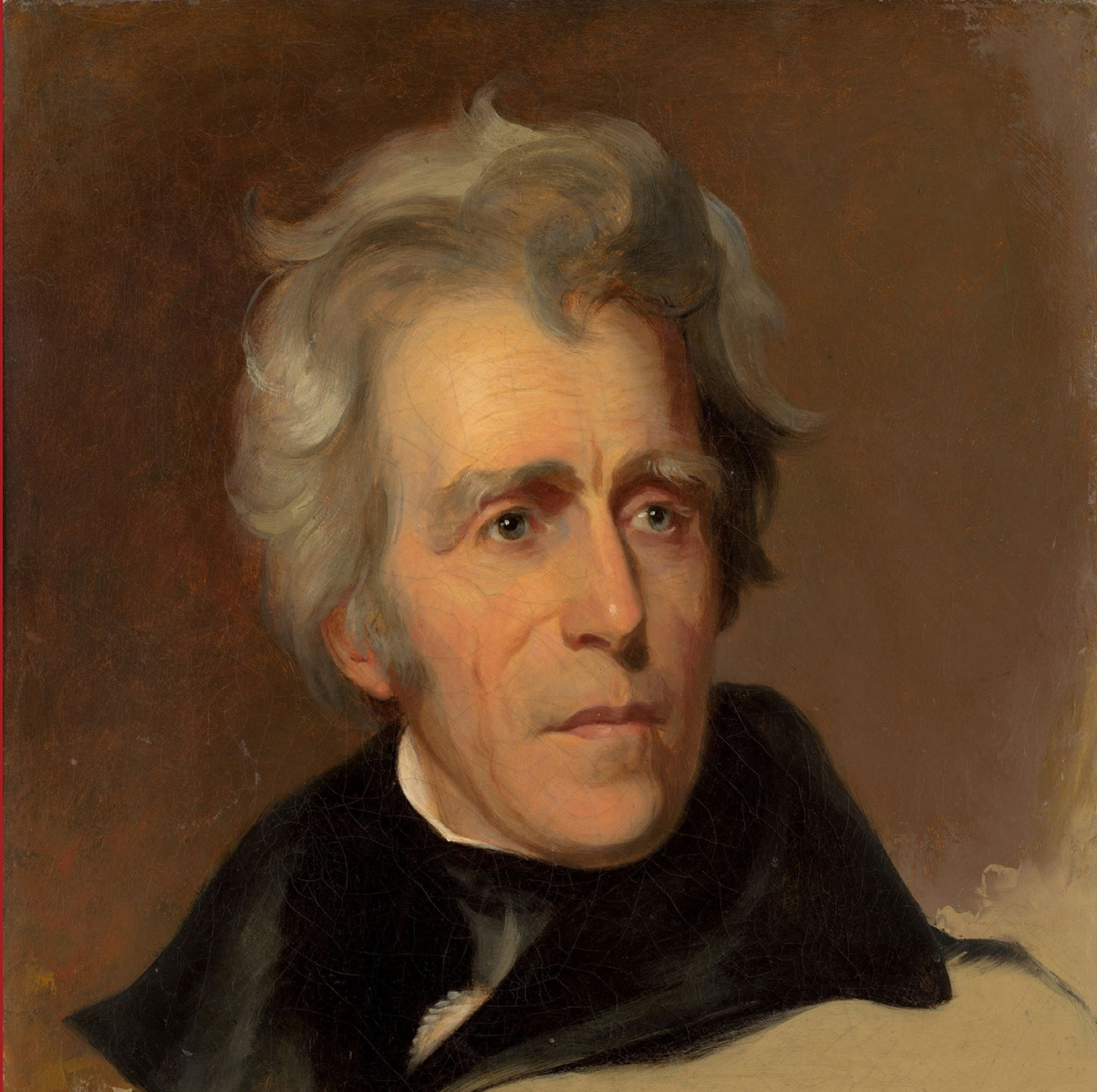


Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress on the Indian Removal Act of 1830



*Portrait of Andrew Jackson by Thomas Sully, oil on canvas, 1845.
(Andrew Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art)*

Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2014, updated in 2024)

Tim Bailey taught middle school and elementary school in Utah for over two decades. Named the 2009 National History Teacher of the Year, he is the Gilder Lehrman Institute's director of curriculum development and instructional design.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

RECOMMENDED TIME FOR COMPLETION: Five 45-minute class periods (although two lessons may be combined and/or assigned as homework)

UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on visual and textual primary source materials. These skills will enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate documents and other resources of historical significance.

Over the course of five lessons the students will read, analyze, and gain a clear understanding of Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress on December 6, 1830, specifically the section that addresses Indian Removal. The first four lessons require students to read excerpts from the message "like a detective." Employing summary organizers, practice, review, and discussion, they will master the technique of identifying keywords, creating summaries of excerpts and, as an assessment in the final lesson, writing an argumentative essay.

Students will be able to

- Close-read informational text proficiently
- Identify and explain the meaning of keywords and important phrases in a primary source text
- Explain and summarize the meaning of the text, on both literal and inferential levels, through the proficient completion of four summary organizers
- Develop and draw conclusions based on textual evidence
- Write persuasive or argumentative essay that explains and evaluates the evidence in the primary source text
- Collaborate effectively with classmates regarding analysis and assessment of an author's arguments and viewpoints

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did Andrew Jackson justify a policy of removing Indigenous peoples from their land?
- What compensation for Indigenous peoples did Andrew Jackson argue was fair and appropriate?
- How did Andrew Jackson describe Indigenous peoples?

- Whose interests did Indian removal policy best serve?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6: Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social studies.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.8: Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author's claims.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

MATERIALS

- Excerpts from President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, Presidential Messages, 1789–1875; Records of the US Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives, catalog.archives.gov/id/5682743
- Summary Organizers 1–4
- Creating an Essay: Analyzing Jackson's Message to Congress

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Andrew Jackson, Democracy, and Indian Removal Policy

by Lisa Andersen, The Gilder Lehrman Institute and Fordham University

Andrew Jackson was President of the United States from 1829 to 1837. He governed during an era in which land, even more than education, made economic mobility possible. People who owned land could build farms or plantations. They could use family labor and enslaved people's labor to achieve financial independence. Increasing White families' access to land in the West and the South was the lynch pin securing the Jackson administration's core ambition: advancing equality among White men.

Jackson's political ideals were an outgrowth of his personal experiences. He had grown up poor but became a lawyer specializing in debt collection. He had a second career in the military and a third as a slaveholding plantation owner. To Jackson, the relationship between economic mobility and political power was obvious and odious: political power created economic opportunities, and wealth secured political influence. Jackson drew upon the Democratic Party to channel support for populist policies such as ending the national bank (which seemingly favored a moneyed elite over the public good), extending suffrage even to White men who didn't own property (a change embraced in all but three states by 1840), and reducing the tariff (a tax on imports that arguably benefited manufacturers at the expense of farmers and plantation owners). Historians call this attack on elite authority "Jacksonian democracy."

But what about people who weren't White men? Many White people shared Jackson's assumption that their interests and those of Native Americans were mutually exclusive. First and foremost, both groups wanted to control land that had traditionally belonged to Native peoples. When Jackson's 1830 Message to Congress described removing Native peoples from their land as a "benevolent" alternative to the "danger of collision," he reinforced many Americans' assumption that "waves of population and civilization . . . rolling to the westward" was inevitable.

What distinguished Jackson, even when compared to other White Americans, was that he went beyond favoring White people's interests to the point of completely disregarding the Native peoples' lives. Indian removal had obvious dangers: it involved a journey of 800 miles, sometimes on foot, sometimes during the winter, for even children and the elderly. Thousands of Creek, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Seminole, and Choctaw people would die on the Trail of Tears (1830–1850). Yet, in his Message to Congress, Jackson dismissed as a petty concern the fact that Indigenous peoples did not want to "leave the graves of their fathers" and take up life in a "new abode." His claim to "benevolent" intentions rang hollow in the context of what he proposed.

Some historians have mused that Jackson's contempt for Native Americans was a relic of his military experience. He had previously commanded troops against the Creek and Seminole nations. Whatever the reason for his disdain, Jackson's description of the nations he planned to remove—that of people with "savage habits"—used a racist word to promote an inaccurate portrayal. The Cherokee people living in Georgia, for example, had similar lifestyles to the White people who wanted their land. They were overwhelmingly literate, lived on farms, relied on enslaved people's labor, and had a written constitution. Many were Methodist or Baptist. They did not need to be "under the protection of the Government" to become "interesting, civilized, and Christian."

Andrew Jackson's speech misrepresented the US government's underlying motivations and the harm that this policy would cause. Yet the speech is an important primary source not in spite of the fact that it is misleading and inaccurate, but because of it. This speech presents critical thinkers with an extraordinary opportunity to observe the interplay between pro- and anti-democratic impulses in the 1830s.

Lisa M. F. Andersen, PhD, is director of academic strategy at the Gilder Lehrman Institute and an adjunct professor at Fordham University.

LESSON 1

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2014, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will do a close reading of the first section of President Andrew Jackson's message to Congress concerning the Indian Removal Act of 1830, given in December 1830. The students will have the opportunity to draw conclusions about President Jackson's words and ideas as expressed in this document. The learning activities will be facilitated as a whole-class lesson.

Tim Bailey taught middle school and elementary school in Utah for over two decades. Named the 2009 National History Teacher of the Year, he is the Gilder Lehrman Institute's director of curriculum development and instructional design.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze President Andrew Jackson's 1830 message to Congress on Indian removal.

MATERIALS

- Excerpt from President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, Presidential Messages, 1789–1875; Records of the US Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives, catalog.archives.gov/id/5682743
- Summary Organizer 1: President Jackson on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute copies of President Andrew Jackson's message to Congress concerning the Indian Removal Act of 1830, and ask the students to read it silently to themselves. Resist providing extensive historical background at this point as the goal is for the students to develop ideas and draw conclusions based solely on Jackson's words.
2. "Share read" the document with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while you begin to read aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Then ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to read aloud, still serving as the model. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English language learners (ELL).
3. Explain that the students will learn how to do in-depth analysis for themselves by reading, understanding, and summarizing President Jackson's views on Indian removal from his 1830 Annual Message to Congress. In this first lesson, the whole class will work together to summarize the first selection from the text.
4. Distribute copies of Summary Organizer 1 and display it in a format large enough for the whole class to see. This activity sheet contains the first section of the Jackson's message on the Indian Removal Act.
5. Describe the process for the class: The first objective is to select "keywords" from the text and use those words to create a summary sentence that gets at the gist of what Jackson was saying.
 - a. Guidelines for Selecting the Keywords: Keywords are important contributors to understanding the text. They are usually nouns or verbs. Advise students not to pick "connector" words (*are, is, the, and, so, etc.*). The number of keywords depends on the length of the paragraph. This excerpt is 155 words; therefore, students should select 7 to 8 keywords. Since the students must know the meaning of the words they choose, you will have opportunities to teach students how to use context clues, word analysis, and dictionary skills to discover word meanings.

- b. The students should now select 7 to 8 words that they believe are keywords and circle or highlight them or write them in the Keywords section of the organizer.
 - c. Survey the class to find out what the most popular choices were. You can write them down and have the class discuss the options and vote on the final choice, based on guidance from you. For example, the class could select the following words: *announce*, *benevolent policy* (short phrases can be selected if they represent a single idea), *removal*, *Indians*, *advantages*, *United States*, *danger*, and *savage hunters*. Now, no matter which words the students had previously selected, have them write the words agreed upon by the class or chosen by you into the Keywords section.
6. Explain to the class that they will use these keywords to write a sentence that summarizes the meaning of the first selection from the text. This keyword summary sentence should be developed through a whole-class discussion and negotiation. The students might decide they don't need some of the words to make the sentence even more streamlined. This is part of the negotiation process. Their summary using Jackson's words might be "I would like to announce a benevolent policy for the removal of the Indians with advantages for the United States and the savage hunters." The students will copy the final negotiated sentence into the Keyword Summary section of the organizer.
 7. Guide the students in restating the summary sentence in their own words, not having to use the keywords from the text. Again, this is a class negotiation process. They might say, for example, "I want to talk about a way to move the Indians that's good for us and them." This sentence should be copied into the In Your Own Words section of the organizer.
 8. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or on a separate vocabulary form.

LESSON 2

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2014, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will do a close reading of the second section of President Andrew Jackson's message to Congress concerning the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the students will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary and then restating that summary in their own words. In this lesson the students will work with partners and in small groups.

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GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze President Andrew Jackson's 1830 message to Congress on Indian removal.

MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer 2: President Jackson on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

PROCEDURE

1. Lead a discussion of what the class learned in the previous lesson and what they determined was the meaning of the first excerpt from President Jackson's message. Explain that they will continue to work on the text with partners and in small groups.
2. Distribute Summary Organizer 2 and share read the text as described in Lesson 1.
3. Review the procedure from Lesson 1, reminding students that they will select keywords from the text, use the keywords to summarize the text, and then restate the summary in their own words. Because this excerpt is longer (207 words), the students should select 9 to 10 keywords.
4. Pair students up to complete the first task. Each pair should negotiate the selection of 9 to 10 keywords and write their list in the Keywords section of the organizer.
5. Now put each pair of students into a group of four. These groups should then repeat the same negotiation process to finalize a list of 9 to 10 keywords and write that new list into the Keywords section. Circulate to ensure that all groups are negotiating successfully and choosing appropriate words.
6. Each group will use the selected words to build a sentence that summarizes Jackson's message in this part of the text. Circulate among the groups to monitor their progress and to make sure that all students are contributing to the activity.
7. Have the groups share out their summary sentences. This should act as a catalyst for a discussion that points out the qualities of the various sentences: How careful were the students to use Jackson's keywords in the summary? How successful were the students in recognizing Jackson's main ideas?
8. Each group will now restate the summary sentence in their own words. Again, this is a group negotiation process. After they have decided on a sentence, they should write the final version into their organizers.

9. Have the groups share out and discuss the clarity and quality of the restatements.
10. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or on a separate vocabulary form.

LESSON 3

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2014, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will do a close reading of the third section from President Andrew Jackson's message to Congress concerning the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the students will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary and then restating that summary in their own words. In this lesson the students will work individually unless you believe they need another day of support from a partner or small group.

Tim Bailey taught middle school and elementary school in Utah for over two decades. Named the 2009 National History Teacher of the Year, he is the Gilder Lehrman Institute's director of curriculum development and instructional design.

GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze President Andrew Jackson's 1830 message to Congress on Indian removal.

MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer 3: President Jackson on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

PROCEDURE

1. Briefly discuss the text summaries the students came up with in the previous lessons and the meaning of Jackson's message to this point.
2. You may choose to have the students work individually or with a partner if they need the extra support.
3. Hand out Summary Organizer 3, which contains the third excerpt from Jackson's message. They can read the text to themselves or you can share read the text as described in Lesson 1.
4. Review the process of selecting keywords, writing a summary using those keywords, and then restating the summary in their own words.
5. Because this excerpt is 222 words, the students can pick up to 10 keywords.
6. Have the students select their keywords and write their keyword summaries and restatements.
7. Have the students share out their restated summaries and discuss the clarity and quality of the different interpretations of Jackson's message.
8. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult; they can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or a separate vocabulary form.

LESSON 4

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2014, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will do a close reading of the fourth section of President Andrew Jackson's message to Congress concerning the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Through reading and analyzing the original text, the students will know what is explicitly stated, draw logical inferences, and demonstrate these skills by writing a succinct summary and then restating that summary in their own words. In this lesson the students will work individually.

MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer 4: President Jackson on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

PROCEDURE

1. Briefly discuss the summaries the students came up with in the previous three lessons.
2. Hand out Summary Organizer 4, which contains the fourth excerpt from President Jackson's message to Congress. They can read the text to themselves or you can share read the text as described in Lesson 1.
3. Review the process of selecting keywords, writing a summary using those keywords, and then restating the summary in their own words. Tell the students that they will be working on their own again to summarize this part of the text.
4. Because this paragraph is 227 words in length, the students can pick 10 keywords.
5. Have the students share out their restated summaries and discuss the clarity and quality of the different interpretations of Jackson's views.
6. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or a separate vocabulary form.

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GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze President Andrew Jackson's 1830 message to Congress on Indian removal.

LESSON 5

BY TIM BAILEY (created in 2014, updated in 2024)

OVERVIEW

This lesson has two objectives. First, the students will synthesize the work of the last four lessons and demonstrate that they understand President Andrew Jackson's message to Congress about the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Second, they will answer a question in a short persuasive or argumentative essay that requires them to make inferences and support their conclusions with explicit information from the text.

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GRADE LEVELS: 7–12

TIME FOR COMPLETION: One 45-minute class period

UNIT OVERVIEW: This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute's Teaching Literacy through History™ (TLTH) resources, designed to align with the Common Core State Standards. Students will learn and practice skills that will help them analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned points of view on primary source materials. Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze President Andrew Jackson's 1830 message to Congress on Indian removal.

MATERIALS

- Excerpt from President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress of 1830
- Completed Summary Organizers 1–4
- Creating an Essay: Analyzing Jackson's Message to Congress on the Indian Removal Act

PROCEDURE

1. Distribute the full excerpt from President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress and ask the students to read it silently to themselves.
2. Ask the students for their best summary of the first section of the excerpt from Jackson's 1830 message to Congress. This is done as a class discussion. You may write this short sentence on the overhead or similar device. Follow the same procedure for the other three sections from the text. When you are finished, the students will have a summary of the text that will help them organize their essay.
3. Each student will write a short persuasive or argumentative essay addressing one of the prompts below. If the students are not familiar with writing an argumentative essay, you can lead a short lesson on the process, and then assign the essay for homework or for the next lesson. Remind the students that any arguments they make must be backed up with words taken directly from President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress. The first prompt is designed to be the easiest.

Prompts

- a. What arguments did President Jackson present to support the Indian Removal Act of 1830?
- b. President Andrew Jackson argued that this policy (Indian removal and resettlement) would be good for the American Indians. Explain how Jackson presented and defended this argument.
- c. Whose interests did Andrew Jackson advocate? Whose interests did he disregard? Use President Jackson's own words and statements to support your argument and viewpoint.

You may choose to distribute the Creating an Essay activity sheet to help the students organize their arguments and evidence.

Excerpt from President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress, 1830

It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent 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. 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 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 and State Governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of 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 strengthen the southwestern frontier and render the adjacent States strong enough to repel 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 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.

What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization and religion?

The present policy of the Government is but a continuation of the same progressive change by a milder process. The tribes which occupied the countries now constituting the Eastern States were annihilated or have melted away to make room for the whites. The waves of population and civilization are rolling to the westward, and we now propose to acquire the countries occupied by the red men of the South and West by a fair exchange, and, at the expense of the United States, to send them to land where their existence may be prolonged and perhaps made perpetual. Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they more than our ancestors did or than our children are now doing? To better their condition in an unknown land our forefathers left all that was dear in earthly objects. Our children by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth to seek new homes in distant regions. Does Humanity weep at these painful separations from everything, animate and inanimate, with which the young heart has become entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source of joy that our country affords scope where our young population may range unconstrained in body or in mind, developing the power and facilities of man in their highest perfection. These remove hundreds and almost thousands of miles at their own expense, purchase the lands they occupy, and support themselves at their new homes from the moment of their arrival. Can it be cruel in this Government when, by events which it can not control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home to purchase his lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode?

How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions! If the offers made to the Indians were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy.

And is it supposed that the wandering savage has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, civilized Christian? Is it more afflicting to him to leave the graves of his fathers than it is to our brothers and children? Rightly considered, the policy of the General Government toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous. He is unwilling to submit to the laws of the States and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.

From President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, Presidential Messages, 1789–1875; Records of the US Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives, catalog.archives.gov/id/5682743

NAME _____

PERIOD DATE _____

Summary Organizer 1: President Jackson on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

Original Text

It gives me pleasure to announce to Congress that the benevolent 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. 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 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 and State Governments on account of the Indians. It will place a dense and civilized population in large tracts of country now occupied by a few savage hunters. . . .

From President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, Presidential Messages, 1789–1875; Records of the US Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

NAME _____

PERIOD DATE _____

Summary Organizer 2: President Jackson on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

Original Text

By opening the whole territory between Tennessee on the north and Louisiana on the south to the settlement of the whites it will incalculably strengthen the southwestern frontier and render the adjacent States strong enough to repel 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 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. What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12,000,000 happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization and religion? . . .

From President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, Presidential Messages, 1789–1875; Records of the US Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

NAME _____ PERIOD DATE _____

Summary Organizer 3: President Jackson on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

Original Text

The present policy of the Government is but a continuation of the same progressive change by a milder process. The tribes which occupied the countries now constituting the Eastern States were annihilated or have melted away to make room for the whites. The waves of population and civilization are rolling to the westward, and we now propose to acquire the countries occupied by the red men of the South and West by a fair exchange, and, at the expense of the United States, to send them to land where their existence may be prolonged and perhaps made perpetual. Doubtless it will be painful to leave the graves of their fathers; but what do they more than our ancestors did or than our children are now doing? To better their condition in an unknown land our forefathers left all that was dear in earthly objects. Our children by thousands yearly leave the land of their birth to seek new homes in distant regions. Does Humanity weep at these painful separations from everything, animate and inanimate, with which the young heart has become entwined? Far from it. It is rather a source of joy that our country affords scope where our young population may range unconstrained in body or in mind, developing the power and facilities of man in their highest perfection. . . .

From President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, Presidential Messages, 1789–1875; Records of the US Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

NAME _____

PERIOD DATE _____

Summary Organizer 4: President Jackson on the Indian Removal Act of 1830

Original Text

These remove hundreds and almost thousands of miles at their own expense, purchase the lands they occupy, and support themselves at their new homes from the moment of their arrival. Can it be cruel in this Government when, by events which it can not control, the Indian is made discontented in his ancient home to purchase his lands, to give him a new and extensive territory, to pay the expense of his removal, and support him a year in his new abode?

How many thousands of our own people would gladly embrace the opportunity of removing to the West on such conditions! If the offers made to the Indians were extended to them, they would be hailed with gratitude and joy.

And is it supposed that the wandering savage has a stronger attachment to his home than the settled, civilized Christian? Is it more afflicting to him to leave the graves of his fathers than it is to our brothers and children? Rightly considered, the policy of the General Government toward the red man is not only liberal, but generous. He is unwilling to submit to the laws of the States and mingle with their population. To save him from this alternative, or perhaps utter annihilation, the General Government kindly offers him a new home, and proposes to pay the whole expense of his removal and settlement.

From President Andrew Jackson's Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1830, Presidential Messages, 1789–1875; Records of the US Senate, Record Group 46; National Archives.

Keywords

Keyword Summary

In Your Own Words

NAME

PERIOD DATE

Creating an Essay: Analyzing Jackson's Message to Congress on the Indian Removal Act

Select one of the following questions as an essay prompt. Support your response with evidence from the message to Congress.

1. What arguments did President Jackson present to support the Indian Removal Act of 1830?
2. President Andrew Jackson argued that this policy (Indian removal and resettlement) would be good for the American Indians. Explain how Jackson presented and defended this argument.
3. Whose interests did Andrew Jackson advocate? Whose interests did he disregard? Use President Jackson's own words and statements to support your argument and viewpoint.

Topic Sentence or Paragraph:

Evidence:

Evidence:

Evidence:

Concluding Sentence or Paragraph: