The Trail of Tears

A Mini DBQ Lesson
Student Copy

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"Trail of Tears" painting by Robert Lindneux
Woolaroc Museum, Bartlesville, Oklahoma.
Exercise A. Analyzing Sources

Directions:
Answer the following questions that follow each document.

DBQ 1: Andrew Jackson's Second Annual Message

On December 6, 1830, President Andrew Jackson delivered his annual message to the United States Congress. In his message, Jackson informs Congress of the progress made concerning Indian removal, and explains the advantages of his policy for both the United States and the Native Americans.

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 [National] 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.

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 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization and religion?

A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents 1789-1908, Volume II, by James D. Richardson, published by Bureau of National Literature and Art ,1908

1. Why does Jackson think that the speedy removal of the Native Americans is advantageous for the United States?

2. Why does Jackson think that the speedy removal of the Native Americans is advantageous for the Native Americans?
DBQ 2: Worcester v. Georgia (1832) Supreme Court Decision

The Cherokee nation, then, is a distinct community, occupying its own territory... in which the laws of Georgia have no force.... The Acts of Georgia are repugnant (disgusting) to the Constitution, laws, and treaties of the United States. They interfere forcibly with the relations established between the United States and the Cherokee Nation, the regulation of which according to the settled principles of our Constitution, are committed exclusively to the government of the Union.

Marshall, C.J., Opinion of the Court, Supreme Court of the United States, 31 U.S. 515

1. What does the Supreme Court declare the Cherokee nation to be? What is the significance of this?

2. What does the Supreme Court declare about Georgia’s actions?

DBQ 3: Excerpts from John Ross's words to delegates of the Iroquois League

John Ross was a Cherokee chief that represented tribal interests to the Federal government.

'Brothers: The tradition of our Fathers ... tells us that this great and extensive continent was once the sole and exclusive abode of our race.... Ever since the whites came] we have been made to drink of the bitter cup of humiliation;
Treated like dogs . . . our country and the graves of our Fathers torn from us ... through a period of upwards of 200 years, rolled back, nation upon nation [until] we find ourselves fugitives, vagrants and strangers in our own country..
'The existence of the Indian Nations as distinct Independent Communities within the limits of the United States seems to be drawing to a close. . . . You are aware that our Brethren, the Choctaws, Chickasaws and Creeks of the South have severally disposed of their country to the United States and that a portion of our own Tribe have also emigrated West of the Mississippi — but that the largest portion of our Nation still remain firmly upon our ancient domain. . . . the position [sic] there may be compared to a solitary tree in an open space, where all the forest trees around have been prostrated (knocked down) by a furious tornado."

http://www.eduplace.com/ss/hmss/8/unit/act3.1blm.html

1. What is John Ross’s opinion about the way the U.S. treated the Indian tribes?

2. What did John Ross mean when he described the Cherokee as “.... compared to a solitary tree in an open space, where all the forest trees around have been prostrated by a furious tornado.”
DBQ 4: Excerpts from the Treaty of New Echota, December 29, 1835

On February 28, 1835, a delegation of the Cherokee nation and the United States government created a treaty, which provided the Cherokee with compensation for their removal from Georgia. Below are excerpts from this treaty.

ARTICLE 1. The Cherokee nation hereby cede relinquish and convey to the United States all the lands owned claimed or possessed by them east of the Mississippi river, and hereby release all their claims upon the United States for spoliations of every kind for and in consideration of the sum of five millions of dollars...

ARTICLE 6. Perpetual peace and friendship shall exist between the citizens of the United States and the Cherokee Indians. The United States agree to protect the Cherokee nation from domestic strife and foreign enemies and against intestine wars between the several tribes. The Cherokees shall endeavor to preserve and maintain the peace of the country and not make war upon their neighbors...

ARTICLE 8. The United States also agree and stipulate to remove the Cherokees to their new homes and to subsist them one year after their arrival there and that sufficient number of steamboats and baggage wagons shall be furnished to remove them comfortably, and so as not to endanger their health, and that a physician well supplied with medicines shall accompany each detachment of emigrants removed by the Government.

ARTICLE 9. The United States agree to appoint suitable agents who shall make a just and fair valuation of all such improvements now in the possession of the Cherokees as add any value to the lands; and also of the ferries owned by them, according to their net income; and such improvements and ferries from which they have been dispossessed in a lawless manner or under any existing laws of the State where the same may be situated.


1. How much money did the Cherokee receive from the United States government in return for their land in Georgia?

2. According to the treaty, what do the Cherokee promise to do in return for peace?

3. List three things the government agrees to do to help the Cherokee removal be more comfortable.

4. According to the treaty, which group has the final say in Cherokee possessions, the United States Government or the Cherokee nation?
DBQ 5: Recollections of a Survivor, Trail of Tears

"Long time we travel on way to new land. People feel bad when they leave Old Nation. Women’s cry and make sad wails, Children cry and many men cry...but they say nothing and just put heads down and keep on go towards West. Many days pass and people die very much."

http://www.freewebs.com/spirit_cherokee/columns.htm

1. Describe in your own words the suffering of the Cherokee people.

2. Why do you think they “say nothing” and do not resist?

DBQ 6: “Trail of Tears” painting

"Trail of Tears" painting by Robert Lindneux
Woolaroc Museum, Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

1. List 2 images within this picture that show that the Trail of Tears might have been a voluntary removal of Cherokees from their native lands.

2. List 2 images from this picture show that this removal was forced by the U.S government and that the Cherokees did not want to leave.
Exercise B. Writing about Related Sources

Directions:
Write a letter to President Jackson in response to the Big Question below. Be sure to include in your answer at least three details from the documents on the previous pages. Reviewing your responses to the scaffolding questions will help you to answer the Big Question well.

The Big Question:

Was the United States fair and justified in their policies towards the Native Americans in the Southeast?
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Answers all the questions by referring to the documents and bringing in new information</td>
<td>□ Answers most of the questions and refers to the documents</td>
<td>□ Answers some of the questions and refers to some of the documents</td>
<td>□ Answers none of the questions and does not use the documents to support ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ Consistently uses accurate data</td>
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<td>□ Uses some accurate data</td>
<td>□ Uses no accurate data</td>
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<td>□ Fully develops ideas by using <strong>three examples</strong>, reasons, details, and explanations that support the topic</td>
<td>□ Somewhat develops ideas with <strong>two</strong> supporting evidences</td>
<td>□ Uses little supporting evidence to develop ideas</td>
<td>□ Uses no supporting evidence</td>
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<td>□ Demonstrates a logical plan of organization</td>
<td>□ Uses some organization</td>
<td>□ Attempts to organize but goes off topic</td>
<td>□ Lacks organization of ideas</td>
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<td>□ Consistently expresses ideas clearly</td>
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