



Cherokee Treaty of Long Island on Holston

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does a formal negotiation process allow two groups in conflict to find peace?

Standards

Social Studies

(6-8) I.1.2, I.1.4, I.1.5, I.1.6, I.1.10, (9-12) I.1.3, I.1.5
8.B.1.1, 8.B.1.2, AH.B.1.3, AH.B.1.6
8.C&G.1.2, 8.C&G.1.3, 8.C&G.1.4, 8.C&G.1.5, AH.C&G.1.3, AH.C&G.1.4
8.E.1.1, 8.E.1.2, 8.E.1.3, AH.E.1.4, AH.E.1.5
8.G.1.2, AH.G.1, AH.G.2, AH.G.1.4
8.H.1-4, 8.H.2.2, 8.H.2.3, AH.H.1.1, AH.H.1.3, AH.H.3, AH.H.3.2, A.H.3.3

English Language Arts

RI.6-12.1, RI.6-12.2, RI.7-8 & 11-12.3, RI.6-12.4, RI.6-8.5, RI.6-12.6, RI.6-12.7, RI.9-12.9, RI.6-12.10
SL.6-12.1, SL.6-12.2, SL.6-12.3, SL.6-12.4
L.6-12.1, L.9-12.3, L.6-12.4, L.6-12.5, L.6-12.6

Visual Arts

6.CX.2.2, B.CX.1.1, B.CX.1.2, B.CX.1.5, I.CX.1.1, P.CX.1.1, A.CX.2.2

Additional Standards for Extensions

(6-8) I.1.7 (9-12) I.1.4, AH.C&G.2.1
RI.6-8.9, W.6-12.1, W.6-12.2, W.6-12.3, W.6-12.5, W.6-12.6, L.6-12.2, L.6-8.3

Objectives

- Analyze the conflict over westward settlement and North Carolina's relationship with the Cherokee by studying the perspectives of both Cherokee and early state leaders.

- Create a response to the Treaty of Long Island on Holston in the form of blackout poetry.
- Learn more about the Cherokee tribe, its traditional and current lands, and that people of the Eastern Band still live in Western N.C.

Lesson Contents

The Proclamation of 1763 failed to discourage colonization of land beyond the ridge of the Appalachian Mountains. Having been treated unfairly in earlier treaties, the Cherokee distrusted state leaders when they arrived at Long Island in 1777. Two years earlier, a land transaction took place between the Transylvania Company, owned by a North Carolinian, and the Cherokee people. After negotiations, the company claimed 20 million acres of Cherokee land, which included parts of Virginia, Tennessee (then North Carolina), and Kentucky. In exchange, the Cherokees received five wagon loads of trade goods. Many Cherokee leaders denied the terms and legality of the 1775 transaction. Those at Long Island in 1777 argued that the earlier agreement was for a lease only.

In 1776, young Cherokee warriors, led by Dragging Canoe, acted against the injustice of earlier treaties and waged war on White settlements. State governments of the Carolinas and Virginia then retaliated with force. State soldiers killed Cherokee warriors and burned over 50 Cherokee villages and crops. Scottish traders working for the British crown in the backcountry were also involved. They tried to persuade the Cherokee to build alliances with Appalachian-region tribes. That way, many tribes could side with the British and fight the new states.

Wanting peace, the Cherokee leaders ceded land to the states in the Treaty of Long Island. Although the peace the treaty established did not last, it halted British efforts at a large American Indian alliance against the states and established the Cherokees' neutrality in the Revolution. The result was that the states' military could focus on fighting British forces in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.

Primary Sources

- **Treaty of Long Island on the Holston, 1777**, Governors' office records, council papers, 67.1.11, State Archives of N.C., digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/proceedings-of-the-treaty-of-the-long-island-of-holston-river-with-cherokee-nations-avery-treaty/6153047?item=6153049.
- John Collett, J. Bayly, and S. Hooper, "**A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an Actual Survey**," MC.150.1770c, State Archives of N.C.; also North Carolina Maps, dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/467/rec/2.

- **Maps of Cherokee Territory:** C.C. Boyce, “**Map of the Former Territorial Limits of the Cherokee...**” (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution – Bureau of Ethnology, 1884) Library of Congress, G3861.E1 1884.R6TIL, loc.gov/resource/g3861e.np000155/; U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, “**Qualla and 3200 Acre Tracts, Cherokee Indian Reservation, North Carolina, 1937,**” UNC collection, C970.03 G46e, dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm/singleitem/collection/ncmaps/id/892/rec/4.
- Samuel C. Williams, ed. “**Tatham’s Characters Among the North American Indians,**” Tennessee Historical Magazine, 7:3 (October 1921), pp. 174-179, reprinted from William Tatham’s article in *Annual of Biography and Obituary* (London, 1820).
- **Governors’ Correspondence, Spring 1777:** Letter from Patrick Henry to Richard Caswell, March 14, 1777, Executive Letter Book, Virginia, as published in *Documenting the American South*, docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.php/document/csr11-0299; Letter from John Rutledge to Richard Caswell, Governors' Papers: Correspondence, March 1777, SR.GP.177703, State Archives of N.C., digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/governors-papers-richard-caswell-correspondence-march-1777/1000104?item=1000131; Letter from Caswell to Henry, April Governors' Papers: Correspondence, April 11, 1777, SR.GP.177704, State Archives of N.C., digital.ncdcr.gov/Documents/Detail/governors-papers-richard-caswell-correspondence-april-1777/1000174?item=1000182.

Secondary Source & Transcription:

Archibald Henderson, “The Treaty of Long Island of Holston, July 1777,” *North Carolina Historical Review*, V8:1, January 1931, full transcription of original treaty pp. 58-116

Assignment Options

(files on thumb drive)

- **Glossary**
- **Background: Wampum Beads**
- **Background: Treaty of Long Island**
- **Activity: Morse Code Beads**
- **First Anniversary of the U.S.**
- **Reader’s Theater Script**
- **Activity: Blackout Poetry**
- **Exit Tickets**

Supplies

- Projector (optional)
- Art supplies, glue, markers or paint, and string
- Beads in 3 colors (if choosing a pre-made option), or scrap paper
- Pins, sticky notes, painter's tape, or other method to mark map
- Magnifying glasses (provided)

Lesson Preparation

- Review the primary sources, transcriptions, related materials, and slides to determine which options are appropriate for your students. Note that this box contains a variety of options from which teachers can select, based on available time, learning goals, and student capacities.
- Find the **Document Analysis Sheet** in the **Cross-Lesson Activities** folder to determine which document(s) you want students to use to complete it. Note: because the Treaty of Long Island on Holston has so many parts, consider selecting one part, assigning various parts to different students, or assigning various primary source documents. Print the **Analysis Sheet** double-sided for each student and print documents or sections for individual work.
- Print a copy of the **Glossary** page for your reference in discussions or to distribute to students. Consider creating your own vocabulary exercise with the more relevant words.
- Prepare to work with 3 maps: “**A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an actual Survey,**” 1770, and 2 maps of Cherokee territory (1884 & 1937). The 1770 map has been provided as a facsimile near its original size. Print or project the 2 additional maps, found in the primary sources folder. If printing to distribute, make the appropriate number of copies for individual or group work.
- Print **Background: Treaty of Long Island** for each student or prepare to lead a class discussion by projecting relevant images.
- Print copies of (or plan to project) **First Birthday of the United States**, one for each student. Print double-sided if a transcription activity is appropriate for your students.
- Prepare to project relevant images or print **Background: Wampum** to distribute to students or groups. Decide whether to show the 7-minute video, “**How A Native American Artisan Keeps The 4,500-Year-Old Practice of Wampum Alive for the Culture,**” ([youtube.com/watch?v=Jd3RJ0OcJ3A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd3RJ0OcJ3A)) about traditional and modern techniques to create wampum beads. Review information to be ready to lead discussion.
- Prepare materials for **Activity: Morse Code Beads**. Instructions may be projected or distributed as sheets for individuals or groups. Decide whether students will make beads from scrap paper

or if you will provide beads (of another material) so that each student has 3 colors—each with 5, 6, and 7 beads. Consider working with an art teacher for this activity.

- Prepare for the **Reader's Theater Script**. Read it through to make sure it is appropriate for your students. Decide how to group your students and how to assign reading parts. There are **42 passages**, so it is possible for everyone to have a part. You could have 6 students read the entire script like a performance, with the rest of your class watching, or have everyone participate. Longer speeches have been broken up into smaller portions to make the reading parts easier, so there are places where the same historical figure will speak several times in a row in short passages instead of one longer one. For instance, 9 passages are from Avery's speeches. 9 students could take 1 each and all, along with Sharp, could represent members of the N.C. commission, or one student could portray Avery and speak all 9 parts. Decide whether to rearrange your room so that students sharing a given character's part can sit together. For example, everyone reading Cherokee parts could sit on one side of the room, with everyone reading Old Tassel's parts sitting together, etc. Make copies of the script for students to share.
- Print **Activity: Blackout Poetry** for each student. Students may select (or be assigned) one of the 4 speech options found in the primary sources folder. There are 2 speeches by Avery, a North Carolina delegate to the treaty negotiations, and 2 by Cherokee leaders: Raven and Old Tassel. Prepare copies so that all 4 speeches are represented. Each student should end up with a direction page and 1 speech.
- If using the **Exit Tickets**, print copies single-sided and cut into quarters for each student (e.g., 7 copies for 28 students). Multiple ticket options are provided for choices or in case the lesson extends multiple days.

Connecting to Background Knowledge:

(5 minutes)

Ask: Imagine you found a perfect spot on a beach or in a state or national park and wanted to claim it for your own. What would you be willing to do for the land? Student answers will vary but may include: attempt to purchase, petitioning the government or working to change laws, squatting. *Ask: What wouldn't you be willing to do?* Answers will vary but may include fighting and criminal activities. Discuss that in 1776 fighting broke out with the Cherokee in the western part of the state because of settlers moving onto Cherokee land.

Procedure

Activity 1: Reading the Map

(20 - 30 minutes)

- Display "**A Compleat Map of North-Carolina from an actual Survey.**" Project or distribute the 2 Cherokee maps found in the primary sources folder. If working with paper maps, move the

students into pairs or small groups. On the large 1770 map, find and mark (with a pin or sticky note strip) 3 American Indian towns, as well as the Holston River and the New River Head.

- Project or distribute the 1884 “**Map of the Former Territorial Limits of the Cherokee...**” Give students time to find and discuss the Great Island of the Holston, the Watauga River, and the Headwaters of the New River near the towns of Boone and Jefferson. Have them match this area to the same area on the 1770 map using the “New River Head” as a comparison point.
- The olive-green area marked #9 on the 1884 map was the land that the Cherokee ceded at the 1777 Treaty of Long Island.
- Finally, have students look at the 1937 Qualla map, showing roughly the current shape of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians’ land today. Noting the shape of the Qualla outline, have them find a similar shape on the 1884 map (it is yellow and marked #10). Discuss the drastic loss of Cherokee territory over time. Allow time for questions and reflections about the changing boundaries.

Activity 2: Before the Treaty

(30 - 45 minutes)

- Project images for class discussion or distribute **Background: The Treaty of Long Island**.
- Distribute **First Anniversary of the U.S.** A facsimile of the original page of the treaty is on one side for an optional transcription activity. Assign a short journal assignment based on the prompt or discuss students’ ideas for July 4th celebrations today.

Activity 3: Treaty Negotiations

- Project images or distribute **Background: Wampum**. Discuss the significance behind the strings of beads included in the box. If selecting this option, show the 7-minute video, “**How A Native American Artisan Keeps The 4,500-Year-Old Practice of Wampum Alive for the Culture.**” This explains traditional and modern techniques to create wampum beads. Note that the artisan in the film is a member of the Narragansett nation of Rhode Island. Explain that today the Cherokee are one of 574 federally recognized tribes and that all tribes are different even if they share cultural similarities. (15 minutes)
- Project directions or distribute **Activity: Morse Code Beads**. Note: time for this activity will depend on whether students make beads out of paper or not. (15-60 minutes)
- Share: *In 1777 leaders from the Cherokee tribe and the new states of Virginia & North Carolina came together to talk about the contested land.* Move students into pre-determined groups. Distribute copies of **Reader’s Theater Script**, either the whole or assigned reading parts. Note: all the words after the introductions and narrator parts were a part of the actual negotiations as recorded in 1777. Aside from edits to spelling and punctuation for clarity, the historical figures’

words in the script passages match the original document. These selections with original images are in the primary sources folder. (5 minutes)

1. Give students time to read over their parts and to ask about any unfamiliar words. Encourage them to consider the meaning and emotion behind their part. Encourage them to project their voices and to portray the feelings they imagine for the historical figures. Where the script indicates strings of beads change hands, have students use the included examples or beads they made. (20 minutes)
2. When finished, discuss with students their thoughts about the negotiations. Ask them to share any immediate reflections. Discuss any part that students do not understand. (10 minutes)
3. Reflect and Discuss: (15-20 minutes)
 - *What was the attitude of each historical figure? Did this change during the negotiations? Were the compromises even on both sides? Why or why not?*
 - *How did previous relationships affect negotiations?*
 - *How might the circumstances of recording the treaty affect what we know about what happened there?* Consider: there were more than 400 people present, interpreters translated between English and Cherokee, and we have a record of the speeches because someone was there, writing this all down with quill and ink in a council house with a fire, on an island in a river in July, etc.

Activity 4: Treaty Reflections

(30- 60 minutes)

1. Share: *We've now looked at the causes, various perspectives, negotiation activities, and terms of the Treaty of Long Island on the Holston (1777). Consider how this complicated history affects how we view the American fight for freedom.*
2. Distribute **Activity: Blackout Poetry** and allow students to choose 1 of the 4 speeches (or distribute assignments):
 - Avery, given toward the beginning of the treaty's negotiations
 - Raven, a Cherokee diplomat, during the middle of the negotiations
 - Avery, in the middle of the negotiations
 - Old Tassel, a Cherokee diplomat, in response to Avery's second speech
3. Discuss the directions with the students. While blackout poetry is often used to showcase student understanding of literary elements, it can be just as effective when used as a personal response to a document. The poetry does not have to rhyme or contain standard poetic elements; the goal is to feature words that share the students' reflections about this event in history. The way that they link words and the images they add to it will create a response unique to each student. Briefly discuss the examples and highlight important elements: an

image that represents the overall tone or message for the poem; selected words and the rest of the original text covered—all designed as a reflective visual message.

4. Give students time to create their blackout poetry and then to share their work with the class as a presentation or display.

Exit Tickets

(5 minutes)

Multiple options for student choice, variety within the class, or to use for lessons extending multiple days.

- *Think about the act of giving a string of beads in the treaty. How do you let people know a request you have is serious?*
- *Have you ever used the term “bury the hatchet?” (found in the [Readers’ Theater Script](#)). What was the situation? If not, imagine an instance when you might.*

Modifications

- Student pages could be shared with students needing to take notes individually, with vision issues, or who have issues focusing (even if the slides are being used collectively).
- Students could be paired with a higher-achieving or differently behaving student for extra support.
- Students could be given extension activities if they finish early or are high-achieving and need more challenging or independent work. These can be done independently or collaboratively.
- When planning reading parts for the [Reader’s Theater Script](#), consider the reading level of your students. You might pair stronger readers with weaker ones, assign specific parts to specific students based on their reading abilities, or, if you have many strong readers, put students in groups and allow them to pick the parts they want to read. If you have many students with weaker reading abilities, you might ask a parent or administrative volunteers to visit your class to perform this script for your students. They could then watch the negotiations play out and discuss afterwards.
- If students are unfamiliar with the history of American Indians and the effects of contact with Europeans on their way of life, the 6-minute video, “The Story of North Carolina: American Indians in Our State,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuumXbWACzQ>, may help to prepare them for the material in this lesson.

Extension Activities

- Research the Transylvania Company and its aims. How did the land purchase influence the negotiations of the Treaty of Long Island on the Holston? NCpedia is a good place to start: <https://www.ncpedia.org/transylvania-company>.
- Imagine that you are a reporter for the *North-Carolina Gazette* in 1777. Write an article detailing the completion of the Treaty of Long Island. How might North Carolinians in coastal areas have received this news at the time? What would they have wanted to know?
- Study the 3 letters of Governor's correspondence, Spring 1777, found in the primary sources folder. Underline or highlight the issues of concern for each in planning the treaty negotiations and infer any additional issues. Write 3 paragraphs to compare and contrast the concerns for the three governors. Additional option: imagine you are Richard Caswell and write a letter to Waightstill Avery with instructions for the N.C. commission in dealing with the Cherokee.
- Give students the opportunity to analyze the speeches used in the blackout poetry activity before they create their poetry. They could use the **Document Analysis Sheet** to dig deeper and then summarize the speech or craft a response to the speaker from an opposing perspective.
- Watch videos documenting 21st-century Cherokee including "**We're Still Here**," with Principal Chief Richard Sneed of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians (start at the 1:50 minute mark): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lAty8FmMvas>. Friendship dances are still part of Cherokee culture. Watch one performed at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian in 2023: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9zIVjeesOU>. Write an essay discussing one or more of these questions: *How has the resistance of the Cherokee during and after the Trail of Tears changed North Carolina? How has the role of the Cherokee changed during North Carolina history? What else do you want to know about the Cherokee?*
- Look closely at the **signature pages** for the Treaty of Long Island (found in the primary sources folder). The Cherokee did not yet have a written language, but each signer represented himself with a distinctive mark. Look at the variety and shapes of these marks and consider each signer's name and village. Does the mark relate to either identity? Design a mark for yourself and explain how and why you chose that mark.
- Read the version of Old Tassel's speech that one of the treaty attendees and scribes, William Tatham wrote for an essay published in London in 1820 (found in the primary sources folder).

Compare and contrast that version of Corn Tassel's speech with Old Tassel's speeches in the 1777 treaty. Analyze why they might be different.

Field Trip Connection

Museum of the Cherokee People: motcp.org/ in Cherokee, Swain and Jackson Counties.

American Indian Heritage Celebration, coordinated by the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh: ncmuseumofhistory.org/events-and-programs/festivals-and-concerts/29th-annual-american-indian-heritage-celebration.

Recommended Resources

"Cherokee People in North Carolina," *NCPedia*, ncpedia.org/ Cherokee/overview.

"Northern Quahog, *Sea History for Kids*, seahistory.org/sea-history-for-kids/quahog/.

Insider News, **"How A Native American Artisan Keeps The 4,500-Year-Old Practice Of Wampum Alive | For The Culture,"** Indigenous artisan Allen Hazard is a member of the Naragansett Nation of Rhode Island, [youtube.com/watch?v=Jd3RJ0OcJ3A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jd3RJ0OcJ3A) (7-minute video).

"Tassel, (Old)," *NCPedia*, ncpedia.org/biography/old-tassel.

"Primary Source: The Transylvania Purchase and the Treaty of Sycamore Shoals, March 17, 1775," *NCPedia*, ncpedia.org/anchor/primary-source-transylvania.