



C.H. Nash Museum  
**CHUCALISSA**

The University of Memphis

# Activities to Complement Your Field Trip or Classroom Visit

Plans for Pre-K through 12th Grade

# INTRODUCTION

## About Chucalissa

The earthen mounds at Chucalissa were constructed and occupied between A.D. 1000-1500 by the people of the Mississippian culture who built platform mounds used for ceremonies and residences of high-ranking officials. The Mississippians lived in permanent villages with houses made of mud and thatch. Hunting, fishing and corn agriculture were staples of the Mississippian diet. Chucalissa's prehistoric Indians also participated in a vast trade network and a complex society.

## Pre-Visit Activities

The crafts, projects, and lessons in this packet are meant to introduce a variety of topics in archaeology and history by incorporating Native American culture. Your students will learn more about the specific site of Chucalissa during your field trip or classroom visit. We hope this guide will help you bring the spirit of the museum and site to your classroom, engage your students, and encourage all who are able to participate in our educational programs to make the most of them.



# TOPICS

## **Pre-K - Kindergarten**

### **Ceramics Symmetry Painting**

Students are introduced to Native American pottery while exploring symmetry.

Topics: pottery uses

Educational Focus: symmetry

## **1st - 2nd Grade**

### **Dreamcatchers Craft**

Students make their own dreamcatcher as they compare and contrast two Native American dreamcatcher legends.

Topics: dreamcatchers, legends

Educational Focus: compare and contrast, symbolism

## **3rd - 4th Grade**

### **Pottery Reconstruction**

Students learn about some of the difficulties archaeologists face when reconstructing artifacts.

Topics: archaeology, excavation, reconstruction

Educational Focus: problem-solving

## **5th - 6th Grade**

### **Trash Talks**

Like archaeologists, students investigate the items people leave behind to make inferences about their lifestyles.

Topics: archaeology, artifacts, stratigraphy

Educational Focus: deduction, critical thinking

## **7th - 8th Grade**

### **Dream Stories**

Students discover the significance of dreams in Native American culture and create their own dream story.

Topics: dreams, dream stories, vision quests

Educational Focus: text analysis, creative writing

## **9th - 12th Grade**

### **Trail of Tears**

Students examine first-person texts to understand multiple perspectives on the Trail of Tears.

Topics: Trail of Tears, Andrew Jackson

Educational Focus: text analysis, persuasive writing, critical thinking

*Most activities can be easily adapted to any grade level.*

*The grades above indicate the appropriate grade level if the activity is not modified.*

# CERAMICS SYMMETRY PAINTING

## Recommended Grades

Pre-K - Kindergarten

## Time Needed

20 minutes

## Materials

### Per student

- Pottery sheet
- Scissors

### Per table

- Paint (tempera works best)
- 1 paintbrush per paint color

## Teacher Prep Work

- Print outlines of a pot on thick paper, if possible.
- Pre-fold the outlines in half.
- Set up the tables: put the paint in open containers and place a paintbrush in each container.
- Prepare pictures or props of things that are symmetrical.
- Make an example to show the students.
- Prepare pictures of Native American pottery, if desired.

Students are introduced to Native American pottery while exploring symmetry.

## Discussion Areas

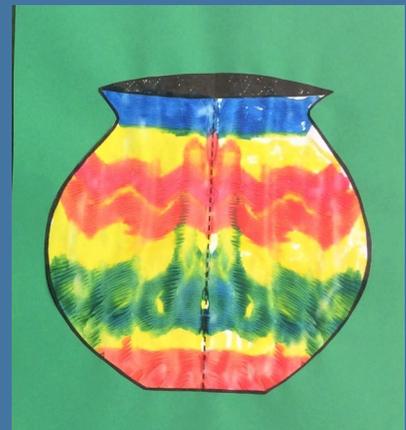
- What did Native Americans use pots for? They used pots for cooking, serving food, storing food, and even carrying water.
- What is symmetry? Symmetry is when something is the same on both sides.
- What kinds of things are symmetrical? Shapes such as squares, triangles, and hearts look the same on both sides. Butterflies and our own bodies are also examples.

## Before You Begin

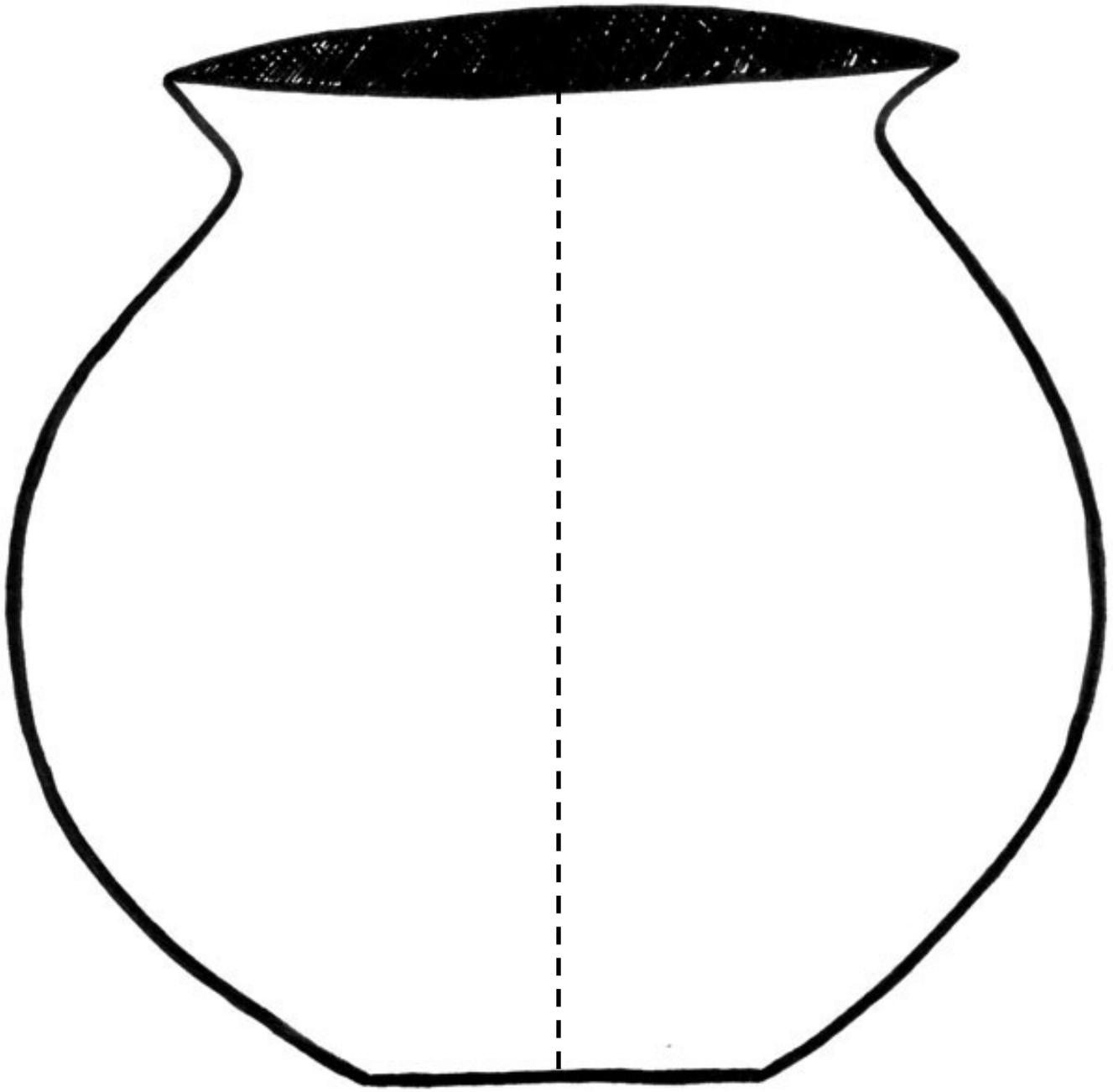
1. Explain what symmetry is and provide some examples with photos or props. Ask for additional examples.
2. Tell students that pots are often symmetrical. Show them your example. Let students know that they will be creating their own symmetrical pot using wet paint.

## Instructions

1. Have students paint only one side of their pot. They may use the paint generously.
2. When they are finished creating their designs, help students re-fold their pot in half. Ask them to press down the dry side to the wet, painted side.
3. Have students open their papers back up.
4. Point out the symmetry of their painting.
5. When the painting is dry, students can cut their pots out, if desired.



# POTTERY TEMPLATE



# DREAMCATCHER CRAFT

## Recommended Grades

1st - 2nd grade

## Time Needed

30 minutes

## Materials

### Per student

- Paper plate
- String
- Markers
- Beads
- Feathers (optional)

### Tools

- Single hole punch

## Teacher Prep Work

- Cut out the middle of the paper plates.
- Use the hole punch to create one hole at the top and three holes at the bottom of the plate.
- Use the hole punch to make 10 holes around the inner circle of the plate.



Photo from <http://createartwithme.blogspot.com/2012/07/super-simple-dream-catcher-from-paper.html>

Students make their own dreamcatcher as they compare and contrast two Native American dreamcatcher legends.

## Discussion Areas

- What are dreamcatchers? Native Americans believe they protect people from bad dreams.
- What are some similarities between the Ojibwe and Lakota legends? Both legends' main character is a spider who spins a web to capture dreams. Both webs are used at night to filter dreams.
- What are some differences between the legends? In the Ojibwe legend, the spider's web ensnares bad dreams, allowing good dreams to pass to the dreamer. In the Lakota legend, the spider's web captures good dreams for the dreamer, allowing only bad dreams to pass and burn up.
- What is symbolism? It is when an idea or feeling is represented by something else such as a picture or object.

## Before You Begin

1. Inform students that they will be hearing two short legends about dreamcatchers and that they should pay close attention to the similarities and differences in the stories.
2. Read the two legends aloud. Ask students about the purpose of dreamcatchers. Conduct a discussion of the similarities and differences between the two stories. Make a Venn diagram, if desired.
3. Show students a picture of a traditional dreamcatcher. Ask students about symbolism. What could a single bead on a dreamcatcher mean? The string tied around the hoop?

## Instructions

1. Have students tie a string to the top hole. This will hold the dreamcatcher up later on.
2. Ask students to secure another piece of string to one of the inner holes. Then tell students to weave the string through the holes in a back and forth pattern so that the string reaches across the middle of the dreamcatcher. String a bead on the string prior to finishing. Once finished, secure the string to another inner hole and cut the excess string.
3. If desired, add beads and feathers using string to the bottom of the dreamcatcher.

# DREAMCATCHER LEGENDS

## AN OJIBWE LEGEND

A grandmother watched patiently each day as a spider spun his web above her sleeping place until one day her grandson noticed the spider and tried to kill it.

“Don’t hurt him,” she told the boy in a soft tone, surprising him.

“But grandmother, you should not protect this spider.”

When the grandson left, the spider thanked the woman for her protection and offered her a gift. “I will spin you a web that hangs between you and the moon so that when you dream, it will snare the bad thoughts and keep them from you.”

At this, grandmother smiled and continued to watch the spider spin his web.

## A LAKOTA LEGEND

While receiving a spiritual vision high on a mountain, a Lakota leader met Iktomi, a trickster who also held great wisdom. Appearing to the leader in the form of a spider, Iktomi made a hoop of willow and spun a web inside of it.

He told the aged Lakota man that many forces, both bright and dark would attempt to enter peoples’ dreams and that the dream catcher he was making would catch the bright forces and allow the dark ones to slip away and burn up. Iktomi instructed the old man to make dream catchers for his people so they could all achieve a bright future by capturing the good dreams that are blown about by the winds of the night.

## DREAMCATCHER SYMBOLISM

**Hoop:** some believe it is the circle of life

**Web:** the spider’s web

**Bead:** the spider that made the web

**Feather:** some believe it is a soft ladder for the good dream to slide down to the dreamer

# POTTERY RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

## Recommended Grades

3rd - 4th grade

## Time Needed

45 minutes

## Materials

### Per student

- Paper with pottery outline
- Construction paper
- Colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue

## Teacher Prep Work

- Print the pottery sheets.
- Print examples of pottery.



Students learn about some of the difficulties archaeologists face when reconstructing artifacts.

## Discussion Areas

- How do archaeologists gain information about past peoples? Archaeologists excavate sites and gather artifacts.
- What are some common artifacts found at Native American sites? Archaeologists find projectile points such as arrowheads, parts of weapons, stone tools, and pottery.
- What might be some challenges archaeologists face when reconstructing artifacts? Because the artifacts that archaeologists excavate are very old, sometimes they are unable to reconstruct an entire object. In addition, piecing together a broken object can be much like putting together a puzzle without a picture.

## Before You Begin

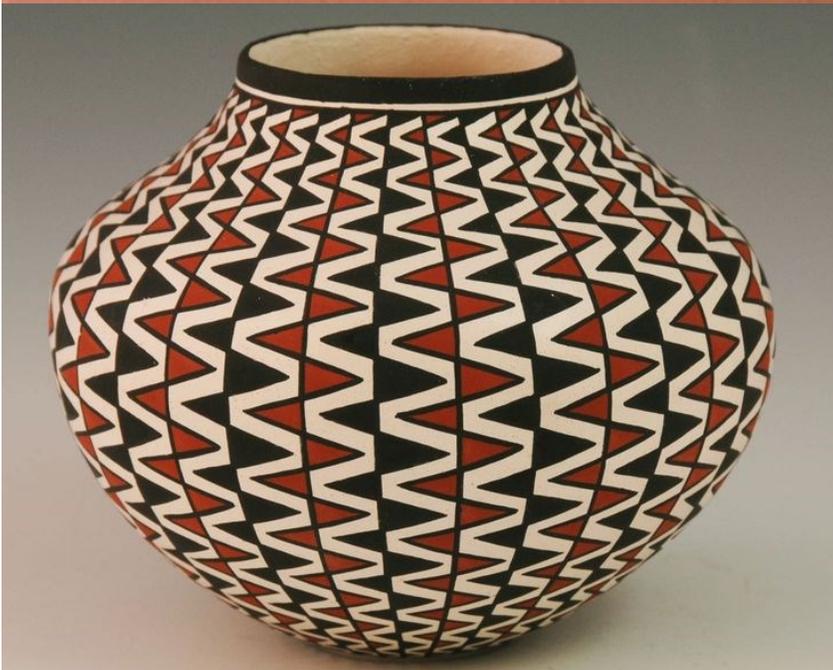
1. Give students a brief introduction to archaeology and Native American pottery.
2. Show students photos of pottery, paying close attention to colors and patterns.
3. Divide the students into groups of 3 people.

## Instructions

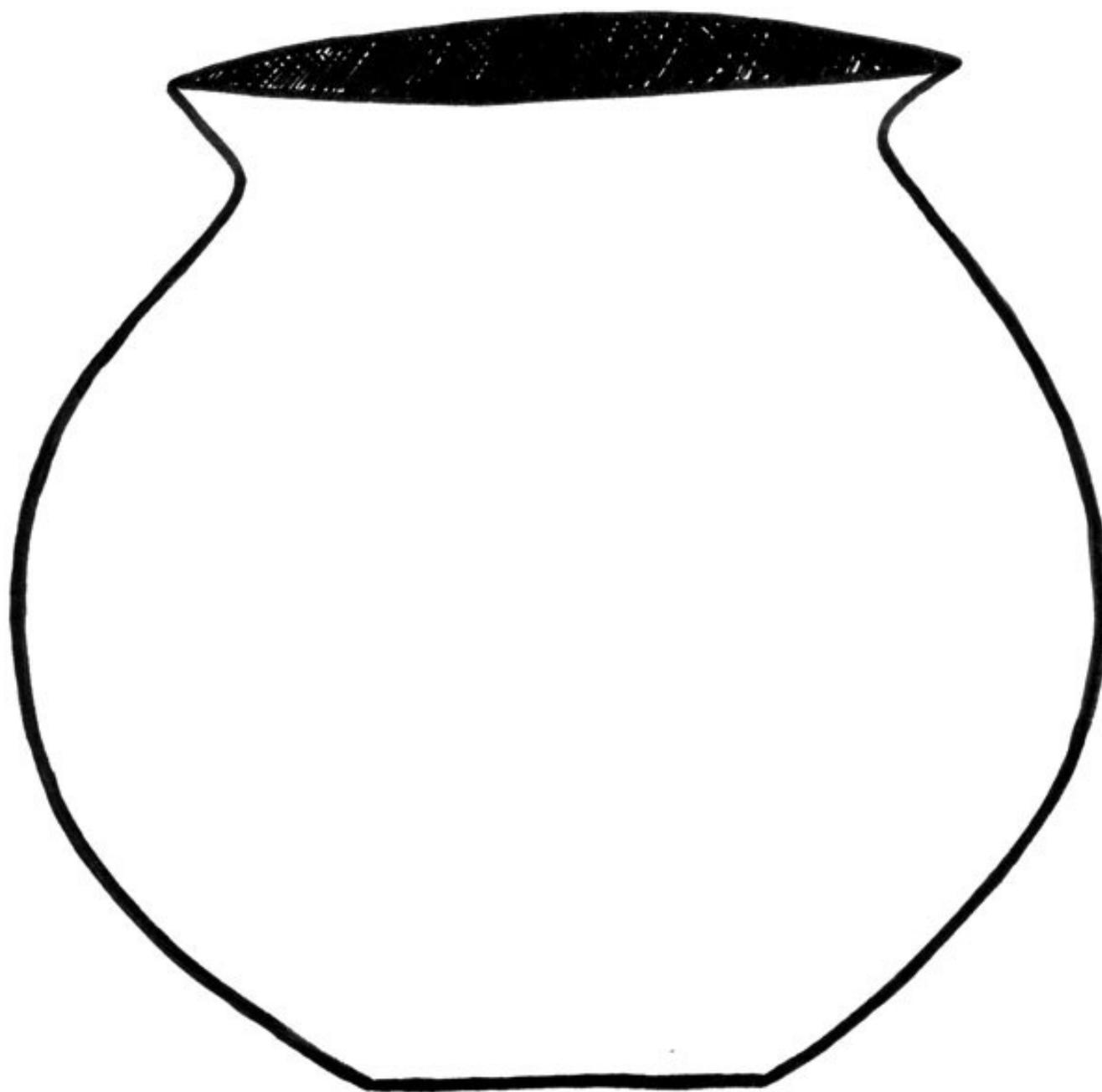
1. Ask students to use colored pencils to decorate their pottery.
2. Have students cut out their pottery and then tear it into approximately 1-inch pieces. Each group should mix their pottery pieces into one big pile.
3. Instruct groups to trade their “pottery sherds” with another group. Ask them to reconstruct the pottery by gluing them onto construction paper.



# POTTERY STYLES



# POTTERY TEMPLATE



# TRASH TALKS

## Recommended Grades

5th & 6th grade

## Time Needed

1 hour

## Materials

### Per student

- Gloves
- Pencil

### Per group of 3-5 students

- Sanitary items that might be found in a trash can from a specific location
- Large container to hold items
- Artifact Documentation sheet
- Trash Talks Questions sheet

## Teacher Prep Work

- Prepare the trash items and put them into containers. See the following pages for ideas.
- Print the Artifact Documentation sheet and Trash Talks Questions sheet.
- Set up the tables: each group should have surface to spread out the artifacts and record their findings.

Like archaeologists, students investigate the items people leave behind to make inferences about their lifestyles.

## Discussion Areas

- What is archaeology? Archaeology is the study of human history and prehistory through the excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts.
- What is an artifact? An artifact is anything that is made or modified by humans. What kind of artifacts do we leave behind today? We leave behind our trash! Much of what archaeologists study is prehistoric and historic trash because that is what people are most likely to abandon at a site.
- How do archaeologists gain information about past peoples? Archaeologists pull together artifacts like puzzle pieces to try to create a story of the past. What can we learn from artifacts? We can learn about past cultures, diet, lifestyles, relationships, what kinds of tools they were using, and sometimes what they believed.
- In a trash can, which artifacts would be most recent? The oldest? The items on top are the most recent, and the items on the bottom are the oldest. How do archaeologists use that information when excavating a site? Archaeologists use stratigraphy, the study of layers in the soil, to figure out the age of artifacts and thereby the age of the site!

## Before You Begin

1. Give students a brief introduction to archaeology and use the above discussion questions as a guide.
2. Tell students that they are going to act as archaeologists from the future. They will examine trash to learn about someone's life.

## Instructions

1. Allow students to put on gloves and then go through the trash.
2. Have students record each item on their artifact documentation sheet and record observations.
3. Ask students to answer their Trash Talks Questions.
4. Have students share their findings at the end of the class period.

If you prefer to do this during your field trip to the C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa, this lesson is offered as a program at Chucalissa. We are also able to bring this program to you during an off-site visit.





# ARTIFACT DOCUMENTATION

**Artifact**

**Observations**

1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____
7.	_____	_____
8.	_____	_____
9.	_____	_____
10.	_____	_____
11.	_____	_____
12.	_____	_____
13.	_____	_____
14.	_____	_____
15.	_____	_____
16.	_____	_____
17.	_____	_____
18.	_____	_____
19.	_____	_____
20.	_____	_____



# DREAM STORIES WRITING PROJECT

## Recommended Grades

7th - 8th grade

## Time Needed

1 hour

## Materials

### Per student

- Paper
- Pencil

### Per class

- Copies of dream story passages

## Additional Recommended Text

- The Boy Who Dreamed of an Acorn* by Leigh Casler

## Teacher Prep Work

- Print copies of the dream story passages

Students discover the significance of dreams in Native American culture and create their own dream story.

## Discussion Areas

- *What is a dream story?* It is the story of a dream that reveals a purpose or a prophecy of the dreamer. Dreams often allow the dreamer to learn something about himself or herself. Sometimes a dream sheds light on the dreamer's role in their community, their greatest strengths or skills, or their path in life.
- *What is the significance of dreams in Native American culture?* Native Americans believed that dreams should not be ignored. Dreams were a way for the spirit world to speak to a person.
- *What is a vision quest?* A rite of passage for a boy reaching adulthood, young men fast at a sacred site in nature in the hopes of having a vision that enlightens their purpose in life. Vision quests are a common subject of dream stories.

## Before You Begin

1. Ask students if they know of any cultures that place significance in dreams. Does their own culture place importance in dreams or have legends about dreams?
2. Tell students that dreams have great meaning in Native American culture. Let them know they will read several dream stories, legends from a variety of tribes.

## Instructions

1. Have students read 2-3 passages. They can read the texts aloud as a class, in groups, or independently.
2. Ask students how dreams are interpreted in Native American culture. Why are they significant? Ask students to define a vision quest.
3. Have students write their own dream story. The subject could be themselves or a fictional character, but the dream must reveal something important to the dreamer.

# CREATION STORY: AN ABENAKI LEGEND

The Great Spirit, in a time not known to us, looked about and saw nothing. No colors, no beauty. Time was silent in darkness. There was no sound. Nothing could be seen or felt. The Great Spirit decided to fill this space with light and life.

From his great power, he commanded the sparks of creation. He ordered Tôlba, the Great Turtle, to come from the waters and become the land. The Great Spirit molded the mountains and the valleys on the turtle's back. He put white clouds into the blue skies. He was very happy. He said, "Everything is ready now. I will fill this place with the happy movement of life." He thought and thought about what kind of creatures he would make.

Where would they live? What would they do? What would their purpose be? He wanted a perfect plan. He thought so hard that he became very tired and fell asleep.

His sleep was filled with dreams of his creation. He saw strange things in his dream. He saw animals crawling on four legs, some on two. Some creature flew with wings, some swam with fins. There were plants of all colors, covering the ground everywhere. Insects buzzed around, dogs barked, birds sang, and human beings called to each other. Everything seemed out of place. The Great Spirit thought he was having a bad dream. He thought, nothing could be this imperfect.

When the Great Spirit awakened, he saw a beaver nibbling on a branch. He realized the world of his dream became his creation. Everything he dreamed about came true. When he saw the beaver make his home, and a dam to provide a pond for his family to swim in, he then knew everything had its place and purpose in the time to come.

It has been told among our people from generation to generation. We must not question our dreams. They are our creation.

*Source: <http://www.firstpeople.us/FP-HTML-Legends/AbenakiCreationStoryandTheImportanceofDreaming-Abenaki.html>*

# THE DREAM FAST: AN OJIBWE LEGEND

Long ago, as it still is today, it was the custom for a boy who reached a certain age to go into the forest and wait for a dream. He would build a small lodge and go without food for many days in the hope he would be visited by some animal or spirit of the forest that would take pity on him and give guidance and power.

There was a boy named Opichi who reached that age. Opichi's father was very respected in the village and he was determined that his son would be given a dream of such power that no one else could compare with him. So eager was the father for his son to get power that he insisted the boy go on his dream fast before the last snow left the ground, even though most boys would wait until the time when the ground was warm and the leaves returned to the trees.

"My son is strong," said the father. "He will go now. He will gain greater strength from the cold."

Opichi was a boy who always wished to please his parents and so he did as his father said. They went together into the forest and the father selected a spot on top of a small hill. There Opichi made a small lean-to of saplings, covering it with hemlock boughs. He sat beneath it on the bare ground with a thin piece of deerskin wrapped about his shoulders.

"I will return each day at dawn," the father said. "You will tell me then what you have seen."

That night the north wind, the icy breath of the Great Bear, blew cold. Opichi's mother was concerned, but the father did not worry. "My son is strong," he said. "This cold wind will make his vision a better one."

When the morning came, he went to the lean-to and shook the poles. "My son," he said, "tell me what you have seen."

Opichi crawled out and looked up at his father. "Father," the boy said, "a deer came to the lodge and spoke to me."

"That is good," said the father. "But you must continue to fast. Surely a greater vision will come to you."

"I will continue to watch and wait," Opichi said.

Opichi's father left his son and went back to his lodge. That night a light snow fell. "I'm worried about our son," said Opichi's mother.

"Do not worry," said the father. "The snow will only make whatever dream comes to him more powerful."

When morning came, the father went into the forest again, climbed the hill and shook the poles, calling his son out.

"Father," Opichi said as he emerged, shaking from the cold, "last night a beaver came to me. It taught me a song."

"That is good," said the father. "You are doing well. You will gain even more power if you stay longer."

"I will watch and wait," said the boy.

So it went for four more days. Each morning his father asked Opichi what he had seen. Each time the boy told of his experiences from the night before. Now hawk and wolf, bear and eagle had visited the boy. Each day Opichi looked thinner and weaker, but he agreed to stay and wait for an ever-greater vision to please his father.

At last, on the morning of the seventh day, Opichi's mother spoke to her husband. "Our son has waited long enough in the forest. I will go with you this morning and we will bring him home."

Opichi's mother and father went together into the forest. The gentle breath of the Fawn, the warm south wind of spring, had blown during the night and all the snow had melted away. As they climbed the hill, they heard a birdsong coming from above them. It was a song they had never heard before. It sounded almost like the name of their son. Opi chi chi. Opi chi chi.

When they reached the lodge, Opichi's father shook the poles. "My son," he said, "it is time to end your fast. It is time to come home."

There was no answer. Opichi's mother and father bent down to look into the small lean-to of hemlock boughs and saplings. As they did so, a bird came flying out. It was gray and black with a red chest. Opi chi chi. Opi chi chi.

So it sang as it perched on a branch above them. Then it spoke.

"My parents," said the bird, "you see me as I am now. The one who was your son is gone. You sent him out too early and asked him to wait for power too long. Now I will return each spring when the gentle breath of the Fawn comes to our land. My song will let people know it is the time for a boy to go on his dream fast. But your words must help to remind his parents not to make their son stay out too long."

Then, singing that song which was the name of their son, the robin flew off into the forest.

*Source: <http://www.native-languages.org/ojibwestory2.htm>*

# ORIGIN OF THE INDIAN CORN: AN OJIBWE LEGEND

In times past, a poor Indian was living with his wife and children in a beautiful part of the country. He was not only poor, but inexpert in procuring food for his family, and his children were all too young to give him assistance. Although poor, he was a man of a kind and contented disposition. He was always thankful to the Great Spirit for everything he received. The same disposition was inherited by his eldest son, who had now arrived at the proper age to undertake the ceremony of the Ke-ig-uish-im-o-win, or fast, to see what kind of a spirit would be his guide and guardian through life. Wunzh, for this was his name, had been an obedient boy from his infancy, and was of a pensive, thoughtful, and mild disposition, so that he was beloved by the whole family.

As soon as the first indications of spring appeared, they built him the customary little lodge, at a retired spot some distance from their own, where he would not be disturbed during this solemn rite. In the meantime he prepared himself, and immediately went into it and commenced his fast. The first few days he amused himself in the mornings by walking in the woods and over the mountains, examining the early plants and flowers, and in this way prepared himself to enjoy his sleep, and, at the same time, stored his mind with pleasant ideas for his dreams. While he rambled through the woods, he felt a strong desire to know how the plants, herbs, and berries grew, without any aid from man, and why it was that some species were good to eat, and others possessed medicinal or poisonous juices.

He recalled these thoughts to mind after he became too languid to walk about, and had confined himself strictly to the lodge; he wished he could dream of something that would prove a benefit to his father and family, and to all others. "True!" he thought, "the Great Spirit made all things, and it is to him that we owe our lives. But could he not make it easier for us to get our food, than by hunting animals and taking fish? I must try to find out this in my visions."

On the third day he became weak and faint, and kept his bed. He fancied, while thus lying, that he saw a handsome young man coming down from the sky and advancing towards him. He was richly and gaily dressed, having on a great many garments of green and yellow colors, but differing in their deeper or lighter shades. He had a plume of waving feathers on his head, and all his motions were graceful.

"I am sent to you, my friend," said the celestial visitor, "by that Great Spirit who made all things in the sky and on the earth. He has seen and knows your motives in fasting. He sees that it is from a kind and benevolent wish to do good to your people, and to procure a benefit for them, and that you do not seek for strength in war or the praise of warriors. I am sent to instruct you, and show you how you can do your kindred good." He then told the young man to arise, and prepare to wrestle with him, as it was only by this means that he could hope to succeed in his wishes. Wunzh knew he was weak from fasting, but he felt his courage rising in his heart, and immediately got up, determined to die rather than fail. He commenced the trial, and, after a protracted effort, was almost exhausted, when the beautiful stranger said, "My friend, it is enough for once; I will come again to try you;" and, smiling on him, he ascended in the air in the same direction from which he came.

The next day the celestial visitor reappeared at the same hour and renewed the trial. Wunzh felt that his strength was even less than the day before, but the courage of his mind seemed to increase in proportion as his body became weaker. Seeing this, the stranger again spoke to him in the same words he used before, adding, "Tomorrow will be your last trial. Be strong, my friend, for this is the only way you can overcome me, and obtain the boon you seek." On the third day he again appeared at the same time and renewed the struggle. The poor youth was very faint in body, but grew stronger in mind at every contest, and was determined to prevail or

perish in the attempt. He exerted his utmost powers, and after the contest had been continued the usual time, the stranger ceased his efforts and declared himself conquered. For the first time he entered the lodge, and sitting down beside the youth, he began to deliver his instructions to him, telling him in what manner he should proceed to take advantage of his victory.

"You have won your desires of the Great Spirit," said the stranger. "You have wrestled manfully. Tomorrow will be the seventh day of your fasting. Your father will give you food to strengthen you, and as it is the last day of trial, you will prevail. I know this, and now tell you what you must do to benefit your family and your tribe. Tomorrow," he repeated, "I shall meet you and wrestle with you for the last time; and, as soon as you have prevailed against me, you will strip off my garments and throw me down, clean the earth of roots and weeds, make it soft, and bury me in the spot. When you have done this, leave my body in the earth, and do not disturb it, but come occasionally to visit the place, to see whether I have come to life, and be careful never to let the grass or weeds grow on my grave. Once a month cover me with fresh earth. If you follow my instructions, you will accomplish your object of doing good to your fellow-creatures by teaching them the knowledge I now teach you." He then shook him by the hand and disappeared.

In the morning the youth's father came with some slight refreshments, saying, "My son, you have fasted long enough. If the Great Spirit will favor you, he will do it now. It is seven days since you have tasted food, and you must not sacrifice your life. The Master of Life does not require that." "My father," replied the youth, "wait till the sun goes down. I have a particular reason for extending my fast to that hour." "Very well," said the old man, "I shall wait till the hour arrives, and you feel inclined to eat."

At the usual hour of the day the sky-visitor returned, and the trial of strength was renewed. Although the youth had not availed himself of his father's offer of food, he felt that new strength had been given to him, and that exertion had renewed his strength and fortified his courage. He grasped his angelic antagonist with supernatural strength, threw him down, took from him his beautiful garments and plume, and finding him dead, immediately buried him on the spot, taking all the precautions he had been told of, and being very confident, at the same time, that his friend would again come to life. He then returned to his father's lodge, and partook sparingly of the meal that had been prepared for him. But he never for a moment forgot the grave of his friend.

He carefully visited it throughout the spring, and weeded out the grass, and kept the ground in a soft and pliant state. Very soon he saw the tops of the green plumes coming through the ground; and the more careful he was to obey his instructions in keeping the ground in order, the faster they grew. He was, however, careful to conceal the exploit from his father. Days and weeks had passed in this way. The summer was now drawing towards a close, when one day, after a long absence in hunting, Wunzh invited his father to follow him to the quiet and lonesome spot of his former fast. The lodge had been removed, and the weeds kept from growing on the circle where it stood, but in its place stood a tall and graceful plant, with bright-colored silken hair, surmounted with nodding plumes and stately leaves, and golden clusters on each side. "It is my friend," shouted the lad; "it is the friend of all mankind. It is Mondawmin (the name for corn). We need no longer rely on hunting alone; for, as long as this gift is cherished and taken care of, the ground itself will give us a living." He then pulled an ear. "See, my father," said he, "this is what I fasted for. The Great Spirit has listened to my voice, and sent us something new, and henceforth our people will not alone depend upon the chase or upon the waters."

He then communicated to his father the instructions given him by the stranger. He told him that the broad husks must be torn away, as he had pulled off the garments in his wrestling; and having done this, directed him how the ear must be held before the fire till the outer skin became brown, while all the milk was retained in the grain. The whole family then united in a feast on the newly-grown ears, expressing gratitude to the Merciful Spirit who gave it. So corn came into the world, and has ever since been preserved.

# HOW DOGS CAME TO LIVE WITH THE INDIANS: AN MENOMINEE LEGEND

We often hear the saying that the dog is man's best friend. But before the dog came to live with humans, it belonged to the wolf family, and there among the wolves the dogs had to do all the errands. One cold day, the wolves ordered the dog to go to a man's wigwam to get fire. This was the only place that the wolves knew that they could get fire but it was very dangerous for any wolf to go there. The wolves had often gone to Indian villages to get fire, but they would always drop the coals and the humans would get the fire back. Or as they carried a burning stick it would burn brighter and they would have to drop it or otherwise be singed by the flames.

The dog knew all this and decided that it would be a very difficult job to get fire from humans. So the dog decided that he would just pretend to try to steal fire from humans but not really go through with it. But the dog knew that if he failed in the mission to get the fire, life with the wolves would be unbearable, and instead he decided he would just leave the wolves and go live with the humans.

The dog left the wolves' country and went through the forest to the Indian village. He saw smoke coming out of the smokeholes of the wigwams and went toward one of the houses. He stood in the doorway and looked inside, and realized that the hunters were not home: only the women and children were there. The people had always feared the wolves, so the dog decided that it would be good to show that he himself was afraid of the humans. So he lowered his tail and his head and looked up at the people with his eyes wide to show that he was afraid of them and crept over to the fire and lay down.

The dog was lucky, because the man who lived in the wigwam had often dreamed of wolves, and had in fact dreamed that he would receive a gift from the wolves. In his hunting, he had also appealed to the Wolf spirit and been assisted by it to feed his family. When he returned to the wigwam and saw the harmless wolf dog lying there by his fire, he decided to make friends with him. Remembering his dreams, the Indian man told the dog that they would be brothers forever, and to prove this he would take the dog as his companion when he went hunting for his family and share the meat that they got together.

*Source: <http://www.mpm.edu/content/wirp/ICW-138.html#dogs>*

# TRAIL OF TEARS TEXTS

## Recommended Grades

9th - 12th grade

## Time Needed

45 minutes

## Materials

### Per student

- 1-2 texts

## Teacher Prep Work

- Make copies of the texts

Students examine first-person texts to understand multiple perspectives on the Trail of Tears.

## Discussion Areas

- What was the Indian Removal Act of 1830? Many white settlers felt that Native Americans stood in the way of westward expansion. President Andrew Jackson signed into law this act that removed Native Americans from their traditional lands so that white settlers could use the land and resources. Native Americans were relocated to the land west of the Mississippi River.
- What was the Trail of Tears? The journey Native Americans took from their traditional lands to the designated “Indian territory” became known as the Trail of Tears because in addition to Native Americans being displaced, many people did not survive the journey.

## Before You Begin

1. Give students a brief introduction to the Indian Removal Act of 1830 and the Trail of Tears.
2. Tell students that they are going to hear several perspectives from that time. They should pay close attention to their argument.

## Instructions

1. Place students in groups of 4-5. Ask each student to read a passage aloud to the rest of the group.
2. Ask students to discuss the different perspectives. Who was for the Indian Removal Act and why? Who was against it?

If you prefer to do this during your field trip to the C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa, a variation of this lesson is offered as a program at Chucalissa. We are also able to bring this program to you during an off-site visit.

# MESSAGE TO CONGRESS ON INDIAN REMOVAL

## ANDREW JACKSON

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.

# A SOLDIER RECALLS THE TRAIL OF TEARS

## PRIVATE JOHN G. BURNETT

Men working in the fields were arrested and driven to the stockades. Women were dragged from their homes by soldiers whose language they could not understand. Children were often separated from their parents and driven into the stockades with the sky for a blanket and the earth for a pillow. And often the old and infirm were prodded with bayonets to hasten them to the stockades.

In one home death had come during the night. A little sad-faced child had died and was lying on a bear skin couch and some women were preparing the little body for burial. All were arrested and driven out leaving the child in the cabin. I don't know who buried the body.

In another home was a frail mother, apparently a widow and three small children, one just a baby. When told that she must go, the mother gathered the children at her feet, prayed a humble prayer in her native tongue, patted the old family dog on the head, told the faithful creature good-by, with a baby strapped on her back and leading a child with each hand started on her exile. But the task was too great for that frail mother. A stroke of heart failure relieved her sufferings. She sunk and died with her baby on her back, and her other two children clinging to her hands.

Chief Junaluska who had saved President Jackson's life at the battle of Horse Shoe witnessed this scene, the tears gushing down his cheeks and lifting his cap he turned his face toward the heavens and said, "Oh my God, if I had known at the battle of the Horse Shoe what I know now, American history would have been differently written."

At this time, 1890, we are too near the removal of the Cherokees for our young people to fully understand the enormity of the crime that was committed against a helpless race. Truth is, the facts are being concealed from the young people of today. School children of today do not know that we are living on lands that were taken from a helpless race at the bayonet point to satisfy the white man's greed.

Future generations will read and condemn the act and I do hope posterity will remember that private soldiers like myself, and like the four Cherokees who were forced by General Scott to shoot an Indian Chief and his children, had to execute the orders of our superiors. We had no choice in the matter.

# CHEROKEE LETTER PROTESTING THE TREATY OF NEW ECHOTA CHIEF JOHN ROSS

It is well known that for a number of years past we have been harassed by a series of vexations, which it is deemed unnecessary to recite in detail, but the evidence of which our delegation will be prepared to furnish. With a view to bringing our troubles to a close, a delegation was appointed on the 23rd of October, 1835, by the General Council of the nation, clothed with full powers to enter into arrangements with the Government of the United States, for the final adjustment of all our existing difficulties. The delegation failing to effect an arrangement with the United States commissioner, then in the nation, proceeded, agreeably to their instructions in that case, to Washington City, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty with the authorities of the United States.

After the departure of the Delegation, a contract was made by the Rev. John F. Schermerhorn, and certain individual Cherokees, purporting to be a "treaty, concluded at New Echota, in the State of Georgia, on the 29th day of December, 1835, by General William Carroll and John F. Schermerhorn, commissioners on the part of the United States, and the chiefs, headmen, and people of the Cherokee tribes of Indians." A spurious Delegation, in violation of a special injunction of the general council of the nation, proceeded to Washington City with this pretended treaty, and by false and fraudulent representations supplanted in the favor of the Government the legal and accredited Delegation of the Cherokee people, and obtained for this instrument, after making important alterations in its provisions, the recognition of the United States Government. And now it is presented to us as a treaty, ratified by the Senate, and approved by the President [Andrew Jackson], and our acquiescence in its requirements demanded, under the sanction of the displeasure of the United States, and the threat of summary compulsion, in case of refusal. It comes to us, not through our legitimate authorities, the known and usual medium of communication between the Government of the United States and our nation, but through the agency of a complication of powers, civil and military.

By the stipulations of this instrument, we are despoiled of our private possessions, the indefeasible property of individuals. We are stripped of every attribute of freedom and eligibility for legal self-defence. Our property may be plundered before our eyes; violence may be committed on our persons; even our lives may be taken away, and there is none to regard our complaints. We are denationalized; we are disfranchised. We are deprived of membership in the human family! We have neither land nor home, nor resting place that can be called our own. And this is effected by the provisions of a compact which assumes the venerated, the sacred appellation of treaty.

We are overwhelmed! Our hearts are sickened, our utterance is paralyzed, when we reflect on the condition in which we are placed, by the audacious practices of unprincipled men, who have managed their stratagems with so much dexterity as to impose on the Government of the United States, in the face of our earnest, solemn, and reiterated protestations.

The instrument in question is not the act of our Nation; we are not parties to its covenants; it has not received the sanction of our people. The makers of it sustain no office nor appointment in our Nation, under the designation of Chiefs, Head men, or any other title, by which they hold, or could acquire, authority to assume the reins of Government, and to make bargain and sale of our rights, our possessions, and our common country. And we are constrained solemnly to declare, that we cannot but contemplate the enforcement of the stipulations of this instrument on us, against our consent, as an act of injustice and oppression, which, we are well persuaded, can never knowingly be countenanced by the Government and people of the United States; nor can we believe it to be the design of these honorable and highminded individuals, who stand at the head of the Govt., to bind a whole Nation, by the acts of a few unauthorized individuals. And, therefore, we, the parties to be affected by the result, appeal with confidence to the justice, the magnanimity, the compassion, of your honorable bodies, against the enforcement, on us, of the provisions of a compact, in the formation of which we have had no agency.

# PETITION BY LADIES IN STEUBENVILLE, OH AGAINST INDIAN REMOVAL

... that the present crisis in the affairs of the Indian nations, calls loudly on *all* who can feel for the woes of humanity, to solicit, with earnestness, your honorable body to bestow on this subject, involving, as it does, the prosperity and happiness of more than fifty thousand of our fellow Christians, the immediate consideration demanded by its interesting nature and pressing importance.

It is readily acknowledged... any...interference on the part of their own sex with the ordinary political affairs of the country, as wholly unbecoming the character of the American females. Even in private life, we may not presume to direct the general conduct, or control the acts of those who stand in the near and guardian relations of husbands and brothers; yet all admit that *there are times* when duty and affection call on us to *advise* and *persuade*...may we not hope that even the small voice of *female* sympathy will be heard?...

When, therefore, injury and oppression threaten to crush a hapless people within our borders, we, the feeblest of the feeble, appeal with confidence to those who should be representatives of national virtues... To you, then, as the constitutional protectors of the Indians within our territory, and as the peculiar guardians of our national character, and our counter's welfare, we solemnly and honestly appeal, to save this remnant of a much injured people from annihilation...

And your petitioners will ever pray.

## CONGRESSMAN DAVY CROCKETT EXCERPT FROM HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

It was expected of me that I was to bow to the name of Andrew Jackson, and follow him in all his motions, and mindings, and turnings, even at the expense of my conscience and judgment. Such a thing was new to me, and a total stranger to my principles. I know'd well enough, though, that if I didn't "hurra" for his name, the hue and cry was to be raised against me, and I was to be sacrificed, if possible. His famous, or rather I should say his *in-famous*, Indian bill was brought forward, and I opposed it from the purest motives in the world. Several of my colleagues got around me, and told me how well they loved me, and that I was ruining myself. They said this was a favourite measure of the president, and I ought to go for it. I told them I believed it was a wicked, unjust measure, and that I should go against it, let the cost to myself be what it might; that I was willing to go with General Jackson in every thing that I believed was honest and right; but, further than this, I wouldn't go for him, or any other man in the whole creation.