The Chickasaw Nation
Elementary Student Curriculum
Fourth Grade
Unit 2: Chickasaw Pre-Removal

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Chickasaw Pre-Removal

Unit 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 2. 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 and reference list for convenience. All provided materials have been reviewed and approved by the Chickasaw Nation Department of Culture and Humanities and the Chickasaw Nation Department of Communications and Community Development. To further assist, we have worked with Oklahoma educators to outline the *Oklahoma Academic Standards each lesson addresses.

The Chickasaw Nation would like to thank you for your honored commitment and support. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Joe Thomas, special assistant to the secretary, at (580) 436-7258 or joe.thomas@chickasaw.net.

Lesson Plan

BENCHMARKS

The following Oklahoma Academic Standards, as outlined in the Oklahoma State Department of Education's 2012 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:

- ***United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 1. 1A:** Locate landforms and bodies of water on a map of North America including the United States, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Gulf of Mexico; the major river drainage systems, including the Mississippi, Ohio, Missouri, Arkansas, Colorado, Columbia and Rio Grande Rivers; the Great Lakes, the Great Salt Lake and the Chesapeake Bay; the Great Plains and the Continental Divide; and the Appalachian, Rocky, Sierra Nevada, Cascade and Brooks Mountain Ranges.
- ***United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 1. 2D:** Describe the diverse, but unified, nature of the American people by identifying the distinctive contributions to American culture of Native Americans, African Americans, major European groups, major Spanish-speaking groups and Asian groups.
- ***United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 1. 3:** Compare and contrast the regional vegetation, climate, spatial distribution and use of natural resources.
- ***United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 1. 4:** Analyze natural resources and how they impacted the economy of each region, including fishing, farming, ranching, mining, manufacturing, tourism and oil and gas, and their connections to global trade.
- ***United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 1. 5:** Summarize how people interact with their environment to resolve geographic challenges, including housing, industry, transportation, communication, bridges, dams, tunnels, canals, freshwater supply, irrigation systems and landfills.
- **United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 2. 1:** Identify the major Native American groups and their ways of life in each region, including traditional housing and economic activities, customs and storytelling, viewpoints on land usage and ownership, and their contributions to American culture and history.
- **United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 2. 2:** Examine and summarize the reasons for the key expeditions of Spain, France and England and their impact on the development of each region including, the explorers Columbus, Ponce de León, De Soto, Coronado, Marquette and Jolliet, LaSalle, Cabot, Hudson, Drake and Ralieh. (CCRIT 2)
- **United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 2. 3:** Summarize how France, Spain, England, Russia and the Netherlands culturally influenced different regions of the United States in which they settled, including regional place names, architectural features, customs, and language. (CCRIT 2)
- **United States Studies *Regional Geography and History* Content Standard 2. 4:** Identify and evaluate instances of both cooperation and conflict between Native

American groups and European settlers arising from the Columbian Exchange, including agriculture, trade, cultural exchanges, military alliances, wars and control of territory.

Content standards marked with an asterisk are standards in which a connective "tie-in" could be made with the lesson depending on how much an instructor wants to elaborate on the material.

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, we are going to learn about the Chickasaw homelands, the place where the Chickasaws lived prior to their removal to Indian Territory, which is present-day Oklahoma. Does anyone know where the Chickasaws are originally from? [*Allow students to answer the question.*] The original Chickasaw homelands encompassed present-day states Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee, which takes up more than 38,000 square miles of the southeast North American continent. There, the Chickasaws lived and thrived.

"Stories that are passed down from generation-to-generation tell of a time when the Chickasaws and Choctaws were one tribe. This was before the Chickasaws were in their historic homelands, before Chickasaw Removal, and even before European contact. Does anyone know the story of the Chickasaw Migration? [*Allow students to answer question.*] That's okay! In this short video, you will learn the story! "

https://www.chickasaw.tv/home/video/the-chickasaw-migration-story/list/chikashsha-and-chata-videos

OBJECTIVES

1. The students will view the short video and discuss the significance of the Chickasaw Migration story.
2. The students will read the provided text.
3. The students will interact with the reading by answering discussion questions.
4. The students will complete the activity.
5. The students will complete the quiz.

VIDEO PROCEDURE

a. The teacher will play the short video and discuss the significance of the Chickasaw Migration story.
b. The teacher will ask questions after the video.
   Sample Questions:
   1. ***Who did the Chickasaws and Choctaws pray to for direction and guidance?***

2. ***What was the significance of the sacred pole?***
3. ***What were the names of the two brothers discussed in the video?***

c. The teacher will facilitate video discussion.

MATERIALS

1. Chickasaw Migration story video (Web-link provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of the following: their attentiveness to the video and any comments they make that the teacher considers particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher's discretion.

READING PROCEDURE

a. The teacher will read the first paragraph of text to the students to model good reading behavior.
b. The students will then take turns reading the provided text with the teacher stopping them at appropriate points to pose questions or to ask students to define specific words.

[If the student is uncomfortable with oral reading, the teacher may wish to consider reading the entire passage themselves to model good reading habits. For students who already display great comfort with oral reading, the teacher may wish to have the students read the entire passage. Teachers should feel free to stop the reading and pose knowledge questions about the text—e.g., asking students to define words or explain more. Similarly, the discussion 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. Reference material (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of the following: their oral reading and any comments they make that the teacher considers particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher's discretion.

DISCUSSION PROCEDURE (30 min.)

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.

[*The discussion 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. Pens/pencils
2. Discussion questions (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of the following: their 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.

ACTIVITY PROCEDURE (20 min.)

1. The teacher will introduce the activity to the students: "Now, imagine that you and your family lived with the Chickasaws in the historic homelands. Describe what type of housing you would have lived in? What kind of food did you and your family eat? Additionally, everyone should explain their roles and responsibilities (both boys and girls should list their roles and responsibilities)."
2. The students will respond to the questions by writing a journal entry.
3. After the students have completed their journal entry. Allow them to share and discuss their perspectives in class.

MATERIALS

1. Notebook paper
2. Pencil/pen

EVALUATION

The teacher will read and/or listen to the students' journal entries and grade them based on the following: content, creativity, participation and any comments they make that the teacher considers particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher's discretion.

QUIZ PROCEDURE (15-20 mins.)

1. The teacher will hand out the provided quiz.
2. The teacher will supervise as the students complete the quiz.

3. The teacher will take up the quiz and have a brief discussion over the questions and answers. The teacher should pose questions to the students or ask students to define specific words from the quiz.

MATERIALS

1. Pens/Pencils
2. Student quiz (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade the students based on some combination of the following: completion of quiz and any comments they make that the teacher considers particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher's discretion.

CLOSURE (5 mins.)

"Today, you all learned the history of the Chickasaws before their forced removal from their historic homelands of present-day Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee. There, the Chickasaws thrived off of the land and natural resources, using trees to construct their homes, canoes and other goods. They hunted bear, buffalo, dear, squirrels, rabbits and other wild game. Today, the Chickasaw Nation is located in Oklahoma. In our next lesson, you will learn about the Chickasaw Removal. Until then, have a great day, class!"

Reference Material

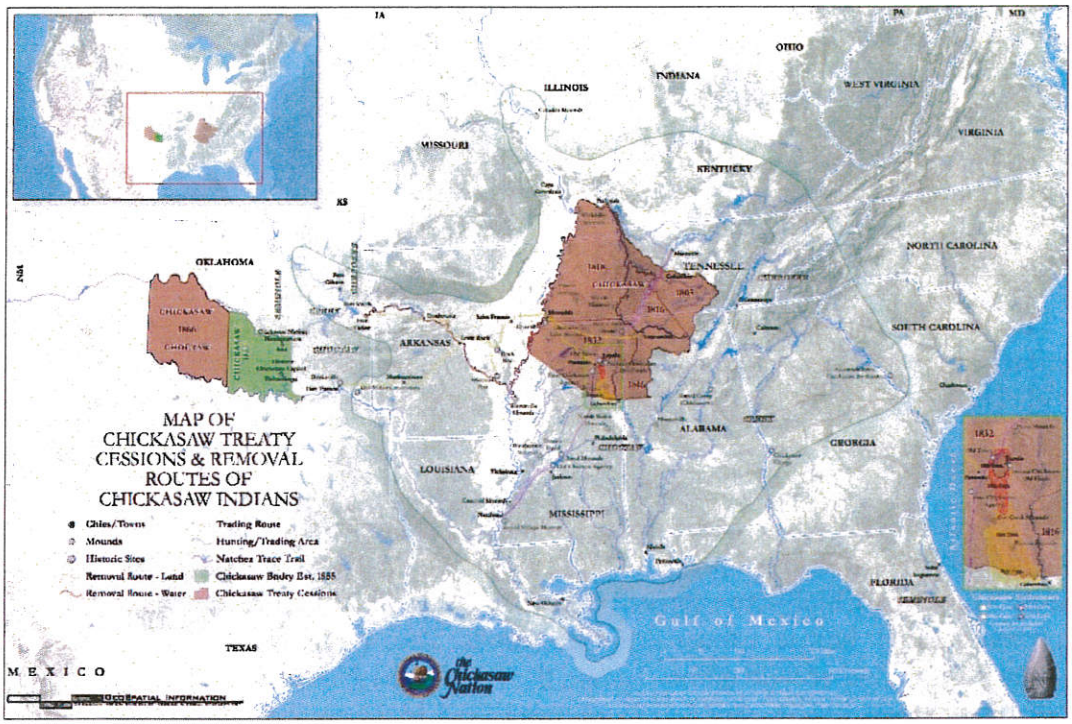

Figure 1: Map of Chickasaw treaty cessions and removal routes.

The Chickasaw's historic homeland boundaries consist of areas located in present-day Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee. One important aspect of their homelands included the use of natural resources, including the waterways, which they used as a source for food, transportation, a means for trading, protection against raiding tribes and Europeans, and for religious practices. James Atkinson, author of *Splendid Land, Splendid People*, (2004), noted that from remote times, the American Indian people of the southeast built secure homes, obtained sustenance from the land, made comfortable clothing, and constructed efficient tools, weapons, adornments and household items from the natural resources.

The Chickasaws were economical in the way they lived, and this is one of many

reasons why they thrived in the southeast. With all of the wildlife, the Chickasaws had plenty of options to choose, but they still viewed everything around them as a gift. For example, they used every part of the animal, whether it was for food, medicine, tools or for clothing. Other items such as shells, wood and animal horns were used for eating utensils. The Chickasaws passed down the respect for the land and water from generation-to-generation, teaching their children from a young age.

Chickasaw children began training for their future responsibilities as soon as they were old enough to understand their tasks. Chickasaw boys were taught to hunt, learned assorted trades and were trained to be warriors. They learned the art of swimming, running, wrestling and making and using bows and arrows. Chickasaw girls were taught homemaking, how to identify plants, the art of medicine for healing, and were responsible for gathering firewood, water and vegetation. With time, the Chickasaws became sedentary and adopted farming as a way of life. A common method of planting for the Chickasaws is referred to as the "three sisters," which is an intercropping system growing corn, beans and squash simultaneously. Corn was planted first. After it had time to grow about a foot in length, the beans were planted at the base of the corn. The corn provided a climbing stalk for the beans, while the beans provided

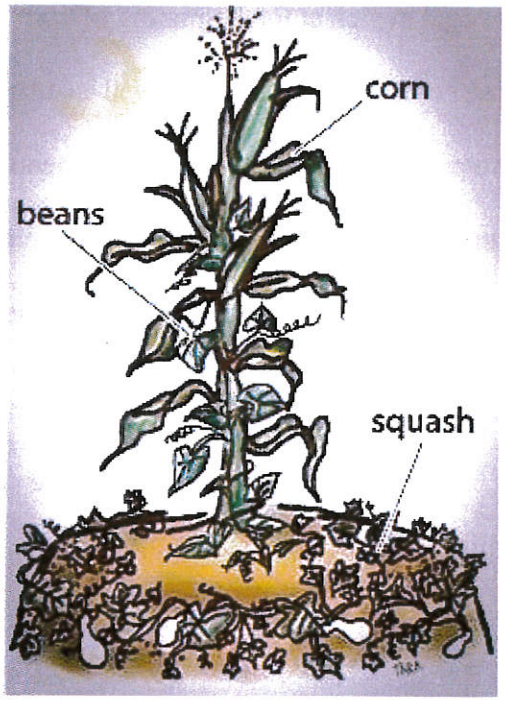

Figure 2: Artist rendering of "three sisters" crops.

nitrogen to the soil for the corn to grow. Squash was also planted at the base of the corn stalk. The squash leaves spread out to shade the corn's shallow roots and limit evaporation of water from the soil.

Unlike most Plains tribes, the Chickasaws did not live in tipis/tee-pees or move around constantly. Each household consisted of a summer house and a winter house, and Chickasaw families would switch at the beginning of each season. The winter house was circular, well-insulated and built to protect them from extreme elements and intruders. The summer house was a rectangular structure with peaked roofs that utilized cool breezes during the summer. Some Chickasaw towns were reported to have more than 200 households.

Figure 3: Chickasaw Summer House.

Before European contact, the influence of Christianity and Chickasaw Removal, American Indian belief systems mirrored Christianity in some ideals. The Chickasaws believed there was one great creator *Aba'Binni'li'* (Ah-bah-bin-nih-LEE'), one who sits above, who made everything, from the sky, to mother Earth and to the Chickasaw people. Chickasaws and Choctaws

Figure 4: Chickasaw Winter House.

alike believed the Earth was their mother. It took care of everything they needed—from the food they ate to the houses they built.

At one time, Chickasaws believed they could communicate to animals. The animals would explain to the Chickasaws about why things were the way they were. The animals knew the secrets of the forest, and if Chickasaws were kind enough they would tell them, too. The Chickasaws treated the animals with respect, and in turn, the animals treated the Chickasaws the same. Even if Chickasaws can no longer speak to animals, some of the Chickasaw people still believe animals are messengers of what is to come. This is even true from the story of the white dog (*ofi' tohbi)* that guided the Chickasaw ancestors. Chickasaws have long since lost the language that allows them to communicate to animals, but as time goes on, Chickasaws are still handing down the stories of when they could communicate to them in their pre-historic days. These traditional stories are continuously being shared today through the art of storytelling.

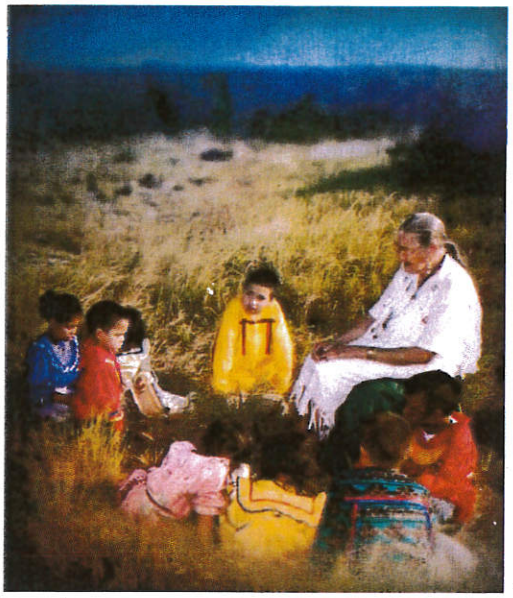

Figure 6: Chickasaw storyteller sharing stories with children.

Storytelling is an important aspect of Chickasaw culture. Chickasaw elders tell stories and teach Chickasaw history as it relates to the times when they lived in their historic homelands, living off of the abundance of natural resources and animals. They continue to share stories about *Aba'Binni'li',* mother Earth and when they could speak

with the animals. To this day in the 21st century, Chickasaws continue to learn and share their traditional stories.

Another custom that is not well-known outside of the Chickasaw community is that they always lived near or around water so they could bathe every day, regardless of the weather. Even when rivers would freeze, Chickasaws would cut a hole in the ice and bathe in it. It was important because it was the way they cleansed their body and spirit. If Chickasaws did not bathe, they believed they could be preyed upon by angry spirits. Some traditional Chickasaws still believe this today. They believe those spirits live among them, and they can help, heal or hurt. An angry spirit can hurt someone and make him or her sick. They also believe in good spirits that can take the shape of an animal and lead a Chickasaw away from a dangerous place.

The Chickasaws were a thriving group in their homelands on the North American continent in present-day Mississippi, Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee. The culture, values and stories that they possess today come from their historic homelands. Their former days in their homelands reminds them every day what it means to be Chickasaw. The pre-removal history reminds us what it means to be Chickasaw and to respect the land, water and animals. While the Chickasaws were removed from their homelands, they still possess the dynamic spirit that makes them who they are today, the unconquered and unconquerable Chickasaw Nation.

Discussion Questions

1. What were Chickasaw children taught from a young age?

2. What items or resources did the Chickasaws use in the southeast that made them so successful?

3. What were some of the Chickasaw beliefs in their homelands?

4. Why did the Chickasaws switch homes during each season?

5. Why did the Chickasaws and Choctaws separate?

Student Quiz

1. Which state below did the Chickasaws live prior to removal?
   A. Mississippi

   B. Oklahoma

   C. Missouri

   D. Texas

2. What modern-day tribe are Chickasaws closely related to?

   A. Seminole

   B. Dakota

   C. Cherokee

   D. Choctaw

3. What is the growing method the Chickasaws used?

   A. Sister planting

   B. Three sisters

   C. Three brothers

   D. Four sisters

4. What color was the dog that guided the Chickasaw people?

   A. Black

   B. Brown

   C. White

   D. Purple

5. How many households did the Chickasaws reportedly have?

   A. 50

   B. 100

   C. 200

   D. 500

6. How did the Chickasaws pass their history to their younger generations?

   A. Drawings

   B. Written down

   C. Storytelling

   D. Sign language

7. What did the brothers, *Chiksa'* and *Chahta,* use for directions during their journey?

   A. The stars

   B. The animals

   C. The spirits

   D. The sacred pole

8. How many houses did the Chickasaws live in during the year?

   A. One

   B. Two

   C. Three

   D. Four

9. Which Chickasaw house was circular and well-insulated?

   A. Tipi/tee-pee

   B. Summer house

   C. Winter house

   D. None of the above

10. Which Chickasaw house was rectangular with peaked roofs?

    A. Tipi/tee-pee

    B. Summer house

    C. Winter house

    D. None of the above

Reference List

Atkinson, James. (2004). S*plendid land, splendid people: The Chickasaw Indians to removal.* Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.

Discussion Questions

1. What were Chickasaw children taught from a young age?
   a. *Chickasaw boys were taught to hunt, learned assorted trades and were trained to become warriors. Chickasaw girls were taught homemaking, how to identify plants, the art of medicine for healing and were responsible for gathering firewood, water and food.*

2. What items or resources did the Chickasaws use in the southeast that made them so successful?
   a. *The Chickasaws used everything around them—such as the water, animals and the trees.*

3. What were some of the Chickasaw beliefs in their homelands?
   a. *Chickasaws believed in Aba'Binni'li' (the Creator; one who sits above). Additionally, they believed the Earth was their mother and the animals were their brothers and sisters to which they could communicate with.*

4. Why did the Chickasaws switch homes during each season?
   a. *Chickasaws switched or constructed new homes because of the seasonal changes in the weather. Winter houses were highly insulated to conserve heat, while the summer houses were less insulated allowing cool breezes into the homes.*

5. Why did the Chickasaws and Choctaws separate?
   a. *They separated because the two brothers, Chiksa' and Chahta, could not agree on the direction to which the sacred pole was leaning.*

Student Quiz

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