

Trail of Tears Project

NCSS Thematic Strand: Time, continuity & change

8th Grade

Purpose, Background and Context

This lesson enables students to recognize and understand the significance of the Jacksonian Era of the 1820s through 1840s. This project was used as an assessment at the conclusion of a discussion of issues surrounding Andrew Jackson's Presidency. Andrew Jackson was the 7th President of the United States who rose to power with the help of the "common man" and championed the ideas of expanded suffrage and growth of the United States. Newly enfranchised voters chose to elect Andrew Jackson over President John Quincy Adams. Andrew Jackson is best known for his treatment of Native Americans and was a forceful proponent of Indian removal policies. He negotiated treaties with tribes that allowed for white settlers to move into native lands.

Materials

1. Students will be provided with copies of primary sources. These resources came from:

<http://www.pbs.org/kcet/andrewjackson/edu/primaryresources.html#documents>

- ❖ Jackson's Second Annual Speech Before Congress, 1830
- ❖ Letter from Chief John Ross
- ❖ On Indian Removal of Indians- State of Morals

2. The laptop computers will need to be brought in the room.

3. *The American Nation* textbook has a background reading that will be required.

4. Students will be provided with a copy of the project guidelines.

Procedures

Procedure One: 10 Minutes

Directions and Introduction: This will be the discussion of the project goals and expectations.

Procedure Two: 32 Minutes

The rest of the class will be given to research and getting a better understanding of the topic. The project guidelines are clearly stated on the project form that will be given to the students during the directions.

Assignment

Trail of Tears Project: 40 points

Work on the Project (~4 days)

You will research and write a section of a newspaper from 1838. This will be worth **20 points**. You can choose from the following:

1. Front page news story: covering a topic of the time
2. Letter to the editor
3. Interview
4. Obituaries (at least two)
5. Cartoons

1. You will be working by yourself to design a project using what you've learned about Andrew Jackson and his presidential policies. You want to illustrate how people living in the United States would **feel and think** during Jackson's Era.

2. Before you begin to gather information for your newspaper article you need

to decide whose perspective you're going to take. Are you going to be Andrew Jackson, a Cherokee Native American, a "common man," or someone else? Please record what character you are going to represent on the top of your two column notes.

3. You will need to set up a two-column notes sheet in your binder. On these notes you will record your background information and research for the project. The left hand column will include your sources. The right hand column will be the background notes that you want to include in your article. This will be worth **10 points**.

4. You will need to do the trail of tears reading in the textbook pages 371-373.

5. When doing your research, ask yourself the following questions:

- Whose perspective are you representing?
- Would your character be pleased with the policies of Jackson? Would they be happy with the treatment of Natives?
- What kind of opinions would you have on Andrew Jackson?
- How will you communicate with others?
- What is the environment like around your character?

6. You will need a quote from **ONE** primary source (Something written during the time period). Hint: use the sources provided from PBS.

7. You need at least **TWO** secondary sources (textbooks or websites). These sources will be listed on your two-column notes.

8. This is a project and not just an essay! When organizing your research into a final newspaper article please utilize the following checklist to make sure you have included:

- Is my newspaper article put together in a creative manner?

- Can my reader get a feeling for what I experienced through my use of language?

- DOUBLE CHECK: Did I use one primary source and two secondary sources?

9. Share newspaper articles with the whole class.

- Present your newspaper project to the class.
- Listen and take notes on one other article.
- Ask questions of your peers.

Your presentation will be worth **10 points**. You need to explain what topic you wrote about and how you came up with your final product.

Presentations Must Include:

1. What type of article you chose to create.
2. Whose perspective you wrote from.
3. A short summary with at least two facts that came from your 2-column notes.
4. Your overall perception of Andrew Jackson. Yay or Nay?!

Website Resources:

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=638

http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/database/article_display.cfm?HHID=638

<http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntecoindian/essays/indianremoval.htm>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part4/4p2959.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/kcet/andrewjackson/edu/primaryresources.html#documents>

<http://www.redriverhistorian.com/jackson.html>

Extensions and Adaptations

If a student shows interest in the topic, she will be encouraged to do further research and come up with a more complete newspaper. This can include both a comics and articles. The extension can also include discussions covering different topics such as the “Bank War,” Trail of Tears, Nullification Crisis etc. Offering differing perspectives of Andrew Jackson will allow the student to understand how the citizens of the United States would have felt during Jackson’s Era.