

VFT: CHEROKEE NATION

USER GUIDE

OVERVIEW

The Cherokee Nation virtual field trip affords an in-depth look at the lives of the Cherokee Indians, from their first encounters with Europeans to events, such as the Gold Rush and the signing of the Indian Removal Act by Andrew Jackson, that led to their forced relocation to Indian Territory in 1838. We recommend that students explore this virtual field trip after they have completed Unit 4 of the [Georgia Studies Book: Our State and Our Nation](#). Teachers could use this activity as a group experience, provide class time for students to explore the field trip at their own pace, or assign it as homework in a flipped classroom setting.

FEATURES

- **video** footage of interviews with experts who explain the lives of the Cherokee Indians and the historic events leading up to the Trail of Tears
- biographical information about important Cherokee Indians such as John Ross, Sequoyah, and Major John Ridge
- **interactive maps** that illustrate the extent of Indian land prior to European encroachment, and the routes taken by the Cherokees during their relocation to Indian Territory
- **primary documents**, including the historic Treaty of New Echota and a letter from John Ross

GEORGIA STANDARDS

- SS8H4** Explain significant factors that affected westward expansion in Georgia between 1789 and 1840.
- e. Analyze how key people (John Ross, John Marshall, and Andrew Jackson) and events (Dahlonega Gold Rush and *Worcester v. Georgia*) led to the removal of the Cherokees from Georgia known as the Trail of Tears.

DISCUSS

1. Why did the Cherokees change their way of life, including their system of government, around 1825? Do you think it is better to embrace differences in other cultures rather than to require assimilation? Why or why not?
2. In the case *Worcester v. Georgia*, the Supreme Court ruled that Georgia laws did not apply to the Cherokees and that the Cherokee Nation was a sovereign state, and therefore subject to its own laws. Although the Supreme Court's decision did not protect the Cherokees from removal in 1838, it set a precedent for court proceedings that concern Native American tribal rights today. What current issues could Native Americans face and how might this ruling help protect them?

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3. The United States recognized the Treaty of New Echota despite the fact that it was not approved by the Cherokee government. Should this have been considered a legal agreement? Explain your answer.
4. The excavation of a 400-year-old American Indian homestead is being conducted in the video *A Glimpse of the Past*. Why is this excavation so important? What types of artifacts do you think the archaeologists will find as they uncover more and more of the earthen structure?
5. In the video *Native Voices*, members of both the Creek and Cherokee tribes discuss their history, beliefs, and lives. Why is it important to hear history from their perspective? What are some interesting facts you learned?

EXTEND

1. You are a member of the Cherokee Nation who is being forcibly removed from your home, placed in stockades, and marched to Oklahoma by U.S. Army troops. Write a letter about your experience. Include information about your feelings, your family and friends (did anyone die and why?), the weather, and your arrival to Indian Territory. Information from the *Native Voices* video in the virtual field trip may help.
2. Research recent events occurring within the Cherokee Nation today. Using this information, create a modern-day issue of the *Cherokee Phoenix*. Articles could consist of upcoming celebrations, information about the current government, notable accomplishments, and interesting historical facts.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. [*Georgia Stories: Cherokee Myths and Legends*](#)
2. [*Georgia Stories: Native Traditions, Past and Present*](#)
3. [*Georgia Stories: Sequoyah: A Georgia Biography*](#)
4. [*Georgia Stories: John Ross: A Georgia Biography*](#)
5. [*Georgia Stories: Trail of Tears*](#)