

The Cherokee Tribe and Their Trail of Tears

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Overview

The Cherokee Tribe and Their Trail of Tears is a multi-disciplinary unit for 5th grade students. This unit allows the teacher to integrate literacy, math, history, and geography skills with engaging lessons that force students to think critically and problem solve while learning about the culture of Native Americans and the heartbreaking history of the Cherokee.

Rationale

The primary goal of these lessons is to improve students' problem solving ability and strengthen understanding of fractions and computation of fractions. The unit makes it possible to achieve this goal while learning about the Cherokee and their Trail of Tears. I chose the topic of the Cherokee and the Trail of Tears because it is a story of injustice and suffering that is rarely told. Students are often taught in school about African American slavery and segregation and the Holocaust in Germany. However, the suffering the Native Americans experienced, and more specifically the Cherokee, is rarely talked about and compared to these other moments in history.

The lessons combine a first-hand account of the suffering experienced by the Cherokee in the form of a poem, and an example of what their travel might have been like from Tennessee to Oklahoma. The lesson demonstrates where many Cherokees live today.

Mathematical Background/Historical Background

Around 1830, President Andrew Jackson passed legislation called the Indian Removal Act. This allowed the government to forcibly relocate all Native Americans living east of the Mississippi River off of their land and move them to less desirable land in Oklahoma.

Five tribes were affected, but of the five, the Cherokee attempted to fight the eviction by taking the state of Georgia to court. It went all the way to the Supreme Court and the Cherokee wonⁱ. However, President Jackson still forced the Cherokee off their land at gunpoint. They were forced to walk and travel by horse and wagon through the winter to Oklahoma. Approximately one out of every four Native Americans died.

The land the Cherokee were moved to was much smaller and more difficult to live off of than the land they had inhabited for years. Before their removal, the Cherokee were prosperous. Some members of the tribe were becoming very wealthy and some had attended schools in New England. The Cherokee created their own language and even had their own newspaper.

The Cherokee nation survives today primarily in two locations in the United States. The largest group lives on a reservation in Oklahoma. A second, smaller group, lives in North Carolina near the original Cherokee home lands. When the Cherokee nation was being forced to relocate, some members of the tribe escaped and hid in the mountains. This group survives today in North Carolina.

Native American cultures do not generally have a traditional system of teaching and learning math skills. However, we can observe their use of math by examining items they have created. Math is used in weaving and beading. Some of their most important items reflect mathematical concepts. We can see the importance of counting and numerical patterns in their creation of items such as Wampum. We can see the geometric concept of translations and transformations in items such as pottery and woven material. We can observe symmetry in many items where they used shapes in beadwork and weaving. Not only is the math important, but also the designs are meaningful in that they tell a story or relay information.

Native Americans have been weaving for more than 8,000 yearsⁱⁱ. Most tribes make some kind of basket. They can be made out of whatever plants are available, such as grass, roots, cedar splints, cornhusks, fern stems, cattail stems, or horsehairⁱⁱⁱ. Navajo Indians have been known to be the most skilled weavers North of Mexico^{iv}. Baskets are important to the Native American way of life for many reasons. They are made to carry and store food in, cradle babies, trap fish or birds, and even wear as hats. When woven very tightly, they can be used to carry and hold water or cook food in^v.

Weaving has always been done by hand, without machines, but with a simple loom. There are several different types of weaving. The simplest involves slats that create lines that are horizontal and vertical. Weaving on one side, and then the other side, to create a symmetrical effect, creates designs on the mats. Width and length of lines in the designs are widened or shortened by doubling up the lengths^{vi}. The second type of weaving includes diagonal designs over the horizontal and vertical lines. Making diagonal lines to the edge of the mat, and then making a right angle and continuing diagonally in the opposite direction create these more complicated designs^{vii}.

Objectives

- SWBAT (Students will be able to) perform measurements on a map using a key and perform calculations with mixed numbers IOT (in order to) create a table and adjust calculations due to changes in data.
- SWBAT create a woven mat and basket IOT describe fractional parts, identify perpendicular and parallel lines, create patterns and understand the concept of warp and weft and how it relates to horizontal and vertical.
- SWBAT convert measurements of area IOT compare numbers and decimals.

Strategies

This unit will incorporate strategies that teach to visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and oral learners. The teacher will make use of hands-on materials to give students first-hand experience with patterns, beadwork, and weaving. Students will spend time observing Native American objects in order to draw them and write about them.

Hands-on measurement – Students will use a nontraditional form of measurement to then transfer into inches using a ruler.

Modeling – Through explicit teacher modeling, the teacher provides students with a clear example of a skill or strategy. The teacher provides a structure to guide students by describing the skill or strategy, the steps involved, breaking it into learnable parts, and checking for understanding.

Student Questioning – Teacher will use popsicle sticks with student names written on each one in order to question all students and check for understanding. Popsicle sticks will be placed in a can and drawn one-by-one when asking questions. Once a stick has been used, it will be left out of the can until all students have been asked a question. This encourages all students to pay attention knowing they can get called on at any time.

Classroom Activities/Lesson Plans

Lesson 1: Introduction

Duration: 45 minutes

Procedure: Post and guide students through the reading of the following objective:

“SWBAT perform measurements on a map using a key and perform calculations with mixed numbers IOT create a table and adjust calculations due to changes in data.”

Spend time reviewing the underlined vocabulary terms with students so they are aware of what skills they will be working on and the correct terminology that should be used throughout the lesson. Remind students that there are several mathematical strategies to solve problems (i.e. guess and check, working backwards, drawing a picture) and they will be using a table as their strategy to work through the problem in these lessons.

Provide students with a blank piece of paper and colored pencils, crayons, or markers. Explain that you will be reading an excerpt of a passage that they should listen to and visualize in their minds. You will be re-reading the passage several times and they will have the opportunity to draw the visualizations they've created from the descriptive passage. Read the excerpt from "The Never ending Trail"^{viii} by Abe del Jones completely without stopping. During the second reading, you may pause several times to ask questions and check for understanding (using the Student Questioning Strategy). Ask questions such as:

- Who was being removed from their land?
- What time of year did this occur?
- What year did this happen?
- What description did the Cherokee use to refer to their home?
- How do you feel about the 'troops in blue'?
- How did the Cherokee feel about moving from their land?
- What happened to many of the Cherokee along the way to their new land?

Read the passage 3 to 4 times, allowing students to have time to complete their drawing and comprehend the events in the passage.

Students will each be given a copy of the Cherokee Removal Routes^{ix}. The teacher will review the map with students and point out the Map Key identifying the land route, water route and Other Major Routes. Students will discuss what the landscape might've been like for travel (mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, forests, etc.) Students will be required to calculate how far the route is from Charleston, TN to Tahlequah, OK. The teacher will guide a discussion on how the route on the map can be measured when it has many curves and turns and a ruler will not work. The teacher will then introduce Wikki Stix and demonstrate how they can be bent and molded to the exact shape of the route on the map and stick to the paper for easy manipulation. The Wikki Stix can then be laid next to a ruler for a reasonable measurement. Students will begin measurement in Lesson 2.

Assessment: Student drawings will be used as an assessment from the lesson to determine if students were able to grasp the content from the passage that was read.

Lesson 2: Measuring the Trail of Tears

Duration: 45 minutes

Procedure: Teacher will guide students through a re-reading of the posted objective.

“SWBAT perform measurements on a map using a key and perform calculations with mixed numbers IOT create a table and adjust calculations due to changes in data.”

Ask the following questions (Using the Student Questioning Strategy) to check for understanding of the objective:

- What will we be doing with the map? (performing measurements)
- What types of numbers will we be working with? (mixed numbers – whole numbers and fractions)
- What math strategy are we going to use to work through the problem? (a table)
- How are we going to adapt to changes in data? (adjust calculations)

Students will review the map of the Cherokee Removal Routes and use Wikki Stix to measure the Land Route from Charleston, TN to Tahlequah, OK. Students will use the key 1 inch = 100 miles to identify the number of miles covered by the Land Route. Students will complete Handout 1 while having a class-wide discussion about the differences in measurements and the accuracy of the process for measuring the map.

Assessment: Teacher will review student measurements in inches to make sure that they have a reasonable answer. Teacher will also review the student conversion process to make sure they completed the process accurately.

Lesson 3: On the Way

Duration: 45 minutes

Procedure: Teacher will guide students through a re-reading of the posted objective.

“SWBAT perform measurements on a map using a key and perform calculations with mixed numbers IOT create a table and adjust calculations due to changes in data.”

Teacher will review with students the previous lessons. The class will discuss (using the Student Questioning Strategy) the removal of the Cherokee, aspects of the map, how they measured the map and what measurements were calculated. Teacher will then set the tone for the day’s lesson by explaining that they will be tracking a fictitious travel schedule of the Cherokee on their way to Oklahoma. Each student will receive Handout 2. The teacher will work through the problem and completion of the table with students while modeling on the chalkboard, Smart board, or chart paper. Students will then calculate the hours traveled per day, distance traveled per day, number of days it would take to travel 1,200 miles, and what month they might arrive in Oklahoma. Students can share out their answers and strategies for finding the answers.

Assessment: Teacher will check for understanding by reviewing student work and answering questions throughout the lesson.

Lesson 4: Hardships on the Trail

Duration: 45 minutes

Procedure: Teacher will again begin the lesson by reviewing the objective and previous lessons, using correct vocabulary and assessing students' knowledge through the Individual Questioning strategy.

Students will view a 3-4 minute video from the History Channel^x on Andrew Jackson's impact on the Cherokee's removal from their homeland. The class will discuss how traveling rarely happens smoothly without outside influences. The longer the travel, the more influences there are. Teacher will read to the students pages 37 and 38 from *The Trail of Tears*^{xi}, describing the hardships they experienced along the way. The teacher will then guide students through the completion and a discussion of Handout 3. Students will view a YouTube documentary^{xii} on the Trail of Tears and then write a short reflection.

Assessment: Teacher will use Handout 3 as evidence of the students' ability to use mathematical problem solving strategies to answer questions. Teacher will also use Question 3 on Handout 3 as an assessment of the students' knowledge about the Cherokee, the Indian Removal Act, and the Trail of Tears.

Lesson 5: The Cherokee: Yesterday and Today

Duration: 45 minutes

Procedure: Post and guide students through the reading of the following objective:

“SWBAT convert measurements of area IOT compare numbers and decimals”.

Review with students how the Cherokee were removed from their land in the 1800's and thousands perished on the way to their new land. Discuss how the Cherokee went from inhabiting a land mass that covered 8 states (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia) to an area that is just part of the state of Oklahoma. Their land area went from 135,000 square miles to 56,000 acres.

Students will be given Handout 4 and the teacher will guide them through the problem solving process. Students should be able to convert miles to acres and compare 86.4 million acres from years ago to the 56,000 acres of Cherokee land today. After graphing the numbers on a 100-grid, students should be able to see that 86.4 million covers almost the entire grid, while 0.056 million doesn't even fill one tiny cube in the grid. Allow students to discuss the last question as a class before writing their independent response.

Assessment: Teacher will review student work on Handout 4.

Lesson 6: Mat Weaving

Duration: 60 minutes

Procedure: Post and guide students through the reading of the following objective:

“SWBAT create a woven mat IOT describe fractional parts, identify perpendicular and parallel lines, create patterns and understand the concept of warp and weft and how it relates to horizontal and vertical.”

Spend time reviewing the underlined vocabulary terms with students so they are aware of what skills they will be working on and the correct terminology that should be used throughout the lesson.

Teacher will discuss with students the importance of weaving in the Native American culture. Students will view pictures or artifacts that demonstrate Native American weaving. Teacher will demonstrate how to fold construction paper into strips of equal length and width using fractional descriptions. Teacher will also demonstrate how to begin the warp of a woven mat and add the weft to create parallel and perpendicular lines.

Students will cut 16 strips of construction paper of equal length and width (approximately 1 ½ inches by 12 inches) and staple to a perpendicular strip of paper. Students will then continue adding the weft to the warp and staple the ends. After the mat is completed, students will use pieces of cut sponge and paint to add geometric patterns to the mat.

Assessment: Teacher will assess student knowledge of geometric terms by using Student Questioning Strategy and recording student responses.

Lesson 7: Basket Weaving

Duration: 60 minutes

Procedure: Post and guide students through the reading of the following objective:

“SWBAT create a woven basket IOT describe fractional parts, define perpendicular and parallel lines, create patterns and understand the concept of warp and weft and how it relates to horizontal and vertical.”

Spend time reviewing the underlined vocabulary terms with students so they are aware of what skills they will be working on and the correct terminology that should be used throughout the lesson.

Teacher will discuss with students the importance and use of baskets in Native American culture and how they were made and used and continue to be made today. Students will view examples of Native American baskets (either live or in pictures) and how they were

used. Teacher will demonstrate for students how to create a basket out of 14 strips of cardstock (or folded newspaper).

Students will each be given 14 strips of tag board (or folded newspaper) and lay four strips side by side. Students will then weave four more strips over and under and staple the four corners where the eight strips connect in the center (this will make the base of the basket). The teacher will point out that this flat shape is the “net” for the basket. Students will be encouraged to describe the characteristics of this net and how it relates to the 3-dimensional basket that will be created. The 16 strips will be folded up and the remaining unused strips will be woven into the upright strips. For the last row at the top, student can fold the remainder over and staple. For more interesting patterns and designs, different colored paper can be used (or the comics section of the newspaper).

Assessment: Students knowledge of vocabulary and geometric concepts can be monitored throughout the lesson through informal conversation and a presentation of each student’s final project.

Annotated Bibliography/Resources

Ashrose, Cara, and Bryna Waldman. *The very first Americans*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1993. This is a children’s picture book introducing the Native American tribes, such as Sioux, Hopi, and Seminole, how they lived, ate, had fun, and where they are today.

Bruchac, Joseph, and Diana Magnuson. *The Trail of Tears*. New York: Random House, 1999. A Step 5 “Step into Reading” children’s book divided into chapters about the life of the Cherokee, the events that lead up to the removal of the Cherokee, and their travel to Oklahoma.

Carlson, Laurie M.. *More than moccasins: a kid's activity guide to traditional North American Indian life*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1994. A book of crafts and activities children can make and/or play to learn more about Native American life, food, clothing and games.

"Cherokee Removal Route." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 8 June 2014.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trail_of_Tears#mediaviewer/File:Trail_of_tears_

map_NPS.jpg>. This is a map identifying the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail, including the land route, water route, and other major routes.

“Cherokee Territory”. *Cherokee Territory*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 June

2014. <http://www.yvwiiusdinvoohii.net/Chereastyestoday.htm>. This website provides information on how the land of the Cherokee has changed and what size it is today. Provides details such as what states they now inhabit and what the population is now.

Fleming, Walter C.. *The complete idiot's guide to Native American history*. Indianapolis, IN: Alpha Books, 2003. This book provides an in-depth look at the world of the American Indian and the history and customs of the North American tribes.

Gorsline, Marie, and Douglas W. Gorsline. *North American Indians*. New York: Random House, 1977. This is a children's picture book providing general information about Native Americans in North America. Includes information about various North American tribes including the Wampanoag, Seminole, Iroquois, Plains Indians, Pueblo, Apache, Navajo, and all of their different types of shelter.

Holmes, William Henry. *Prehistoric textile art of eastern United States*. Washington: G.P.O., 1896. An E-Book that provides elaborate detail on the basketry of Native Americans, including the importance of the Cherokee in this skill. Includes diagrams and pictures.

Kissell, Mary Lois. *Aboriginal American weaving*. New York City: American Museum of Natural History, 1910. An E-Book on the techniques and tools used by Native Americans in weaving. Includes diagrams, pictures, and specific techniques of the various tribes.

Murdoch, David Hamilton, and Lynton Gardiner. *North American Indian*. Rev. ed.

London: DK, 2005. This is a Dorling Kindersley Eyewitness book full of beautiful pictures and descriptions of Native American artifacts. These artifacts represent numerous tribes from North America, as well as various aspects of their culture and everyday life.

Roop, Peter, Connie Roop, and Kevin Warren Smith. *--If you lived with the Cherokee*.

New York: Scholastic, 1998. A children's picture book for students reading at the 3rd grade reading level or higher that focuses solely on the Cherokee tribe. This book provides information on how they got their name, what their villages were like, and how they went to school.

"The Never Ending Trail". *The Neverending Trail*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 June 2014.

<<http://www.aboutnorthgeorgia.com/ang/>> A website containing the poem written by Abe del Jones entitled "The Never Ending Trail" about the Cherokee and their journey out of their land.

"Trail Of Tears Short Documentary." *YouTube*. YouTube, n.d. Web. 8 June 2014.

<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwBXOxQqkGc>>. A 10-minute documentary video appropriate for students to watch in order to grasp an understanding of the events that surrounded the removal of the Cherokee and what they had to endure.

"Trail of Tears". *History.com* A&E Television Networks, n.d. Web. 7 June 2014.

<http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/trail-of-tears>.

A three and a half minute video about Andrew Jackson's controversial decisions during his presidency. Describes the Indian Removal Act and its affect on the

Cherokee.

Treuer, Anton. *Everything you wanted to know about Indians but were afraid to ask.*

Saint Paul, MN: Borealis Books, 2012. A book dealing with all things Native American written in short segments according to specific topics. Includes topics such as terminology, history, religion, politics, language, and their culture.

Williams, Lucy Fowler, William S. Wierzbowski, and Robert W. Preucel. *Native*

American voices on identity, art, and culture: objects of everlasting esteem.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2005. This book contains pictures of 78 objects housed at the Penn Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Each object has an essay attached that relates to issues such as Native American identity, the active destruction of their cultures and languages, and the perseverance and strength of Native American communities.

Appendix

(resources students will use)

Excerpt from “The Never ending Trail” by Abe del Jones

“He ordered the removal
Of the Cherokee from their land
And forced them on a trek
That the Devil must have planned –

One thousand miles of misery –
Of pain and suffering –
Because greed of the white man
Could not even wait till spring –

We should bow our heads in shame
Even unto this day
About “The Trail of Tears”
And those who died along the way.

It was October, eighteen thirty-eight
When seven thousand troops in blue
Began the story of the “Trail”
Which, so sadly, is so true –

Jackson ordered General Scott
To rout the Indian from their home –
The “Center Of The World” they loved –
The only one they’d known –

The Braves working in the fields
Arrested, placed in a stockade –
Women and children dragged from home
In the bluecoats shameful raid –”

Handout 1

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Measurement of Land Route from Charleston, TN to Tahlequah, OK. _____
Convert inches to miles (1 inch = 100 miles). Show your work.

2. List measurements in miles from 10 other classmates.

- | | |
|----|----|
| a. | b. |
| c. | d. |
| e. | f. |
| g. | h. |
| i. | j. |

3. Why might measurements vary from student to student?

Handout 2

Name: _____

Date: _____

Complete the table according to the following schedule:

- Cherokee wake up, pack up camp, and begin traveling at 7:30 a.m.
- At 10:30, they take a 30-minute break to rest and feed horses.
- After traveling for 2 more hours, they stop at 1:00 p.m. for lunch.
- The Cherokee take an hour for lunch.
- After traveling through the afternoon, the Cherokee stop at 4:30 p.m. to set up camp before it gets dark.

Clock Time	Moving or Stopped	Miles traveled in one hour (speed)	Elapsed Time	Computation	Distance Traveled
7:30 – 10:30					
10:30 – 11:00					

1. Total amount of time traveled per day. _____

2. Total distance traveled per day. _____

3. Number of days it would take to make the 1,200-mile trip. (Show your work)

4. If the first group of Cherokee left on October 1st, what month would they arrive in Oklahoma? (Show your work)

Handout 3

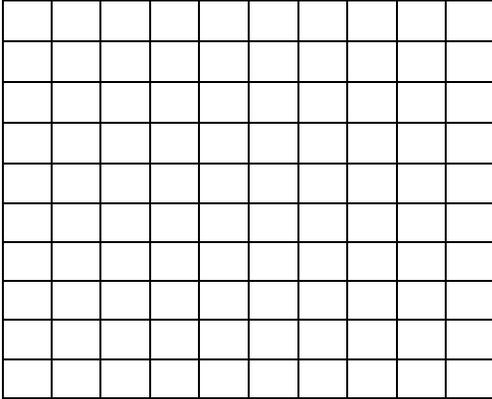
Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Due to illness, broken down wagons, the death of horses and oxen, and winter weather, travel to Oklahoma took 60 days longer than planned. How many days did the travel actually take? Share your reasoning.

2. If the last group of Cherokee people left Tennessee on November 7, when did they arrive in Oklahoma? Show your work or share your reasoning.

3. After viewing the documentary video, please write a few sentences on your feelings about the treatment of the Cherokee and 3 new things you learned.

“Today” (0.056 million sq.mi.)



4. What is the difference between the 2 land masses? Show your work.

5. How would you feel if you were part of the Cherokee tribe today? How would you respond to people who say that you should be happy you have your own land?

Common Core Standards

Mathematics

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.5.NF.A.1

Add and subtract fractions with unlike denominators (including mixed numbers) by replacing given fractions with equivalent fractions in such a way as to produce an equivalent sum or difference of fractions with like denominators. *For example, $2/3 + 5/4 = 8/12 + 15/12 = 23/12$. (In general, $a/b + c/d = (ad + bc)/bd$.)*

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.5.NF.A.2

Solve word problems involving addition and subtraction of fractions referring to the same whole, including cases of unlike denominators, e.g., by using visual fraction models or equations to represent the problem. Use benchmark fractions and number sense of fractions to estimate mentally and assess the reasonableness of answers. *For example, recognize an incorrect result $2/5 + 1/2 = 3/7$, by observing that $3/7 < 1/2$.*

ELA

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1

Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.6

Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the point of view they represent.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.7

Draw on information from multiple print or digital sources, demonstrating the ability to locate an answer to a question quickly or to solve a problem efficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9

Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

Geography

7.1.5.A: Describe how common geographic tools are used to organize and interpret information about people, places, and environment.

7.1.5.B: Describe and locate places and regions as defined by physical and human features.

Social Studies

8.3.5.A: Compare and contrast common characteristics of the social, political, cultural and economic groups in United States history.

8.3.5.D: Examine patterns of conflict and cooperation among groups and organizations that impacted the history and development of the United States.

Endnotes

- ⁱ “Trail of Tears”. *History.com* A&E Television Networks, n.d. Web. 7 June 2014.
<<http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/trail-of-tears>>
- ⁱⁱ Carlson, Laurie M.. *More than moccasins: a kid's activity guide to traditional North American Indian life*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1994
- ⁱⁱⁱ Carlson, Laurie M.. *More than moccasins: a kid's activity guide to traditional North American Indian life*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1994
- ^{iv} Kissell, Mary Lois. *Aboriginal American weaving*. New York City: American Museum of Natural History, 1910
- ^v Carlson, Laurie M.. *More than moccasins: a kid's activity guide to traditional North American Indian life*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1994
- ^{vi} Holmes, William Henry. *Prehistoric textile art of eastern United States*. Washington: G.P.O., 1896
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- ^{viii} “The Never Ending Trail”. *The Neverending Trail*. N.p., n.d. Web. 12 June 2014.
<<http://www.aboutnorthgeorgia.com/ang/>>
- ^{ix} "Cherokee Removal Route." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 8 June 2014.
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trail_of_Tears#mediaviewer/File:Trail_of_tears_map_NPS.jpg>
- ^x “Trail of Tears”. *History.com* A&E Television Networks, n.d. Web. 7 June 2014.
<<http://www.history.com/topics/native-american-history/trail-of-tears>>
- ^{xi} Bruchac, Joseph, and Diana Magnuson. *The Trail of Tears*. New York: Random House, 1999
- ^{xii} "Trail Of Tears Short Documentary." *YouTube*. YouTube, n.d. Web. 8 June 2014.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwBXOxQqkGc>>