EXPLORING FEDERAL POLICY ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS IN THE LATE 1800s

TEACHER VERSION

Subject Level: High School History
Grade Level: 9–10
Approx. Time Required: 45 minutes

Learning Objectives:
- Students will be able to gather information from primary sources.
- Students will be able to explain post-Civil War federal policy for Native Americans and discuss its effects on Native American youths.
Activity Description

Students will examine three primary sources — two photographs of Native American youths, one before and one after their enrollment in a boarding school in 1886, and an excerpt from an 1890 report on federal policy regarding Native American assimilation — to understand the lives of young Native Americans during this time in history.

Suggested Grade Level: 9–10

Approximate Time Required: 45 minutes

Learning Objectives:
- Students will be able to gather information from primary sources.
- Students will be able to explain federal post-Civil War policy for Native Americans and discuss its effects on Native American youths.

Topics:
- Federal Indian policy
- Native Americans
- Post-Civil War

Skills Taught:
- Analyzing historical photographs
- Comparing and contrasting
Materials Required

- The student version of this activity, 5 pages
- A teacher computer with Internet access and a projector to display web sites.

Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity. Items, their sources, and any relevant instructions for viewing them online appear at the end of this teacher version.

- Item 1: Chiricahua Apache Upon Arrival at Carlisle Indian School
- Item 2: Chiricahua Apache Four Months After Arriving at Carlisle Indian School
- Item 3: Report on Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed in the United States (Except Alaska) at the Eleventh Census: 1890

For more information to help you introduce your students to the U.S. Census Bureau, read “Census Bureau 101 for Students.” This information sheet can be printed and passed out to your students as well.

Standards Addressed

See charts below. For more information, read “Overview of Education Standards and Guidelines Addressed in Statistics in Schools Activities.”

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1</td>
<td>RH 9-10 - History/Social Studies</td>
<td>Key Ideas and Details</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.</strong></td>
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EXPLORING FEDERAL POLICY ABOUT NATIVE AMERICANS
IN THE LATE 1800s

TEACHER VERSION

UCLA National Standards for History: U.S. History Content Standards

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<th>Era</th>
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<td>6 – The Development of the Industrial United States (1870–1900)</td>
<td>Standard 4: Federal Indian policy and United States foreign policy after the Civil War</td>
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UCLA National Standards for History: Historical Thinking Standards

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<th>Standard</th>
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<td>Standard 2: Historical Comprehension</td>
<td><strong>Draw upon the visual, literary, and musical sources.</strong> Students will examine historical photographs and an excerpt from a historical document to understand federal policy about Native American assimilation and its implications for Native American youths.</td>
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Bloom’s Taxonomy

Students will interpret primary sources to **understand** federal policy about Native Americans after the Civil War.
Teacher Notes

Before the Activity

Students must understand the following key terms:

- **Assimilation** - structural and cultural merging of minority and majority groups in a society, in which the minority group adopts the culture of the majority group.
- **Bureau of Indian Affairs** - the oldest division of the U.S. Department of the Interior, established in 1824, which provides services to millions of Native Americans, including American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- **Trail of Tears** - the Cherokee people’s forced migration, under President Andrew Jackson’s Indian Removal Act in the 1830s, from their native lands east of the Mississippi River to present-day Oklahoma, during which the 15,000 travelers faced hunger, disease, and exhaustion.


Teachers should be aware that the content of this activity is sensitive so they may want to walk students through it as part of a class discussion.

During the Activity

Teachers should note to their students that the U.S. Census Bureau now uses the term American Indian or Alaska Native to identify populations previously referred to as Native Americans.

After the Activity

Teachers should lead a discussion and/or assign an exit slip (a written student response to questions that teachers pose at the end of an activity) to give students a chance to share what they learned. Teachers could ask:

- What did you observe that confirmed what you already knew about federal policy regarding Native Americans in the late 1800s?
- What did you observe that surprised you?

Extension Ideas

- Teachers could ask students to imagine being one of the students from Items 1 and 2 and then write a letter home describing their experience at the boarding school.
- Teachers could have students research the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.
Student Activity

Click here to download a printable version for students.

Activity Items

The following items are part of this activity and appear at the end of this student version.

- Item 1: Chiricahua Apache Upon Arrival at Carlisle Indian School
- Item 2: Chiricahua Apache Four Months After Arriving at Carlisle Indian School
- Item 3: Report on Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed in the United States (Except Alaska) at the Eleventh Census: 1890

Student Learning Objectives

- I will be able to gather information from primary sources.
- I will be able to explain post-Civil War federal policy for Native Americans and discuss its effects on Native American youths.

1. Examine Item 1: Chiricahua Apache Upon Arrival at Carlisle Indian School and Item 2: Chiricahua Apache Four Months After Arriving at Carlisle Indian School. What similarities and differences do you notice between the two photos? How do you think the children in each of the photos were feeling? Below, record at least three of your observations and write two questions.

   Student observations and questions will vary but could include the differences in the children’s attire and general appearance. Students might wonder how the children felt about this change to their appearance.

2. Read Item 3: Report on Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed in the United States (Except Alaska) at the Eleventh Census: 1890, which is an excerpt from a report on federal policy about Native American assimilation.

   What does the excerpt tell you about the U.S. government’s view of Native American culture at the time?

   The excerpt shows that the federal government did not want Native Americans to practice their traditional customs. They were instead expected to adopt the majority American culture to become what policy leaders deemed to be productive members of society.

3. What does “assimilation” mean, and were Native American government schools in this era established to promote it? Cite specific evidence from the items to support your answer.

   Assimilation means adopting the culture and traditions of the majority of the population. This was clearly the goal of the Native American government schools in this era, as indicated by the line from
the report that states, “The general purpose of the government is the preparation of Indian youth for assimilation into the national life by such a course of training as will prepare them for the duties and privileges of American citizenship.” Also, the change in the children’s appearance between the “before” and “after” photographs suggests that they may have been encouraged to assimilate at the school.

4. According to Item 3, what was the biggest “problem” that the government faced with Native American education in 1890? Explain the author’s reasoning.

The biggest challenge was “what to do with the Indian boys and girls belonging to reservations” after they had finished government schooling. The government worried that sending them back to their reservations would mean that they would likely resume their Native American customs.

5. Today, this excerpt could be considered offensive. Why do you think that could be the case? Use information from the photographs to support your answer.

Student answers will vary but could include: The excerpt could be considered offensive because it seems that the U.S. government at the time assumed Native Americans weren’t productive or dutiful citizens in the first place. Also, it’s apparent from the photos that these Native American children changed their dress when at school, which implies that the school’s leaders thought their original attire was inappropriate. Forcing these types of changes on others hinders the American ideal of the freedom of expression.

If this activity is teacher-led, teachers could pause the activity at this point to tell students that in 2009, President Barack Obama signed a “Resolution of Apology to Native Peoples of the United States.”
Item 1: Chiricahua Apache Upon Arrival at Carlisle Indian School

This photograph shows children of the Chiricahua Apache tribe when they arrived at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, on Nov. 4, 1886.


Information provided with the permission of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 4th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20560.

(https://chnm.gmu.edu/cych/primary-sources/290)
Item 2: Chiricahua Apache Four Months After Arriving at Carlisle Indian School

This photograph shows the same children of the Chiricahua Apache tribe — in the same order — four months after they arrived at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, in March 1887.


Information provided with the permission of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, 4th and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20560.

(https://chnm.gmu.edu/cyh/primary-sources/290)
Item 3: Report on Indians Taxed and Indians Not Taxed in the United States (Except Alaska) at the Eleventh Census: 1890

“The greatest and most difficult problem now of Indian education is what to do with the Indian boys and girls belonging to reservations after they have been educated in government boarding or industrial schools away from their reservations? Shall they be sent back to the reservations? If so, what will they do when they go back, and once back, will they resume their Indian customs?

PURPOSES OF INDIAN SCHOOLS

The general purpose of the government is the preparation of Indian youth for assimilation into the national life by such a course of training as will prepare them for the duties and privileges of American citizenship. This involves the training of the hand in useful industries; the development of the mind in independent and self-directing power of thought; the impartation of useful practical knowledge; the culture of the moral nature; and the formation of character. Skill, intelligence, industry, morality, manhood, and womanhood are the ends aimed at.”