

Stories from the Clinch River Valley - Displacement

Subjects:

Language Arts & Literature, Social Studies & Geography

Grade Level(s):

Upper Elementary, 3-5

Related Publication:

[E-book – Displacement](#)

Overview:

This lesson introduces young learners to the concept of displacement by examining events in the Clinch River Valley. Students will explore how projects such as the building of Norris Dam and the creation of Oak Ridge displaced communities, and how the Clinton 12 demonstrated courage and resilience during a time of social change. Through these stories, students will begin to understand both the challenges and the opportunities that arise from displacement.

Background Information:

Materials and Activity Sheets

- Map, globe, or internet-based mapping site
- Children's book, *Displacement*
- Worksheet 1: T chart template

Objectives

Students will:

- Describe how displacement can affect daily life.
- Locate the Clinch River Valley on a map and describe why displacement took place in the construction of Norris Dam and Oak Ridge.
- Compare and contrast the effects of the bombing of Clinton High School and how they community reacted to students being displaced.

Vocabulary

- Clinch River Valley – A valley following the Clinch River for more than 300 miles through parts of Virginia and Tennessee.
- Displacement: the situation in which people are forced to leave the place where they normally live.

- Tennessee Valley Authority- an electric cooperation owned by the government. TVA's service area covers all of Tennessee, portions of Alabama, Mississippi, and Kentucky, and small areas of Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia.
- Community – a group of people who share common interests, beliefs, and/or cultural background.
- Homestead - a house, especially a farmhouse, and outbuildings
- Desegregation- the action of ending segregation between races or sexes in a place or organization
- Eminent Domain: the right of a government to take private property for public use
- Civil Rights Movement- a social movement and campaign from 1954 to 1968 in the United States to abolish legalized racial segregation, and discrimination in the country.

Procedures

Note to Teacher: Prior to teaching this lesson, gather library books on Appalachian communities, dam construction projects, the Manhattan Project, and the civil rights movement.

1. **Locate and Introduce the Region**
 - Display the Clinch River Valley on a map, globe, or digital resource.
 - Highlight key geographic concepts, including the idea of a river valley.
2. **Introduce Key Vocabulary**
 - Review important terms with students, focusing on *displacement*.
 - Work together as a class to create a shared definition.
3. **Read-Aloud**
 - Read *Currents of Change* children's e-book, *Displacement*.
4. **Guided Discussion**
 - Pause during and after reading to ask:
 - Why did displacement occur in the Clinch River Valley?
 - What examples of displacement were shown in the book?
 - How would you feel if you were suddenly displaced?
5. **Visible vs. Invisible T-Chart**
 - Display a chart labeled **Visible** and **Invisible**.

Visible	Invisible

- Explain that displacement has both observable and hidden elements.
- 6. **Class Brainstorm**
 - Using ideas from the reading and discussion, list examples:
 - **Visible:** houses moved or torn down, landscapes altered, families forced to move.
 - **Invisible:** feelings of loss, fear, alienation, not belonging.
 - Emphasize the difference between what can be seen and what cannot.
- 7. **Create a Shared Definition**
 - In small groups, have students write 1–2 sentences (or words) describing displacement and its causes.
 - Record group definitions on the board.
 - As a class, agree on one final shared definition (e.g., *“being forced to move due to natural disaster, government projects, or war”*).
- 8. **Classroom Simulation: Experiencing Displacement**
 - Have students count off by 1s and 2s.
 - Tell the “2s” they have been displaced. Give them 30 seconds to gather belongings and move to the back of the room.
 - Place a masking tape “X” on their desks, explaining they cannot return there and must find a new spot in the classroom.
 - Continue with a normal class activity for ~30 minutes while they remain displaced.
 - Afterwards, remove the “X” and allow students to return to their original desks.
- 9. **Reflection and Debrief**
 - Lead a discussion:
 - What did the displaced students feel?
 - What did the rest of the class notice?
 - How would this experience feel if it were permanent?
 - Connect student reflections back to the historical examples studied.

Extensions

- The Tennessee Valley – a historic film highlighting the TVA’s effort to bring electricity to the Tennessee Valley (1936) [Tennessee Valley - YouTube](#)
- Valley of the Tennessee (1944) – a historic film highlighting the building of the dams and the benefits associated with their construction. [Valley of the Tennessee, 1944 - YouTube](#)
- [Cameron Boyce Honors The Clinton 12 | Black History Month | Disney XD - YouTube](#) In celebration of Black History Month, Cameron Boyce discusses the heroic journey of his grandmother, Jo Ann Boyce, and her involvement in the Clinton 12
- The Oak Ridge Story - [The Oak Ridge Story \(youtube.com\)](#)

Framework and Standards

Enduring Understandings

- Displacement is a complex experience that can cause hardship and grief yet also lead to transformation and growth.

- Communities in the Clinch River Valley experienced major displacement due to projects like Norris Dam, the creation of Oak Ridge, and the struggle for school integration with the Clinton 12.

Essential Questions

- What is Displacement?
- Why did displacement happen in the Clinch River Valley?
- How does displacement affect a community and the residents?

Standards

National Social Studies Standards

- Thematic Strand 2: TIME, CONTINUITY, AND CHANGE
- Thematic Strand 3: PEOPLE, PLACES, AND ENVIRONMENTS
- Thematic Strand 5: INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS, AND INSTITUTIONS
- Thematic Strand 8: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIETY

National Geography Standards

- Essential Element 1: The World in Spatial Terms

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

- Reading: Informational Text
 - Key Ideas and Details: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
- Speaking and Listening
 - Comprehension and Collaboration: Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
 - Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
- Language
 - Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
 - Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.

Tennessee State Social Studies Standards

- Post-World War II and the Civil Rights Movement (1940s-1960s)
 - 5.24- Analyze the key people and events of the Civil Rights Movement
- Tennessee in the 20th Century (1900-present)
 - 5.48- Describe the effects of the Great Depression on Tennessee and the impact of New Deal policies in the state (i.e., Tennessee Valley Authority and Civilian Conservation Corps).

- 5.50 - Identify Tennessee's significant contributions to the Civil Rights Movement, including The Clinton Twelve
- 5.49- Describe Tennessee's contributions during World War I and World War II, including: the conversion of factories to wartime production, the importance of Oak Ridge, and the influence of Tennesseans (i.e., Cornelia Fort, Cordell Hull, and Alvin C. York).