

Trail of Tears Stations: Response Sheet

HANDOUT

Guiding Questions

- How did the acquisition of new territories impact the nation's growth and development?
- How did westward expansion impact Native American tribes, and what were the consequences of these interactions?

Objectives

- ☐ I can describe how U.S. expansion affected Native American communities.
- ☐ I can analyze primary sources to explain the consequences of westward expansion.

Background Information

In the early 1800s, the United States was growing rapidly. As more Americans moved west in search of land, opportunity, and wealth, the U.S. government began to see Native American lands as an obstacle to progress. The Indian Removal Act of 1830 gave the president the power to relocate Native American tribes living east of the Mississippi River to lands farther west. Although some tribes agreed to move, others—like the Cherokee—resisted, arguing they had the right to stay in their ancestral lands.

Despite legal battles and protests, thousands of Native Americans were forced to leave their homes. This journey, often made on foot under harsh conditions, became known as the Trail of Tears. It led to great suffering and the deaths of thousands of Native men, women, and children. The removal of tribes made more land available for white settlers, but it came at a tremendous cost.

Station 1: Indian Removal Act (1830)	Answers:
What power is the president given?	

How does this connect to U.S. expansion?	
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Station 2: Cherokee Petition to Congress (1836)	Answers:
What reasons do the Cherokee give for wanting to stay?	
What principles and virtues are they appealing to?	

Station 3: Map of the Trail of Tears Routes	Answers:
Which tribes were relocated?	
What challenges would these journeys have created?	

Station 4: Image: "American Progress"	Answers:
What message does the image convey about expansion?	
How might Native Americans have felt about this portrayal?	