools in the East. By the white man’s standards, you’re as civilized as they are, if not more so. But still they want to kick you off your land and move you to a place west of the Mississippi River—a place you’ve never even seen. You must continue to argue your case if you are to survive as a people.

[“Indians in 1838 Framed Model Legislation” from *East Oregonian*, July 30, 1912](#)

Vocabulary Activity Sheet

Vocabulary Activity Sheet

1. Write what you think the word means.
2. Write what the article wants it to mean.
3. Find the word in the print dictionary.
4. Write down the definitions.
5. Compare and contrast all the vocabulary definitions. Write a sentence or two about the difference or similarity of the word and its various definitions.
6. Choose 5 vocabulary words.

Vocabulary Word	What You Think It Means	What Article Means	Dictionary Definition	Compare/Contrast

Vocabulary List with Accompanying Newspaper Articles

- Abode [*Sunday Oregonian, 1904*](#)
- Aborigines [*Sunday Oregonian, 1913*](#)
- Appropriate [*Rogue River Courier, 1905*](#)
- Arrested [*Morning Enterprise, 1913*](#)
- Assertion [*West Shore, 1886*](#)
- Avert [*Morning Oregonian, 1921*](#)
- Benevolent [*Daily Coast Mail, 1903*](#)
- Cede [*Coos Bay Times, 1907*](#)
- Consummation [*Sumpter Miner, 1900*](#)
- Induce [*West Shore, 1889*](#)
- Pecuniary [*Daily Morning Astorian, 1888*](#)
- Perpetual [*Morning Oregonian, 1906*](#)
- Philanthropy [*Sunday Oregonian, 1907*](#)
- Prolonged [*Sunday Oregonian, 1921*](#)
- Provision [*Morning Oregonian, 1909*](#)
- Repel [*Sunday Oregonian, 1910*](#)
- Retard [*Morning Oregonian, 1910*](#)
- Sanctioned [*East Oregonian, 1910*](#)
- Skeptical [*Sunday Oregonian, 1922*](#)
- Solitude [*West Shore, 1888*](#)
- Tracts [*Medford Mail Tribune, 1910*](#)
- Treaty [*East Oregonian, 1919*](#)
- Zealously [*Sunday Oregonian, 1910*](#)

Continued List of Applicable Language Arts Standards for Grades 9-12

Grade 8

- CCSS.ELA.SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.8.3 Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and relevance and sufficiency of the evidence and identifying when irrelevant evidence is introduced.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.8.4 Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.8.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grade 8 Language standards 1 and 3 [here](#) for specific expectations.)

Grade 9-10

- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.9-10.8 Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.9-10.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 9-10 Language standards 1 and 3 [here](#) for specific expectations.)

Grade 11-12

- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist No. 10*).

- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.
- CCSS.ELA.RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning; alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed; and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- CCSS.ELA.SL.11-12.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 11-12 Language standards 1 and 3 [here](#) for specific expectations.)

Continued List of Applicable Social Studies Standards

- Historical Thinking 8.6. Use and interpret documents and other relevant primary and secondary sources pertaining to U.S. history from multiple perspectives.
- Historical Thinking 8.7. Analyze evidence from multiple sources, including those with conflicting accounts about specific events in U.S. history.
- Historical Thinking 8.8. Evaluate information from a variety of sources and perspectives.
- Historical Thinking 8.9. Construct or evaluate a written historical argument demonstrating an understanding of primary and secondary sources.
- Geography 8.10. Interpret maps to identify growth and development of the United States.
- Civics and Government 8.14. Explain rights and responsibilities of citizens.
- Civics and Government 8.15. Contrast the impact of Articles of Confederation as a form of government to the U.S. Constitution.
- Civics and Government 8.18. Examine and analyze important U.S. documents, including (but not limited to) the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and 13th through 15th Amendments.
- Civics and Government 8.21. Analyze important political and ethical values such as freedom, democracy, equality, and justice embodied in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.