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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2011 Volume III: The Idea of America

An Opportunity for All? Andrew Jackson and the American Indian

Guide for Curriculum Unit 11.03.08, published September 2011

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When the first Englishmen arrived on these shores they brought with them certain ideas and notions about freedom and liberty and just who can and cannot enjoy the benefits of such. These ideas soon became part of an "American " consciousness, and when projected upon people who held their *own* ideas and beliefs about the order of the world and how things worked, conflict was the result. Those ideas of superiority became codified into federal government policies, especially under Andrew Jackson, and the results were loss of millions of acres of Indian lands, life-ways, and sometimes, children.

During this unit students will read and analyze selected texts, images and other primary source documents. Students will decide whether Andrew Jackson is a hero and take a stand to support their findings. I have incorporated film and a father's letter concerning his son. My unit is written for eighth grade.

(Developed for Social Studies, grades 7-9; recommended for Social Studies, grades 7-9)

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