

The Indian Removal Act and the Trail of Tears

Summary

This lesson provides small groups with the opportunity to explore the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Cherokee Trail of Tears. It allows for group work as well as independent study. It will target the sentiments of the students and introduce tolerance.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 90 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Social & Civic Responsibility

Materials

Historical notes found in various books and internet sites, History textbook, United States Atlas, Large classroom map, United States fabric maps (1 per table of 6) or individual placemat maps, laminated quotes from historical facts, Cherokee Nation song, Native American music CD, overhead transparency of song lyrics and Trail of Tears color picture, transparency of 3 summary quotes, timeline and lesson objectives, overhead projector, CD player and worksheet for independent study.

Background for Teachers

<http://www.powersource.com/cocinc/history/trail.htm> Historical facts about Andrew Jackson's Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Cherokee Trail of Tears.

Student Prior Knowledge

Students should know about the discrimination towards Native Americans and the state of the United States in regards to Westward Expansion. They should know what it is to 'suffer.'

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will know of the deadly journey of the Cherokee tribes while being forced off their land. They will develop a sense of tolerance and understanding of what the Native Americans have had to go through since the Europeans invaded their lands.

Instructional Procedures

Students are seated in groups of six. Each member has a job: Reader, Scribe, Task Master, Collector, Presenter, Pointer. Duties will be explained as needed. Anticipatory set: Students enter the room while Native American music is playing. They are to answer the question that is written on the board, "What was the Indian Removal Act?" They can find the answer in the textbook. Teacher starts class by playing "Cherokee Nation" song as the class listens to the words. Teacher then displays the transparency of the lyrics and discusses with the class what they mean. Teacher displays the transparency of the Trail of Tears. Student are to infer what is happening in the picture. Teacher blocks portions of the picture to insure view of details. Teacher processes the events of the painting. Teacher has student volunteer to answer the question on the board and then proceeds to explain the Indian Removal Act and the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Large fabric maps are placed on tables.

Teacher has "Pointer" follow the Trail of Tears journey as outlined by teacher. Other group members observe and take mental note (You may have individual placemat maps for each group member to follow). Teacher uses large classroom map to show journey of the Cherokee and other tribes. Students use classroom Atlases to view the Native American tribes and their journeys to the west. Group Activity: Teacher passes a laminated quote (taken from information provided in the Historical account of the Trail of Tears Internet site) to each table. "Reader" is to read to the group, "Scribe" will write what the group members think the quote means, "Presenter" will stand and present what the Scribe wrote, and the "Collector" will collect the written work and the laminated quotes to be returned to the teacher. Groups get 6 minutes to do this! Teacher uses Native American music as a timer. The music plays in the background while students are busy at work. Teacher monitors the class and is available for help. After the "Presenter" of each group finishes his/her job, teacher asks for applause from the class for a job well done. Teacher gives participation points to all those who participated in group activity. Teacher reads actual statements from the Cherokee survivors. Students and teacher process the events and express feelings and emotions. Tolerance is defined and students share personal experiences of discrimination that they may have had. Teacher provides modern day examples of what it would be like to be asked to pack up and leave your homes to walk across several states and relocate in the middle of a desert. Teacher adds closing remarks before giving the students their worksheets. Students work independently or within their groups to finish their worksheets. A quiz may be given the next day!

Strategies for Diverse Learners

Gifted students may be required to take the role of a reporter and write a documentary of the "Trail of Tears." The struggling student will benefit from the group work as he/she has five other group members to help them. They make take the duty of the "collector" instead of the "reader" or the "presenter" which would allow them to help out without putting pressure on them to stand and speak to the class. Topographical maps would enhance the lesson for a blind student as well as the music.

Extensions

Field trip to a Native American Museum, Bring in Native American guest speakers and artifacts, Show a video of Native Americans being forced off their lands: "I will fight no more, forever" (Story of Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce tribe's struggles with the United States Government in 1877).

Assessment Plan

Students will be assessed in how well they actively participate in the group activity as well as their written assignment. They will also be given a quiz the following day. They may be asked to write a factual documentation of the Trail of Tears and what the Indian Removal Act meant. This would be used as assessment as well.

Bibliography

Internet: Trail of Tears; Textbook: The American Nation - Prentice Hall; Book: George Washington's War; Song: Cherokee Nation by Paul Revere and the Raiders; Music: Native American Music CD; Video clip: Text resource material.

Authors

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