

Early Trading and Talking with Choctaws

Objectives

Using the Rapalje Notebook, an 18th century ledger, students will learn about the relationship between a British trading family and their Choctaw clients, be introduced to some basic Choctaw words, and practice their own trading skills.

The *Early Trading and Talking with Choctaws* lesson plan is adaptable for grades 4–9.

Social Studies Frameworks	4 th Grade (DOK 1 and 2)	2a, b, 3a, b, c, 5a, 6a, c
	5 th Grade (DOK 1, 2, and 3)	1a, e, 2b, c, 3b, 4b, c, 5a, b, c
	6 th Grade (DOK 3)	4a, b, 7b
	7 th Grade (DOK 1)	2a
	8 th Grade (DOK 3)	3b, 6c
	Mississippi Studies (DOK 1 and 3)	1a, b, f, 6c
	World History from the Age of Enlightenment to Present (DOK 2 and 3)	2c, 6a

Objectives:

Using the Rapalje Notebook, an 18th century ledger, students will learn about the relationship between a British trading family and their Choctaw clients, be introduced to some basic Choctaw words, and practice their own trading skills.

Materials: *Native Americans During Colonial Times*; *Reading Comprehension* worksheet; Mississippi highway map; Internet access; *Native American Place Names in Mississippi* by Kieth A. Baca (local library); *Teacher Barter Bazaar Guide*; *Choctaw Crossword Puzzle*; *Body Silhouette* worksheet.

Procedures

Activity One: Natchez and Spanish West Florida

1. Distribute *Native Americans During Colonial Times* to students.
2. Distribute *Reading Comprehension* worksheet to students. After completing the worksheets individually or in small groups, discuss the answers as a class.

Activity Two: The Choctaw Language

1. As a class, have students brainstorm Mississippi place names with Native American roots and write them on the board. These can include the names of cities, counties, or rivers.
2. Have students examine the following pages in the Rapalje Notebook online at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/rapalje and identify these sites listed in the Choctaw language portion. Have students plot them on the Mississippi highway map using the Choctaw names. *Please make sure that the students understand that these words are a translation that Rapalje himself made and not the actual Choctaw words.*

Luchassetto (Big Black River) - Rapalje, item 44 (search for page 36)

Balabanchi Ocano (Mississippi River) Rapalje, item 45 (search for page 37)

Joneyinchweaw (Walnut Hills/ Vicksburg) Rapalje, item 54 (search for page 46)

Lusa Chitto Sechee (Grand Gulf) Rapalje, item 64 (search for page 56)

3. Have students locate these sites with names based in the Choctaw language. After they have located these places, discuss what students might think led to the origins of their names. Use *Native American Place Names in Mississippi* by Kieth Baca and *The School of Choctaw Language* website to find the meanings.

Bogue Chitto (bok=creek, chito=big) – Baca, page 10

Byhalia (baiyi=white oaks, hieli=standing) – Baca, page 18

Copiah (koi=panther, paya=to cry out or scream) – Baca, page 32

Homochitto (homma=red, chito=big //OR// holmo=roof or shelter, chito=big) – Baca, page 40

Issaquena (isi=deer, okhina=river, water, or stream) – Baca, page 44

Neshoba (nashoba=wolf) – Baca, page 62

Noxapater (naki=lead, chipinta=small, i.e. little bullet) – Baca, page 62

Noxubee (oka=water, nakshobi=to smell of fish) – Baca, page 66

Oktibbeha (oka=water, itibbi=fight or battle) – Baca, page 75

Pelahatchie (apeli=hurricane, hucha=river //OR// pilla=away off, hucha=river, i.e., far off river) – Baca, page 81

Shuqualak (**shikulla**=beads) – *Baca*, page 94

Tallahatchie (**tvlia**=rock, **hucha**=river) – *Baca*, page 103

Yoda Creek (**aivtta**=abode, domicile, habitation) – *Baca*, page 135

Additional Resources:

Baca, Kieth A. *Native American Place Names in Mississippi*. University of Mississippi Press, 2007.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, The School of Choctaw Language at <http://www.choctawschool.com/Home.aspx>.

Activity Three: A Barter Economy

1. Define and discuss the terms economy and barter.
2. Using a map of Mississippi, have students point out the locations where they believe bartering would have taken place in the 18th century and have them explain why.
3. Stage a barter bazaar in the classroom. Have students bring to class items they are willing to exchange for others. Emphasize that the students should consider the value of their items in comparison to that of the items they wish to exchange them for.
4. Upon completion of the activity, use the *Teacher Barter Bazaar Guide*, conduct a class discussion on the ease of bartering, its fairness, and how it compares to the use of money today.

Extension Activities:

1. Distribute and complete the *Choctaw Crossword Puzzle* featuring the Choctaw words for animals common on the Mississippi River frontier as Rapalje interpreted them. Following this activity, discuss with students related topics, such as:
 - a. Identifying common roots in related words. *Rapalje, item 61* (search for page 53)
Examples
Subaw, Subaw Tike, Subaw Nockee, (Horse, Mare, Stallion)
Oaktushaw, Okekita, Oakitihatagh (Snow, Frost, Ice)
 - b. Why might it be useful for a community language to develop with similar sounding words to describe similar things in the world around them?
This would allow a community to expand upon an established base of knowledge to communicate more easily and more effectively.
 - c. Why did the Choctaws have a word for “tiger” (coie)?
Were there tigers on the Mississippi frontier?
Could the word for “tiger” actually be meant to describe a similar animal native to the area?
What animal might that be? Does that animal still live in Mississippi today?
Is it possible that Rapalje did not understand what the Choctaw word meant?
Which is most likely: The word for “tiger” describes an actual tiger, that the word is meant to describe a different animal, or that Rapalje confused the meaning?
 - d. Have students visit the website for The School of Choctaw Language at <http://www.choctawschool.com/Home.aspx> for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Have them compare the words as Rapalje recorded them to the vocabulary on

the website.

2. Have the students examine the Rapalje Notebook and find the Choctaw word for the numbers below.
Rapalje Notebook, item 47 (search for page 39)
 - Chafa (one)
 - Tuccalo (two)
 - Tochena (three)
 - Osta (four)
 - Tashlayipe (five)
 - Hunalee (six)
 - Untuccalo (seven)
 - Untochena (eight)
 - Chuckcale (nine)
 - Puccole (ten)
3. Using the *Body Silhouette* worksheet, label body parts with their Choctaw names as noted in the *Rapalje Notebook, items 55 and 56 (search for pages 47 and 48)*
4. Learn more about the Rapalje Family and the Mississippi they lived in with the Rapalje Family Notebook lesson plan (adaptable for grades 6-8) available on the MDAH website at <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/new/learn/classroom-materials/lesson-plans-and-teaching-units/>.

Native Americans During Colonial Times

The cultural and social make up of Mississippi in the mid-1500s changed as Europeans settled in small communities in the West Florida territory. Families changed as Europeans married Native Americans. Native Americans encounters with Europeans in turn changed their relationship to the land, their customs, and with other native groups. The trade between the Native American and European settlers resulted in exchange of European goods and Native American foods and crafts which were highly prized on each side. The Native American population decreased drastically because of wars and diseases introduced by the settlers. All these changes spurred many native peoples to move to lands traditionally belonging to other nations.

Continuing into the late 1700s, Native Americans and Europeans, particularly the Spanish, English and French, developed trade agreements for such items as deerskins, fish, and firearms. Oftentimes misunderstandings and mis-communications occurred as the native peoples and settlers adjusted to each other's cultures and customs. European rule, tensions between the Europeans and native peoples, and wars between the native nations often affected trading and stressed fragile alliances.

In 1763, the Treaty of Paris ended the French and Indian War giving control of West Florida, including portions of today's south and southwestern sections of Mississippi, to Great Britain. During the Revolutionary War the British sought to create alliances with the Choctaws, Chickasaw and Creek nations. In the midst of the war between the British and the American colonies Spain declared war on the British, regaining control of West Florida. In 1779, the Spanish captured the city of Natchez. While some Spanish and French families lived there, the population was mainly comprised of British settlers, their African slaves, and a number of native tribes, including the Natchez and Choctaw. Although the British citizens of Natchez revolted, Spanish forces soon controlled the entire colony, including areas ruled by the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations.

As the American Revolution came to an end the Choctaw and Chickasaw faced another change in the imposed rule of their native lands. The Hopewell Treaty of 1786 set aside over 11 million acres of land within the Mississippi Territory for to be divided between the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations and created a relationship for both nations to be treated as such by the U.S. government. Despite the change in government following the Revolutionary War, the role of the colonial south in the 18th century global economy did not change. Traders supplied the frontier population, including Native Americans, with finished European goods in exchange for raw materials. Europeans also valued Native Americans finished goods. Choctaw pottery was one of the more highly prized Native American products that was popular with the Europeans. Tanned animal hides, primarily deer, were the medium of exchange used by native hunters.

Many trading companies recorded their business transactions in ledgers, and the Rapalje Notebook is one of these ledgers. In it brothers Jaques and Isaac Rapalje documented their trade with the Choctaw and others in Walnut Hills and along the Big Black River. The Rapalje's business required they have a rudimentary understanding of the language of their trading partners. Their translations, although not accurate in the modern Choctaw language, were their understanding of the language and allowed them to communicate with their Choctaw customers.

In 1795, the United States and Spain signed Pinckney's Treaty, firmly setting the boundary between the two nations at the 31st parallel and granting American settlers free access to the Mississippi River all the way south to New Orleans. By 1798, the Mississippi Territory was incorporated into the United States without regard to the state's native people. When Mississippi became a state in 1817, the settlers and state began to eye the Native American lands. Through a series of treaties the Native Americans lost more and more control of the lands they once called home and those that were guaranteed them by the 1786 Hopewell Treaty. By 1837 the Chickasaws and the Choctaws had been forced from their homelands west across the Mississippi River to Indian Territory in Oklahoma.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading Comprehension

Answer the following questions using the information in the reading *Native Americans During Colonial Times*.

1. What advantage did the British hope to gain by making alliances with the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee nations during the American Revolution?
2. Which treaty recognized the Choctaw and Chickasaws as nations in the eyes of the U.S. government?

3. Using a modern map of Mississippi and the United States, locate the Mississippi River, Natchez, Vicksburg, and the 31st parallel. Why do you think control of the Mississippi River was vital to the Europeans and the Americans?
4. Why would it have been important for a merchant living in Spanish West Florida to speak and understand the Choctaw language?
5. Summarize the changes that occurred in the Native Nations through their contact with the European/American settlers and governments. Do you think there was ever any honest consideration or respect given to the Native Americans by these people or do you think they were thought of as pawns by the occupying nations? Why or why not?

Name: KEY Date: _____

Reading Comprehension

Answer the following questions using the information in the reading *Native Americans During Colonial Times*.

1. What advantage did the British hope to gain by making alliances with the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee nations during the American Revolution?

Alliances with the Native American nations would prove valuable because they would gain “soldiers” for their cause.

2. Which treaty recognized the Choctaw and Chickasaws as nations in the eyes of the U.S. government?

The Hopewell Treaty of 1786

3. Using a modern map of Mississippi and the United States, locate the Mississippi River, Natchez, Vicksburg, and the 31st parallel. Why was control of the Mississippi River vital to the Europeans, and the Americans?

The Mississippi River was, as it is now, a major artery through the heart of the U.S. This river allowed access to the inland from the Gulf of Mexico to transport goods, raw materials, troops, and people to the midwest.

4. Why would it have been important for a British merchant living in Spanish West Florida to speak and understand the Choctaw language?

Merchants earn their living by selling and trading goods. They could procure raw materials from the Native Americans by selling them finished products. In turn they would make money by selling the raw materials to the Europeans. To have good relations with another culture who you want to work with, it is a good idea to attempt to learn and understand their language.

5. Summarize the changes that occurred in the Native Nations through their contact with the European/American settlers and governments. Do you think there was ever any honest consideration or respect given to the Native Americans by these people or do you think they were thought of as pawns by the occupying nations? Why or why not?

European diseases affected the tribes early on by decimating the population. Native Americans used the European finished goods and trade became important on both sides. The governments involved were mainly interested in using the Native Americans as pawns in their wars and eventually forced them from their land and heritage.

Teacher Barter Baazaar Guide

After completing a classroom barter bazaar use images from the George Rapalje Notebook at http://www.mdah.ms.gov/arrec/digital_archives/series/rapalje to compare trading in the eighteenth century with classroom experience. Topics will include the ease of bartering, its fairness, and how it compares to the use of money today. Note: To locate specific pages, go to the website, click on “Browse Images,” and then enter the desired page number in the box below the image.

1. Ask if common items developed a certain value in relation to other items. For example, perhaps a baseball card could be swapped for five Mardi Gras beads. Ask the students which items are worth more and why. To further illustrate the point, look at the following entries in the Rapalje Notebook:

- a. “April 2, 1796 – Ahajee to 8 hydes (sic) for a gun” *Rapalje Notebook item 39V (search for page 115)*

- b. “Atunklantubby, 3 kegs of taffia (a kind of rum made from low grade molasses or sugar) for 36 hydes, 2 stroud (sic) blankets (sic) for 16 hydes, 2 flaps for 4 hydes” *Rapalje Notebook item 47V (search for page 123)*

Ask the students to consider the math involved. If a gun is worth eight hides, then how many guns would be a fair trade for a stroud blanket or a keg of taffia? How many flaps would be traded for a gun?

2. Ask students what types of items would have been desired and valuable on the Mississippi frontier. After you have received some answers, look at the following entries in the Rapalje Notebook:

- a. “November 2, 1793. Brother of John Turnball. [Order for] 50 ld (sic) ball, 25 ld powder, 200 gun flints, 50 ld sugar, 50 ld coffee” *Rapalje Notebook item 15 (search for page 91)*

- b. “[Order for] 1 barrel salt, 1 barrel of taffia, 20 gallons, 8 yards sheating, 11 ld coffee, 10 ld sugar, 1 tin knife, ½ ld soap” *Rapalje Notebook item 26V (search for page 102)*

Ask students to consider why these items would have been valuable on the Mississippi frontier. How were these items used? Which items do they think would be worth more - necessary items or luxury items? Why?

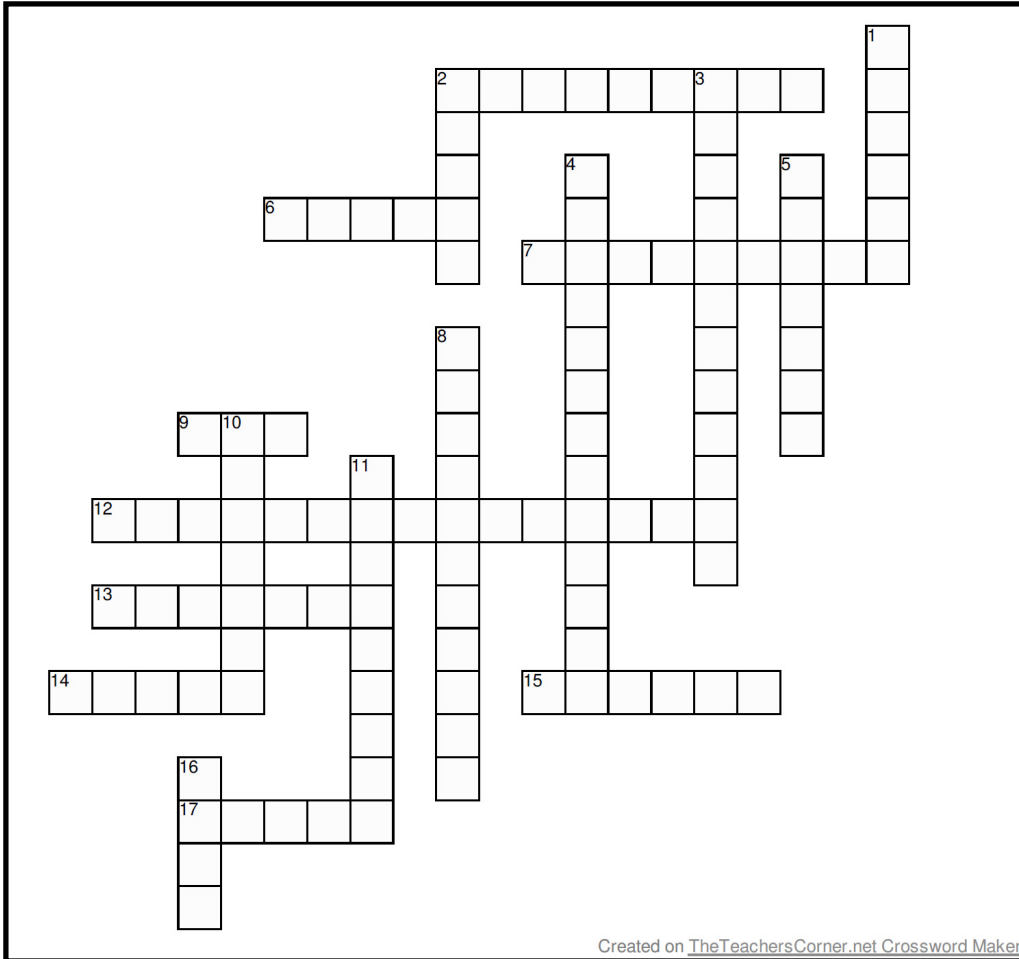
3. Finally, discuss the need for trust in a barter economy. Look at this entry in the Rapalje Notebook:

- a. “Atunklantubby to 4 kegs taffia for 48 hydes, 2 stroud blankets for 16 hydes, 2 flaps for 4 hydes, [totaling 76 hydes]. 38 hydes due me. [He] gave me bad deer skins.” *Rapalje Notebook item 52 (search for page 128)*

Ask students to consider why trust is important in a barter economy. Why is it more important in a barter economy than in a currency economy? Have the students discuss the benefits of using a standard currency to value goods.

Choctaw Crossword Puzzle

Use the key on the right to complete the crossword puzzle.



Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

- Chewlaugh: fox
- Chucfa: rabbit
- Coie: tiger
- Concoshi Ofullee: chicken
- Essee: deer
- Fochuse: duck
- Kaintaw: beaver
- Nasubow: wolf
- Nitta: bear
- Ofa: dog
- Opagh: owl
- Shalocklock: goat
- Showee: raccoon
- Sockhushe: pig
- Subaw Nocknee: stallion
- Subaw Tike: mare
- Subaw: horse
- Waughtunlaugh: swan

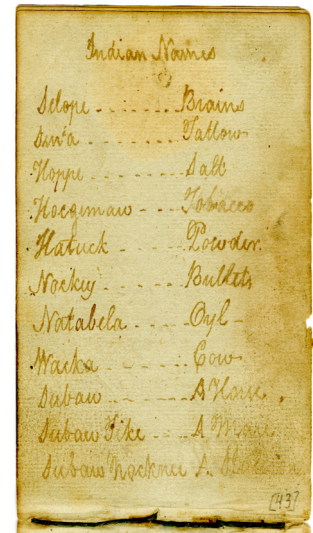
These translations are from George Rapalje's 18th century notebook. The words may not be exactly like the modern, formal Choctaw language, but they are how he interpreted them and used them to communicate with Choctaws in his business.

ACROSS

2. We get ham and bacon from this animal.
6. Varieties include black, grizzly and polar.
7. A female horse or mare
9. Man's best friend.
12. What came first the _____ or the egg?
13. Cousin of the family dog.
14. Venison comes from this animal
15. This animal has long ears and hops.
17. A nocturnal bird

DOWN

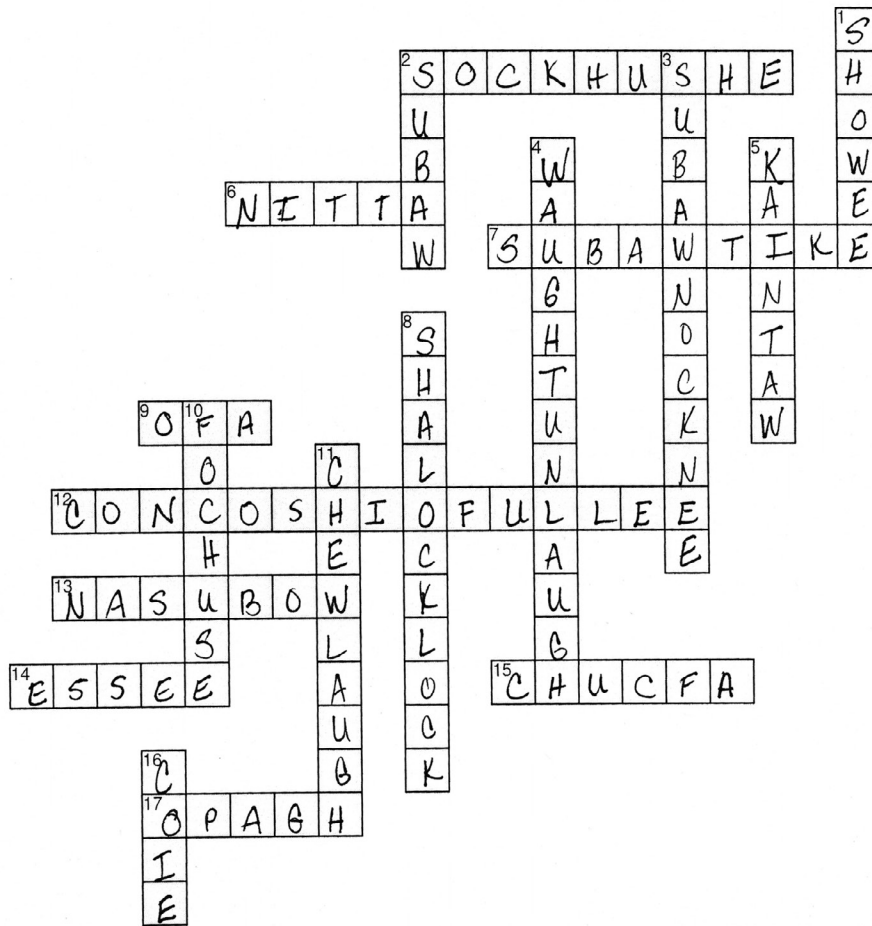
1. This masked bandit has a ringed tail.
2. This animal wears a saddle and shoes.
3. A male horse.
4. The Ugly Duckling became a _____.
5. This animal has a flat tail and builds dams.
8. Billy _____ Gruff
10. Donald and Daffy have the same last name.
11. A _____ in the hen house.
16. Lions, _____ and bears, oh my!



Rapalje Notbook Item 43, page 35. MDAH Archives and Records Services

Choctaw Crossword Puzzle

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- Chewlaugh: fox
- Chucfa: rabbit
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- Essee: deer
- Fochuse: duck
- Kaintaw: beaver
- Nasubow: wolf
- Nitta: bear
- Ofa: dog
- Opagh: owl
- Shalocklock: goat
- Showee: raccoon
- Sockhushe: pig
- Subaw Nocknee: stallion
- Subaw Tike: mare
- Subaw: horse
- Waightunlaugh: swan

These translations are from George Rapalje's 18th century notebook. The words may not be exactly like the modern, formal Choctaw language, but they are how he interpreted them and used them to communicate with Choctaws in his business.

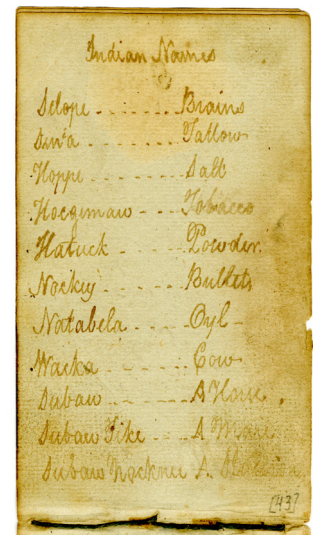
Created on TheTeachersCorner.net Crossword Maker

ACROSS

2. We get ham and bacon from this animal.
6. Varieties include black, grizzly and polar.
7. A female horse or mare
9. Man's best friend.
12. What came first the _____ or the egg?
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page 35.
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Name: _____ Date: _____

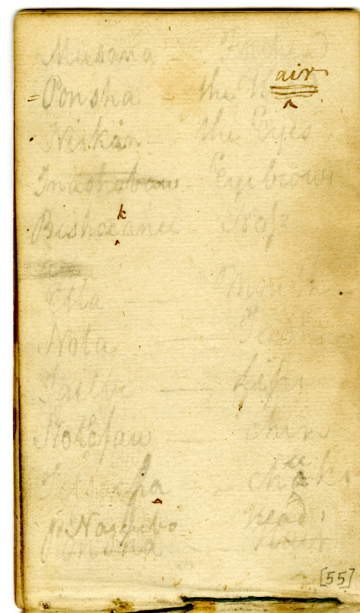
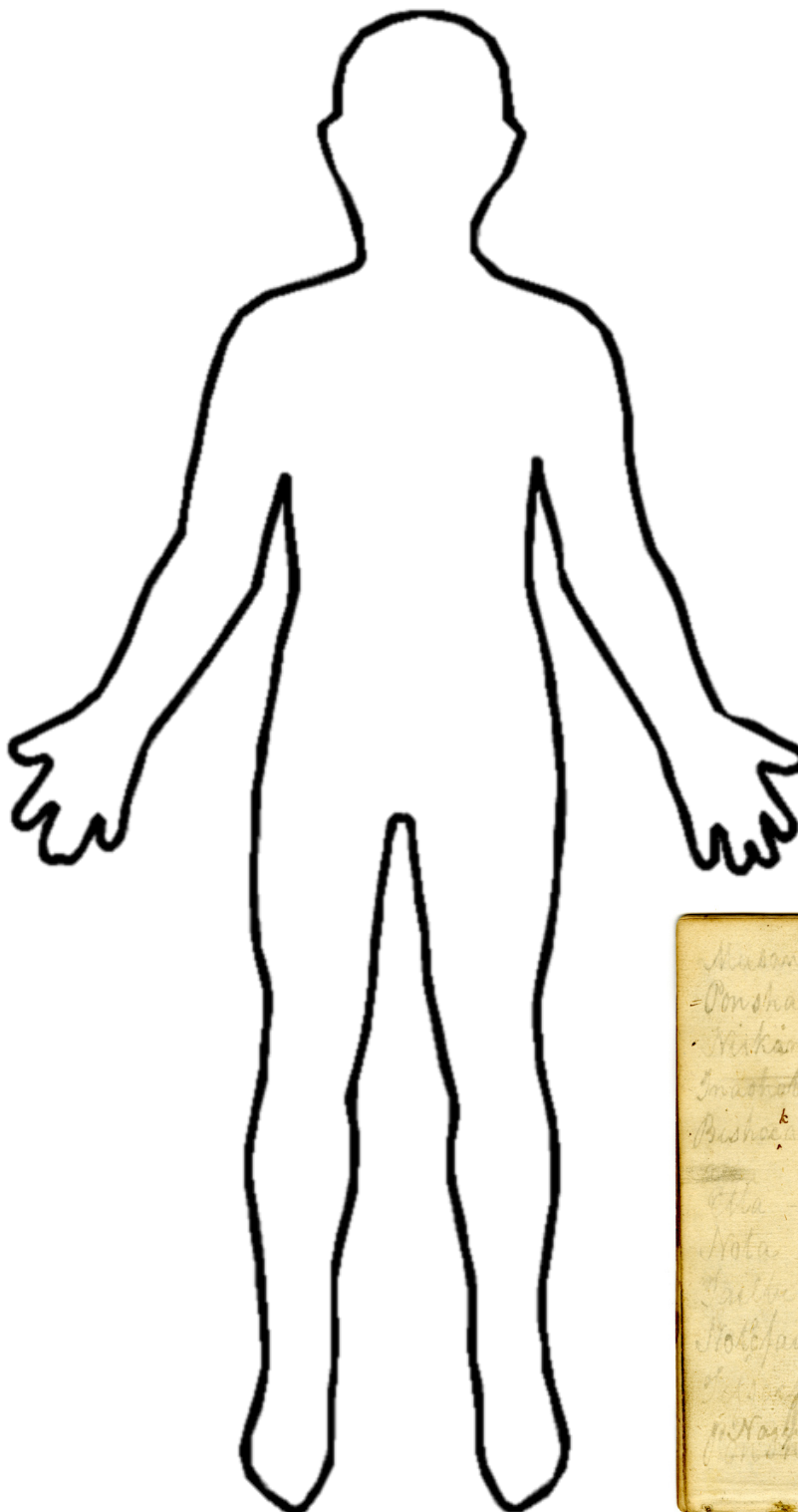
Body Silhouette

Using the key below, label the parts of the body using their Choctaw name.

Key

- Bisuckana: nose
- Etta: mouth
- Eyca: feet
- Ibuck: hands
- Netuckfaugh: chin
- Niskin: eyes
- Nota: teeth
- Nuscobaw: head
- Ponsha: hair
- Socobaw: arms
- Thisucpa: cheeks
- Tocobaw: belly

Rapalje Notebook,
items 55 and 56
(search for pages 47
and 48)



Rapalje Notebook
Item 55,
page 47.
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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY LESSON PLANS

TEACHER EVALUATION

COMPLETE BOTH SIDES AND PLEASE MAIL OR FAX TO THE ADDRESS ON THE NEXT PAGE. THANK YOU!

TEACHER NAME _____

SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS _____

EMAIL (OPTIONAL) _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS _____ GRADE LEVEL _____

LESSON TITLE _____ **Early Trading and Talking with Choctaws** _____

1. In your opinion, did this unit elicit better than average student response; if so, how?
2. Which segments of the unit exceeded your students' attention span?
3. Will this unit be of assistance to you in developing future classroom activities; if so, how?
4. How did this unit add to your earlier teaching on the same subject?
5. Would this teaching unit be handier to use as a:
___multi-day unit ___multi-week unit ___other
6. Were the activities and lessons appropriate for your students? How?

Please rate the following lesson materials and activities by circling the appropriate number.

4=excellent, 3=good, 2=average, 1=inadequate

<u>Directions and Notes</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Curricular Connections</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Student Worksheets</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Interactive Activities</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Historic Images</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>References and Resources</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

Early Trading and Talking with Choctaws

<u>Activity One: Natchez and Spanish West Florida</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity Two: The Choctaw Language</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Activity Three: A Barter Economy</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Extension Activities</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Overall Lesson</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>

We would appreciate any additional comments on this teaching unit and any suggestions for improvement.
Comments may be entered in the space below.

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