

Andrew Jackson's "Indians" – His Truth or His Tale?

Historical Thinking Skills Assessed: Corroboration, Contextualizing

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Course: United States History

Level: Middle

Task Question: Was Andrew Jackson a protector or oppressor of Native Americans?

Learning Outcomes:

Students should be able to analyze primary source documents to assess the impact of Jacksonian policies on Native Americans.

Standards Alignment:

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy

- | | |
|--------|---|
| RI.5.3 | Explain the relationships or interactions between two or more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text based on specific information in the text. |
| RI.5.9 | Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably. |
| W.5.2 | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. |
| L.5.2 | Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. |
| L.5.6 | Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships |

National History Standards

Era 4: Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)

Standard 1: United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans

College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| D2.His.16.6-8 | Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past. |
| D3.3.6-8 | Identify evidence that draws from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations. |

Materials:

- RS#01: Source A – The Indian Removal Act (1830)
- RS#02: Source B – Andrew Jackson's Second Annual Address to Congress (1830)
- RS#03: Source C – *Andrew Jackson as the Great Father*
- RS#04: Source D – *Hunting Indians in Florida with Blood Hounds*
- RS#05: Image Analysis Chart
- RS#06: Illustration Template
- RS#07: ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric

Background for the Teacher:

As Southerners sought to expand the cultivation of cotton in the early nineteenth century, they began to move west into the lands of the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole nations. They urged the federal government to push the Native Americans from these areas and make them available for white settlement. Andrew Jackson, first as a military commander and then as president, played a central role in the policy that was referred to as Indian Removal.

President Jackson had a complicated relationship with American Indians. On one hand, he fought against them during the Creek Wars associated with the War of 1812, ultimately forcing the Creeks from 22 million acres of land in Georgia and Alabama. In 1818, he led an invasion of Florida to punish the Seminole nation for assisting runaway slaves. And, of the eleven major treaties signed between 1814 and 1824, Jackson negotiated nine of them. No other American was so instrumental to Indian Removal. On the other hand, in 1813, Jackson adopted a Native American boy found orphaned on a battlefield and raised him as his son. Moreover, despite aggressively pursuing Indian Removal, he talked about – and perhaps believed in – a “benevolent” policy toward Indians.

Whatever ambivalence he harbored toward Native Americans, however, Jackson as president engineered the systematic forced removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands. In 1830, he urged Congress to pass the Indian Removal Act, which authorized the federal government to grant Native Americans lands west of the Mississippi River in exchange for their lands east of the river. Native nations were offered assistance during their relocation and promised the eternal protection of the United State government in their new homes, and, realizing the futility of resistance, some Indian nations accepted the offer.

The Cherokee, however, refused to leave. Conflicting Supreme Court rulings in 1831 and 1832 muddled the issue of the sovereignty of Indian nations, first declaring that they were dependent nations within United States jurisdiction and then declaring them sovereign. President Jackson ignored the second ruling and negotiated a treaty for Cherokee removal with a chief representing a small faction of the nation. Despite efforts to resist, 15,000 to 16,000 members of the Cherokee tribe were forced by the military to relocate west of the Mississippi during the fall and winter of 1838-1839. During the forced march, which came to be known as “the Trail of Tears,” over 3,000 Cherokee died. By the 1840s, Jackson’s policy of Indian Removal could be declared complete: No Indian nations existed in the American South.

Timeline:

- 1821 The Cherokee syllabary is finished by Sequoyah.
- 1825 John Quincy Adams becomes the sixth President of the United States.
- 1827 Cherokees draft a constitution declaring themselves a nation.
- 1828 The Cherokee newspaper, *Phoenix*, is published.
- 1829 Andrew Jackson becomes the seventh president.
- 1830 The Indian Removal Act is passed by Congress and signed by Jackson.
- 1835 The Treaty of New Echota is signed by approximately 100 Cherokee, stating all Cherokee land east of the Mississippi River belongs to the U.S. Government.
- 1837 Martin Van Buren becomes the eighth President of the United States.
- 1838 The Trail of Tears (the forced march of the remaining Cherokees off of their land east of the Mississippi to Oklahoma) begins. Thousands die on the journey.

Procedure

Context Setting:

- Begin the class by asking the students to answer the following questions:
 - Think of a time when you said one thing and then did something else. Why did you do this? Was it intentional?
 - Why do you think people sometimes say one thing and do another? (Sometimes people lie intentionally to make themselves seem less guilty or to mislead others. Sometimes they themselves believe they are acting in accordance with what they are saying, even though others recognize that they are not. Also discuss that relationships are complicated and not often easily defined.)

Document Analysis:

- Explain to the students that they will analyze four sources regarding Jackson and the removal of the Natives Americans to lands west of the Mississippi River. As they review the sources, they will need to develop an opinion regarding the purpose of Jackson's policies toward Native Americans.
 - RS#01: Source A – The Indian Removal Act (1830). Review the text and the meaning of each section, and answer the comprehension question.
 - RS#02: Source B – Jackson's Second Annual Address to Congress (1830). Analyze the text, and complete the comprehension questions.
 - RS#03: Source C – *Andrew Jackson as the Great Father* and RS#04: Source D – *Hunting Indians in Florida with Blood Hounds*. Complete RS#05: Image Analysis Chart.
- Depending on the students' exposure to primary and secondary sources and level of comfort analyzing sources, the teacher will need to make adaptations to suit his/her specific class.

Source Analysis: Teacher Directed

- Utilizing a document camera, work through the sources while stopping to discuss specific vocabulary and connections (prior knowledge and/or making predictions).
- Work together to complete the comprehension questions and/or chart (depending on the source being analyzed).

Source Analysis: Student Pairs/Groups

- Have the students work in pairs/groups to examine the documents. The teacher should walk around to each group to ensure understanding and answer any questions.
- Review the student answers when completed.

Corroborating Evidence and Constructing Interpretations – *Close Analysis*:

- In pairs, small groups, or as a class, have students compare and contrast the sources to draw conclusions. Pose the following questions:
 - Which sources suggest that Jackson wanted to help the Native Americans through relocation? Cite details to support your answer.
 - Which sources suggest that he wanted to advance white interests while seeming to be sympathetic to the Native Americans? Cite details to support your answer.
 - How does the author/artist, audience, and purpose of each source affect its reliability and usefulness? Which sources are most helpful for determining Jackson's intended goals for Indian Removal? Why?

Thoughtful Application:

- Distribute RS#06: Illustration Template. Have students represent their responses to the task question through an illustration: Was President Jackson a protector or oppressor of Native Americans?
- Direct students to determine, based on the evidence, whether Jackson's claim to be acting in the best interests of the Native Americans was "his truth" or "his tale." Tell them to complete the Illustration Template worksheet to reflect what either "his truth" or "his tale" would look like on each side of the Mississippi River. In other words, what would Native American life look like on each side of the river if Jackson was (truly) acting to help Native Americans? Or, alternatively, what would Native American life look like if Jackson actions were actually to further the interests of white Americans?
- Have volunteers share their drawings using a document camera, if available.
- Evaluate student responses using RS#07: ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric.

Resource Sheet #01

Source A – *The Indian Removal Act (1830)*

Before he became president, Andrew Jackson had been instrumental in moving Indians from their eastern lands – both by waging war against Native Americans and negotiating treaties to trade their eastern lands for land west of the Mississippi River. Once elected president, Jackson outlined his proposed Indian removal policy in his Second Annual Message to Congress in 1830. At Jackson's request, Congress began crafting and debating a bill about Indian removal to western territories. Congress passed the bill on May 28, 1830; Jackson signed it into law on June 30, 1830.

An Act to provide for an exchange of lands with the Indians residing in any of the states or territories, and for their removal west of the river Mississippi.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, **That it shall and may be lawful for the President of the United States to cause so much of any territory belonging to the United States, west of the river Mississippi, not included in any state or organized territory, and to which the Indian title has been extinguished, as he may judge necessary, to be divided into a suitable number of districts, for the reception of such tribes or nations of Indians as may choose to exchange the lands where they now reside, and remove there .**

..

SEC. 2. And be it further enacted, **That it shall and may be lawful for the President to exchange any or all of such districts, so to be laid off and described, with any tribe or nation within the limits of any of the states or territories,** and with which the United States have existing treaties, for the whole or any part or portion of the territory claimed and occupied by such tribe or nation, within the bounds of any one or more of the states or territories, where the land claimed and occupied by the Indians, is owned by the United States, or the United States are bound to the state within which it lies to extinguish the Indian claim thereto . . .

Source: Indian Removal Act (Stat. 28), May 1830. Statutes at Large, 21st Congress, 1st Session. A Century of Lawmaking, Library of Congress. Washington, D.C. Accessed 8/20/14.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/Indian.html>

Comprehension Question: Do you believe that Jackson and Congress have the best interests of the Native Americans in mind? Cite evidence to support your answer.

Resource Sheet #02

Source B – Andrew Jackson’s 2nd Annual Address to Congress (1830)

It gives me pleasure to announce that the **benevolent** [kind] policy of the Government, steadily pursued for nearly thirty years, in relation to the removal of the Indians beyond the white settlements is approaching to a happy **consummation** [completion]. Two important tribes have accepted the provision made for their removal at the last session of Congress, and it is believed that their example will induce the remaining tribes also to seek the same obvious advantages.

The consequences of a speedy removal will be important to the United States, to individual States, and to the Indians themselves. The **pecuniary** [financial] advantages which it promises to the Government are the least of its recommendations. It puts an end to all possible danger of collision between the authorities of the **General** [federal] and State Governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of the country now occupied by a few savage hunters. By opening the whole territory between Tennessee on the north and Louisiana on the south to the settlement of the whites it will **incalculably** [vastly] strengthen the southwestern frontier and render the adjacent States strong enough to **repel** [fend off] future invasions without remote aid. It will relieve the whole State of Mississippi and the western part of Alabama of Indian occupancy, and enable those States to advance rapidly in population, wealth, and power. It will separate the Indians from immediate contact with settlements of whites; free them from the power of the States; enable them to pursue happiness in their own way and under their own rude institutions; will retard [slow] the progress of decay, which is lessening their numbers, and perhaps cause them gradually, under the protection of the government and through the influence of good counsels, to cast off their savage habits and become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community.

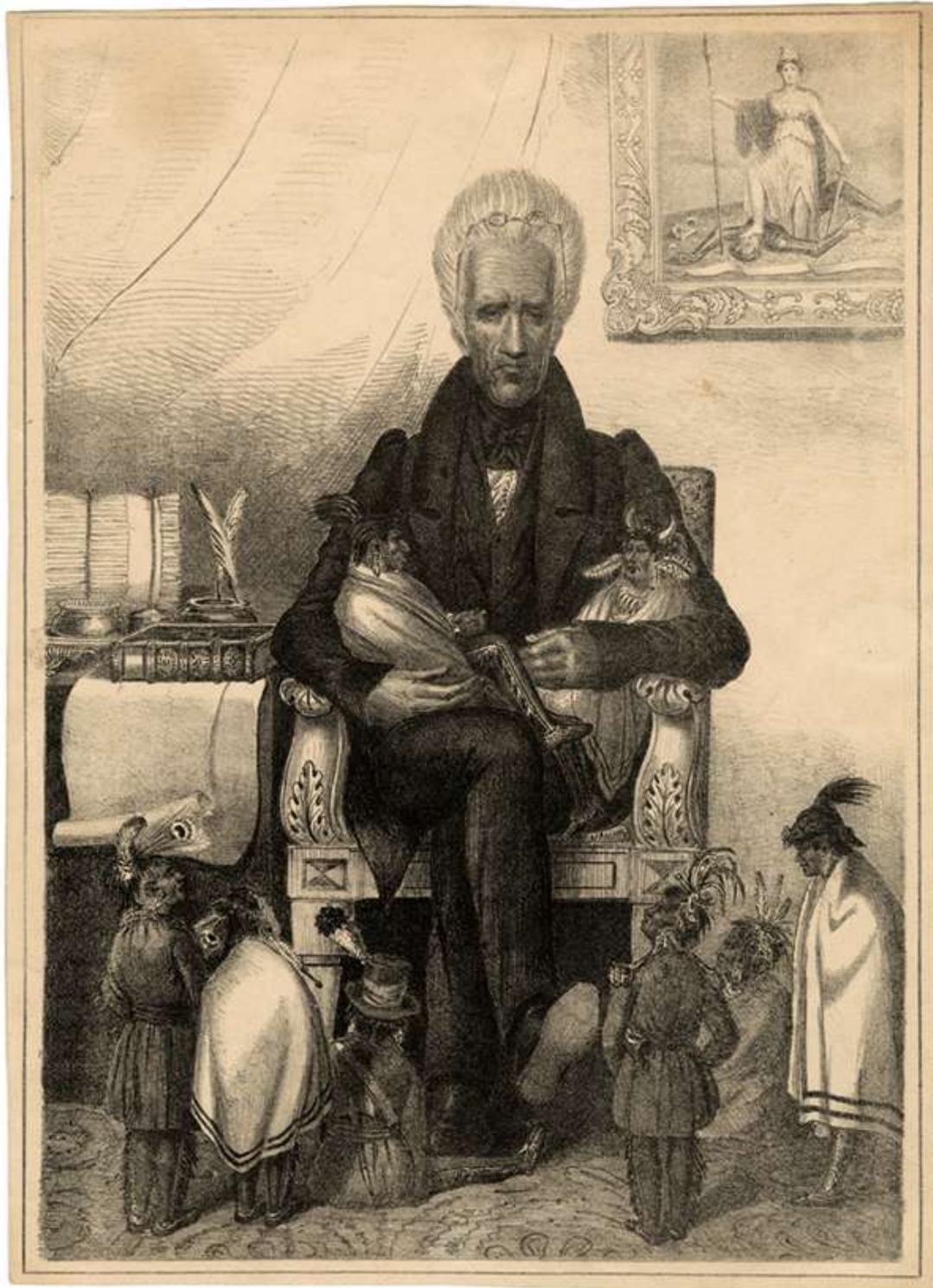
Source: President Jackson’s Message to Congress “On Indian Removal,” December 6, 1830. Records of the United States Senate, 1789-1990, Record Group 46. Records of the United States Senate, 1789-1990. National Archives, Washington, D.C. Accessed 8/22/14.

<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=25>

Comprehension Question: Jackson states, “*The consequences of a speedy removal will be important to the United States, to individual States, and to the Indians themselves.*” What does he believe will be the advantages for each of the groups mentioned above?

Resource Sheet #03

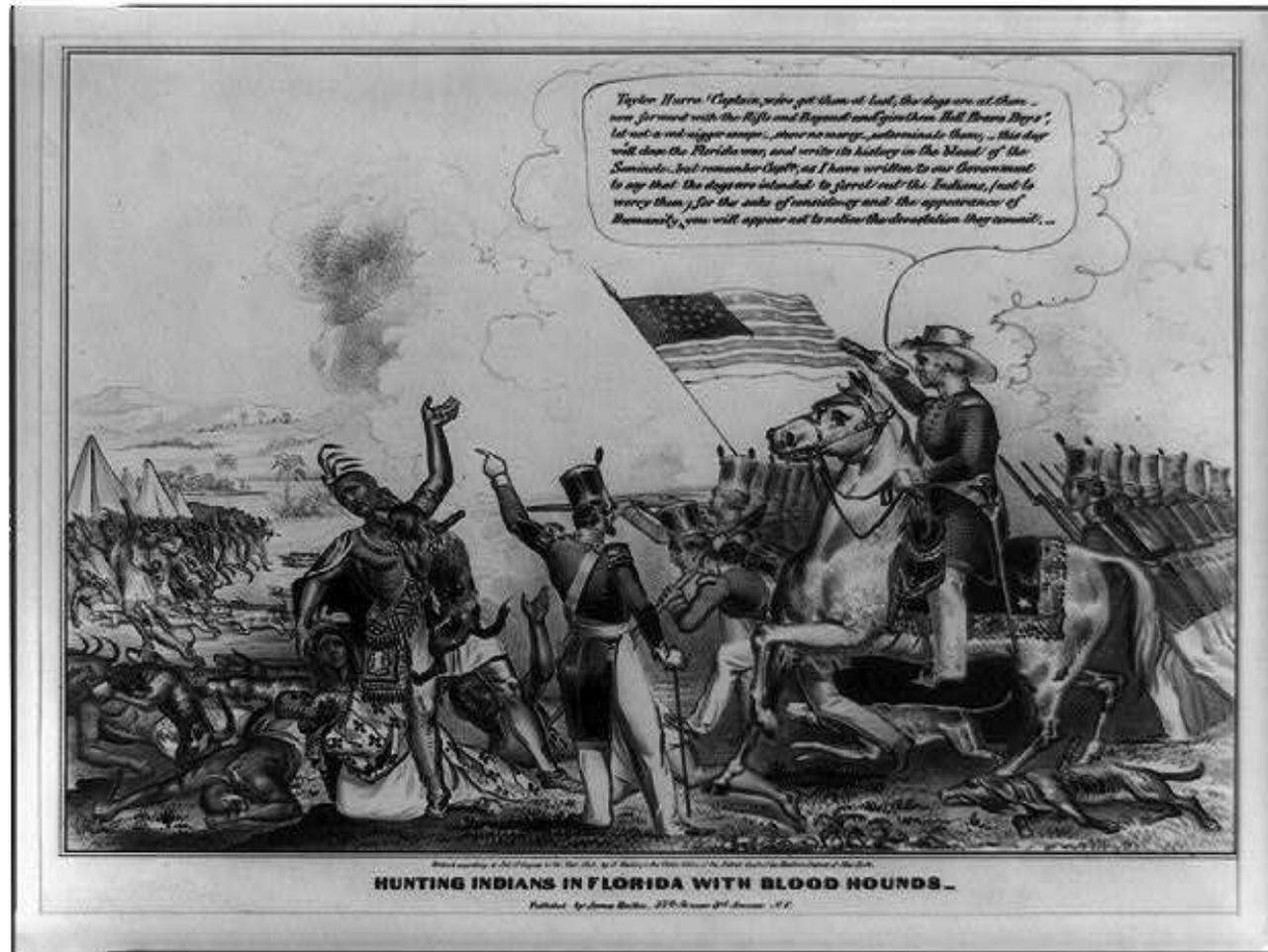
Source C – Andrew Jackson as the Great Father



Source: *Andrew Jackson as the Great Father*. 1835. *Native American History at the Clements Library*. William L. Clements Library. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Accessed 8/22/14.
<http://www.clements.umich.edu/exhibits/online/american-encounters/american-encounters11.php>

Resource Sheet #04

Source D – *Hunting Indians in Florida with Blood Hounds*



Source: Ballie, James. *Hunting Indians in Florida with Blood Hounds* (lithograph on woven paper), 1848. Accessed 8/26/14.
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2008661482/>

Resource Sheet #05

Image Analysis Chart (Critical Reading)

The Great Father (RS #03)	Hunting Indians (RS #04)
1. What can you infer based on the image?	1. What can you infer based on the image?
2. What claims does the author/artist make?	2. What claims does the author/artist make?
3. What evidence does the author/artist use to support his claims?	3. What evidence does the author/artist use to support his claims?
4. What feelings does the author/artist try to invoke?	4. What feelings does the author/artist try to invoke?

5. What information does the author/artist leave out? Which perspectives are missing?

5. What information does the author/artist leave out? Which perspectives are missing?

CORROBORATION

What similarities and differences can you identify in the images?

Similarities

Differences

Resource Sheet #06

Illustration Template

Andrew Jackson’s decision to relocate Native Americans ultimately harmed them, but did Jackson intend the end result from the beginning? Was Indian Relocation his “Truth” or his “Tale?” His “Truth” means that he cared for the Indians and wanted to help them. His “Tale” means that he wanted to appear like he was helping Indians, but his real goal was to benefit white Americans.

Using the template provided, pictorially present your conclusion about the task question: “Was President Jackson a protector or oppressor of Native Americans?” Create an illustration titled either “Jackson’s Truth” or “Jackson’s Tale.” The picture should demonstrate what Native American life would look like to the West and East of the Mississippi River, based on which stance you take. What would Native American life look like in a world where Jackson was relocating them for the benefit of white landowners, or what would it look like in a world where Jackson believed he was actually helping Native Americans? Make sure that you use evidence from the sources to support your interpretation.

Jackson’s _____ (*Truth or Tale?*)

West of the Mississippi	East of the Mississippi

Resource Sheet #07

ARCH Historical Thinking Skills Rubric – Corroboration, Contextualizing

	Strategies/Procedural Concepts	
Criteria	Corroboration	Contextualizing
4	Constructs an interpretation of events using information and perspectives in multiple sources. Identifies consistencies and inconsistencies among various accounts.	Applies prior and new knowledge to determine the historical setting of sources. Uses that setting to interpret the sources within the historical context as opposed to a present-day mindset.
3	Explains similarities and differences by comparing information and perspectives in multiple sources.	Applies prior and new knowledge to determine the historical setting of the sources. May attempt an interpretation of some sources with a present-day mindset or with a limited application to the historical context.
2	Identifies similarities and differences in information in multiple sources.	Attempts to determine the historical setting of sources without fully understanding the historical context.
1	Demonstrates little to no attempt to examine sources for corroborating or conflicting evidence.	Demonstrates no attempt to understand the historical setting of sources.