



# Sample Lesson Plan Incorporating Restorative Practices

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8th grade English Language Arts, Standards Based  
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## **Lesson Summary:**

*This restorative-based lesson incorporates excerpts from the [The Trail of Tears Diary](#) and a poem called "[The Powwow at the End of the World](#)" to discuss the Native American experience. The lesson gives teachers the opportunity to deepen understanding, build community, touch on social justice issues and cover standards. Feel free to use this as a template for your own content!*

## **Anticipatory Set**

In a circle, have students stand up (agree) or sit down (disagree) with the following statements. This is meant as a quick survey, just to get a sense of student opinion. You will return to the same survey at the end of the lesson to see if opinions have changed.

1. It is okay to hurt some people if it is for a greater cause.
2. It is important for people to fit in with others around them.
3. Forgiveness is an important part of moving on.

Students break into pairs and read the [excerpt from Trail of Tears Diary](#).

As they read, have them discuss the **guiding questions**:

- How was the experience of the two tribes different?
- How was the experience of the two tribes similar?
- How did "The Trail of Tears" affect the Native American people?

# EXCERPT FROM TRAIL OF TEARS DIARY

by Jobe Alexander & Mary Hill • 1938

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The Trail of Tears is the name given to the forced relocation of Native American nations following the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The removal included many members of tribes who did not wish to assimilate. **1** Many Native Americans suffered from disease and exposure, and somewhere between 2,000-6,000 Cherokee died on the trail. The Trail of Tears Diary includes interviews that reveal the extraordinary resilience of the Native American nations during the trail. **As you read, take notes on how the perspectives of the two Native American interviewees differ.**

## INTERVIEW WITH MARY HILL, AGE 47

*April 19, 1937*

*Billie Byrd, Research Field Worker S-149*

*Mary Hill, Muskogee Tribe*

*Okfuskee Town (tulwa), Okemah, Oklahoma*

### ***The Migration to the West of the Muskogee*** **2**

- [1] Many years ago, my grandmother, Sallie Farney, who was among those that made the trip to the West from Alabama, often told of the trip as follows:

In every way we were abundantly blessed in our every day life in the old country. We had our hunting grounds and all the things that are dear to the heart or interest of an Indian.

A council meeting was mostly composed of men, but there were times when every member of a town (tulwa) was requested to attend the meetings.

Many of the leaders, when unrest was felt in the homes, visited the different homes and gave encouragement to believe that Alabama was to be the permanent home of the Muskogee tribe. But many different rumors of a removal to the far west was often heard.

- [5] The command for a removal came unexpectedly upon most of us. There was the time that we noticed that several overloaded wagons were passing our home, yet we did not grasp the meaning. However, it was not long until we found out the reason. Wagons stopped at our home and the men in charge commanded us to gather what few belongings could be crowded into the wagons. We were to be taken away and leave our homes never to return. This was just the beginning of much weeping and heartaches. **Q1**



"Buffalo Hunt" by George Catlin is in the public domain.

We were taken to a crudely built stockade <sup>3</sup> and joined others of our tribe. We were kept penned up until everything was ready before we started on the march. Even here, there was the awful silence that showed the heartaches and sorrow at being taken from the homes and even separation from loved ones.

Most of us had not foreseen such a move in this fashion or at this time. We were not prepared, but times became more horrible after the real journey was begun.

Many fell by the wayside, too faint with hunger or too weak to keep up with the rest. The aged, feeble, and sick were left to perish <sup>4</sup> by the wayside. A crude bed was quickly prepared for these sick and weary <sup>5</sup> people. Only a bowl of water was left within reach, thus they were left to suffer and die alone.

The little children piteously <sup>6</sup> cried day after day from weariness, hunger, and illness. Many of the men, women, and even the children were forced to walk. They were once happy children; left without mother and father, crying could not bring consolation <sup>7</sup> to those children.

The sick and the births required attention, yet there was no time or no one was prepared. Death stalked at all hours, but there was no time for proper burying or ceremonies. My grandfather died on this trip. A hastily <sup>8</sup> cut piece of cotton wood contained his body. The open ends were closed up and this was placed along a creek. This was not the only time this manner of burying was held nor the only way. Some of the dead were placed between two logs and quickly covered with shrubs, some were shoved under the thickets, and some were not even buried but left by the wayside. <sup>Q2</sup>

There were several men carrying reeds with eagle feathers attached to the end. These men continually circled around the wagon trains or during the night around the camps. These men said the reeds with feathers had been treated by the medicine men. Their purpose was to encourage the Indians not to be heavy hearted nor to think of the homes that had been left.

Some of the older women sang songs that meant, "We are going to our homes and land; there is One who is above and ever watches over us; He will care for us." This song was to encourage the ever downhearted Muskogees.

Many a family was forced to abandon their few possessions and necessities when their horses died or were too weary to pull the heavy wagons any further.

## INTERVIEW WITH JOBE ALEXANDER

*May 3, 1938*

*Jesse S. Bell, Investigator of Indian-Pioneer History, S-149*

*Jobe Alexander, Cherokee Tribe*

*Proctor, Oklahoma*

I am a full blood Cherokee Indian born in Going-Lake District, Indian Territory, Cherokee Nation, March 10, 1854, and raised there. My father, Dun-Ev-Nall Alexander was born in Georgia and was driven West during the immigration. All the Indians were gathered up or rounded up by Federal <sup>9</sup> soldiers and put in pens and guarded until ready for the move; they were gathered up by the "Clans" and left their gardens and crops, and some of the old homes of the Cherokee are still standing in Georgia.

The last group that was rounded up revolted; <sup>10</sup> the leader gave the signal to revolt and all turned on the guards and took their guns away and murdered the guards and they made for hide aways in the mountains. That is why the Indians are back in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia. They never were found or hunted much. <sup>Q3</sup>

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"Excerpt from Trail of Tears Diary", © 1938, Sequoyah Research Center. Reprinted with permission, all rights reserved.

When students are finished reading, bring everyone back to the circle. As a whole class, go over the discussion questions and check for understanding. Utilize the circle process by having everyone share their thoughts on the discussion questions.

*\*TIP: To save time, you can have one person from the pair share out their answer to the whole group.*

When the students are finished sharing ideas, have them move on to the next text, a poem by Sherman Alexie called "The Powwow at the End of the World." Students will read again with their partner and work together to complete the following graphic organizer.

*The Powwow at the End of the World  
by Sherman Alexie*

*I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall  
after an Indian woman puts her shoulder to the Grand Coulee Dam  
and topples it. I am told by many of you that I must forgive  
and so I shall after the floodwaters burst each successive dam  
downriver from the Grand Coulee. I am told by many of you  
that I must forgive and so I shall after the floodwaters find  
their way to the mouth of the Columbia River as it enters the Pacific  
and causes all of it to rise. I am told by many of you that I must forgive  
and so I shall after the first drop of floodwater is swallowed by that salmon  
waiting in the Pacific. I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall  
after that salmon swims upstream, through the mouth of the Columbia  
and then past the flooded cities, broken dams and abandoned reactors  
of Hanford. I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall  
after that salmon swims through the mouth of the Spokane River  
as it meets the Columbia, then upstream, until it arrives  
in the shallows of a secret bay on the reservation where I wait alone.  
I am told by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall after  
that salmon leaps into the night air above the water, throws  
a lightning bolt at the brush near my feet, and starts the fire  
which will lead all of the lost Indians home. I am told  
by many of you that I must forgive and so I shall  
after we Indians have gathered around the fire with that salmon  
who has three stories it must tell before sunrise: one story will teach us  
how to pray; another story will make us laugh for hours;  
the third story will give us reason to dance. I am told by many  
of you that I must forgive and so I shall when I am dancing  
with my tribe during the powwow at the end of the world.*

**Connections:** How do the texts connect with each other?

**Empathize:** How can I relate these texts to my own personal experience, or what is happening in the world today?

**Quote that Stood Out To Me:**

**Awareness:** Who is harmed in these texts, and how?

**Symbol that relates to both texts.**

Once finished, students return back in circle. Ask the following questions, reminding each other first of circle guidelines. Some questions are asked in a sequential process (answer in order and all students participate) and some are asked in non-sequential process (anyone can answer, in any order).

**Sequential questions/prompts** (all students answer):

- How do these two texts connect with each other?
- Explain your symbol and how it relates to the text.

**Non-sequential questions/prompts** (students volunteer to answer):

- How can you relate these texts to your own experience, or what is happening in the world today?
- Who is harmed in these texts and how?
- Quote that stood out to you and why.

### **Circle Closing (Survey and Sequential)**

Before you close the lesson, return to the original survey to see if any opinions have changed. Complete the survey again, in the same fashion. In a circle, have students stand up (agree) or sit down (disagree) with the following statements.

1. It is okay to hurt some people if it is for a greater cause.
2. It is important for people to fit in with others around them.
3. Forgiveness is an important part of moving on.

If students are driven to discussion from the survey responses, then pause for conversation if you have the time. Or move on to the final circle prompt to close out the lesson:

- Share one thing you learned or that surprised you from this lesson and its readings.

After conducting the content-based circle, students can take the **assessment** on commonlit.

**Standards** covered during this lesson are:

R.I.1: Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

R.I.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

R.I.3 Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories).

RI.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

R.I.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.