



SOCIAL SCIENCES

# Trails of Tears

## ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- **Sovereignty**
- **Treaties with the United States**
- **History**
- **Genocide, Federal Policy, and Laws**

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to ...

- Explain the U.S. government policy of forced removal of Native American people.
- Describe the forced removal of Tribes to the Siletz Coast Reservation in 1856, known as the Trails of Tears.
- Identify two divergent narratives about forced removal in history books from the perspective of the descendants of the Native American Tribes and bands in Western Oregon.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- What are two different narratives that are told about the forced removal of the Tribes of the Rogue River Valley?

## LOGISTICS

- Where does the activity take place?  
*Classroom*
- How are the students organized?  
 Whole class    Teams: 2 – 4  
 Pairs    Individually

## TIME REQUIRED

One hour and 45 minutes of class time

## Overview

This lesson builds on the two previous lessons in this module: Table Rock Treaty of 1853 and Rogue River War. It is based on chapter 8 of *The People Are Dancing Again: The History of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*.<sup>1</sup>

Together, these lessons explore the events that led to the Rogue River War and ultimately to the forced removal of more than 4,000 Native Americans from their ancestral homelands in Oregon to the Coast (Siletz) Reservation. This third lesson in the module asks students not only to learn about the Trails of Tears the Tribes took to the reservation, but also to consider how the Native perspective has been left out of the historical record and why.

There are three activities in this lesson. First, the teacher will use the slide presentation to provide an overview of the Trails of Tears. Second, students will explore the concepts of a “stock story” and “concealed stories” using a handout that provides written accounts of the Trails of Tears from a Native perspective. Finally, students will complete the timeline activity and reflect on what they learned throughout the unit.

<sup>1</sup> Wilkinson, C. (2010). *The people are dancing again: The history of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*. University of Washington Press.



## Background for teachers

This lesson provides an overview of the forced removal of the Native peoples of the Rogue River Valley and the Southern Oregon/Northern California coast from their ancestral homelands to the Siletz Coast Reservation. U.S. government officials carried out this forced removal via five different routes. While the geographical routes were different, the experience for Native people was the same: fear, grief, danger, and deprivation. Today, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians remember these events collectively as the saddest days of their entire history.

The activities in this lesson cover complex issues that are rarely taught from a Native perspective and that many students may find challenging. To support student learning, teachers should be well versed in the lesson plan and the accompanying slides and should read chapter 8 of *The People Are Dancing Again: The History of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*, which provides the necessary background for this lesson.

Key dates/timeline of the forced removal are listed below (and are also included in the slide presentation).

- **November 9, 1855** – The Siletz Coast Reservation for the Coast, Willamette, and Umpqua Tribes was established by executive order.

## STANDARDS

### Oregon social sciences standards<sup>2</sup>

**Civics and Government** - 8.5, 8.7, 8.8, 8.10

**Multicultural Studies** - 8.5, 8.9, 8.14, 8.24, 8.28

**Geography** - 8.19, 8.20

**History** - 8.22, 8.23, 8.24, 8.28

**Historical Thinking** - 8.29, 8.30, 8.31

**Social Science Analysis** - 8.32, 8.33

## MATERIALS

### What will be needed for students to engage in this activity?

- **PowerPoint presentation** (available in lesson materials; load the slides prior to the lesson to ensure they display properly)
- **Classroom writing surface** (e.g., blackboard, whiteboard, chalkboard, chart paper and markers)
- **Classroom audiovisual technology** to display PowerPoint slides
- **Student copy of PowerPoint presentation** in notes page format
- Trails of Tears story handout
- Poster paper, markers, and other materials for the timeline activity

<sup>2</sup> Oregon is in the process of revising its social sciences standards. This document references the draft 2018 standards for grade 8.



- **November 12, 1855** – In a letter to the commissioner of Indian affairs, the Oregon superintendent of Indian affairs said he could not maintain the temporary Table Rock Reservation established for the Tribes of the Upper Rogue Valley because miners and settlers would not allow the Tribes to live in peace. Due to the emergency created by the war of extermination against the Tribes in Southern Oregon, the superintendent of Indian affairs demanded that these Tribes be removed immediately and permanently to the Siletz Coast Reservation. The superintendent planned to buy several land claims adjacent to the reservation that could be a temporary staging area for removal and then later be a permanent part of the reservation. Instead, a separate reservation, the Grand Ronde Reservation, would be created in 1857.
- **January 1856** – The U.S. government marched 480 members of the Kalapuya, Molalla, and Umpqua Tribes from their homes in the Willamette Valley and the Umpqua Reservation. The trails went overland to a temporary camp established at Grand Ronde to hold survivors until the Siletz Coast Reservation was operational (Beckham, 1996).
- **February 22, 1856** – Toquahear (Tye Sam) and 400 Taklema, Shasta, and Upper Rogue Athabaskan people were forced to march from Fort Lane (on the Table Rock Reservation near present-day Medford) to the temporary camp

## VOCABULARY

**Extermination or genocide** - Acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.<sup>3</sup>

**Reservation** - "A federal Indian reservation is an area of land reserved by or for a tribe or confederation of tribes under treaty or other agreement with the United States, executive order, or federal statute or administrative action as permanent tribal homelands."<sup>4</sup>

**Stock story** - Narratives that are told by a dominant group and passed on through historical and literary documents and mainstream media. Stock stories perpetuate oppression, racism, and white supremacy by explaining events in a way that absolves and even supports the status quo.<sup>5</sup>

**Concealed story** - Narratives that coexist with stock stories but are often circulated, told, and retold by people in the margins of the dominant or mainstream society. Concealed stories express and honor the experiences and aspirations of people who are marginalized, and often stigmatized, by the dominant society, allowing them to recount their experiences and critique or "talk back" to mainstream narratives. In this way, concealed stories provide a very different perspective than stock stories, giving accounts of struggle, self-affirmation, and survival in the face of oppression. We can deconstruct stock stories by comparing them to concealed stories, identifying different perspectives and knowledge and developing a fuller picture of our society and its institutions.<sup>6</sup>



at Grand Ronde. The trail followed the existing California-Oregon Trail (now Interstate 5). It took 33 days to go 263 miles. Eight people died and eight babies were born along the way (Beckham, 1996; Schwartz, 1997).

- **June 21, 1856** – After the conclusion of the Rogue River War, the U.S. Army rounded up Native people at Big Bend on the Rogue River and marched them 50 miles to the military fort at Port Orford. More than 700 Native people were shipped to Portland on the steamer ship Columbia and then taken on a smaller ship to a site near Dayton. They were then marched on foot to Grand Ronde and eventually the Siletz Coast Reservation (Beckham, 1996; Schwartz, 1997).
- **July 1856** – Another voyage of the Columbia steamship took more Lower Rogue River people and the bands of Cholcultah (Tyee George) and Lympy Tyee along the same route.
- **July 9, 1856** – The U.S. military marched men, women, and children from Tyee John’s (Tecumtum) band, along with people from the Pistol and Chetco Rivers, north along the coast in a grueling journey of more than 200 miles (Schwartz, 1997). Officials deliberately chose the slower and more difficult overland route to

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>

<sup>4</sup> Definition from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs: <https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>

<sup>5</sup> Definition adapted from Bell et al. (2008).

<sup>6</sup> Definition adapted from Bell et al. (2008).



## ADAPTIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

**This lesson is structured around independent and group analysis work as well as small group and whole-class discussions. Much of the lesson can be adapted for distance or independent learning purposes, using web conferencing or your school district’s online learning platform. A suggested sequence follows. Be sure all students have either print or electronic access to the materials described.**

### Activity 1. Mini-lecture

1. Follow PowerPoint slides 1–12 to provide an overview of the Trails of Tears.
2. Make sure to read out loud all key talking points provided and ask students to write down questions as they follow along with the virtual presentation.
3. At the end of the presentation, ask students to share their clarifying questions and be prepared to review slide deck content.

### Activity 2. The danger of a single story

1. Follow PowerPoint slides 13–18 and use chat applications and other virtual collaboration tools to support student discussion.
2. Share Slide 13 and read the Wilkinson quote. Ask students to type a response to the following questions into the chat (or other online collaboration tool): What does Wilkinson mean by, “There was no fully common experience, no single story”? Why is this important?

*(Continued on next page)*

punish Tyee John and other leaders for fighting to remain in their homeland.

- **Late summer 1856** – The Hanis and Miluk peoples, who had been kept as prisoners near the town of Coos Bay since the outbreak of the Rogue River War, were marched up the coast to Fort Umpqua, joining the Lower Umpqua (Quitch) people.
- **August 1856** – The first groups of people arrived at the headquarters of the Siletz Coast Reservation (the modern site of the town of Siletz). Salmon River (Neachesna), Siletz, Yaquina, Alsea, and Siuslaw peoples were forced to share their homelands with hundreds of newcomers without compensation. In the following months, other groups who had been held at the Grand Ronde encampment or who had held out on isolated pockets of the coast would also be forced onto the reservation.

### Key ideas

- The Rogue River War and the threat of annihilation led to the forced removal of Tribes and bands from the Rogue River Valley and the Southern Oregon/Northern California coast to the Coast (Siletz) Reservation.
- This forced removal began in the winter of 1856 and had several phases, which are collectively known as the Trails of Tears due to the heartache of the displacement and the brutality and suffering the Native people experienced along the way.

### ADAPTIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING



*(Continued)*

3. Next share slides 14–17 and guide students to an understanding of the differences between a stock story and a concealed story. Read through each example story with students. Facilitate an online discussion on differences students notice between the stock story and concealed story about the forced removal of Native Americans in Western Oregon.
4. Finally, provide students with an electronic copy (or hard copy via mail) of the “Single-Story Analysis” handout. Ask students to complete the questions on their own as a homework assignment and collect responses to assess student understanding.

### Activity 3. Timeline activity

1. This activity continues from the previous lesson in this unit. The timeline should be constructed by students and should reflect their own learning.
2. Review the timeline that was created collectively during the previous three lessons in the unit.
3. Using PowerPoint slide 19 and students’ notes from Activity 1 as a reference, ask students to update their timeline. Facilitate students’ discussion and reflection on the following key questions: How does learning about these events change the way you think about the history of Oregon? How does this knowledge change the way you think about the future of Oregon?

- Despite removal, today many Siletz families maintain ties to their ancestral homelands across Western Oregon.

### Links to useful websites that add more detail or context

- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians website: [www.ctsi.nsn.us/](http://www.ctsi.nsn.us/)
- Video lecture about the Rogue River Wars by a Southern Oregon University professor: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ayHZUDmFowg>
- Oregon Public Broadcasting clip about the archaeological finds on the Rogue River War battlefields: <https://www.ohs.org/events/revisiting-the-rogue-river-wars-of-southern-oregon.cfm>

### Lesson preparation

To prepare for this lesson, teachers should:

1. Read chapter 8 of *The People Are Dancing Again* (provided in the appendix)
2. Review previous lessons and materials in this module
3. Review the story activity excerpts
4. Watch Chimamanda Adichie's TED talk: [https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story)
5. Ensure students have access to all materials (printed and/or electronic) needed to participate in this lesson
6. Prepare classroom audiovisual technology to display the PowerPoint slides and any other audiovisual materials to be reviewed with students in class
7. Write the lesson objectives and key vocabulary on a classroom writing surface

## References

- Beckham, S. D. (1996). *Requiem for a people: The Rogue Indians and the frontiersmen*. Oregon State University Press.
- Bell, L. A., Roberts, R. A., Irani, K., & Murphy, B. (2008). *The Storytelling Project curriculum: Learning about race and racism through storytelling and the arts*. Barnard College. [http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/stp\\_curriculum.pdf](http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/stp_curriculum.pdf)
- O'Donnell, T. (1992). *An arrow in the earth: General Joel Palmer and the Indians of Oregon*. Oregon Historical Society Press.
- Schwartz, E. A. (1997). *The Rogue River Indian War and its aftermath, 1850–1980*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Wilkinson, C. (2010). *The people are dancing again: The history of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*. University of Washington Press.

## Resource

- Whaley, G. H. (2010). *Oregon and the collapse of Illahee: U.S. empire and the transformation of an Indigenous world, 1792–1859*. University of North Carolina Press.

## Considerations for teachers

### Assessment

Students should be assessed formatively and summatively. The formative assessment will involve teacher observation of student participation in class and group discussions. Summative assessment will involve teacher review of each student's written analysis of the timeline and primary source activities to confirm understanding of key facts and themes. Students should be able to express an understanding of the complexity of the events that resulted in the forced removal of Native peoples of the Rogue River Valley to the Siletz Coast Reservation.



Checklist to confirm understanding:

- Did the students understand the historical events leading to forced relocation of the Rogue River Valley peoples?
- Were the students able to articulate the impact this time period had on the generations that followed?

### Practices

- *Small-group activities/discussions* - Small-group activities allow students to share and analyze ideas with one, two, or three other people. This practice can be good for students who do not feel comfortable sharing their ideas with the whole class. The teacher should monitor group discussions to determine the degree to which students understand the concepts.
- The teacher must be able to read various maps of Oregon as well as historical documents.
- The teacher should read and reflect on the content of chapter 8 of *The People Are Dancing Again*.

### Reflection/Closure

As students to complete an exit ticket on a Post-It notes or scratch paper answering the following questions:

1. How does learning about these events change the way you think about the history of Oregon?
2. How does this knowledge change the way you think about the future of Oregon?



## Extension activity (optional)

### Say:

*The people of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians continue to tell their own stories and to advocate for the return of land and rights guaranteed to them by treaties. Let's watch part of a video.*

Show students "Standing Strong: The Tribal Nations of Western Oregon"  
(9:20–17:28) <https://youtu.be/-43tfBzWfDE?t=559>

## Appendix

Materials included in the electronic folder that support this lesson are:

- *The People Are Dancing Again*, chapter 8
- Trails of Tears--Story Handout
- Trails of Tears\_Slide Deck
- Trails of Tears\_Slide Deck.Notes Page Format

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## Activity 1

# Mini-lecture—Overview of the Trails of Tears

*Time: 30 minutes*

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### Overview

This activity uses the PowerPoint slides to provide an overview of the federal Indian policy of forced relocation to the Siletz Coast Reservation.

**Note:** The content in this presentation is detailed. Students would benefit from having a copy of the slides in notes page format (see the appendix).

### Step 1

Share slides 1–2. Distribute a copy of slides 1–12 in notes pages format to help students follow the presentation and write/highlight key ideas and facts. Begin the mini-lecture with a review of the U.S. government’s policy of forced removal. Explain that the forced relocation of Native people to the Siletz Coast Reservation in 1856 reflected this broader federal policy.

### Say:

*In 1855, the Siletz Coast Reservation was established at the urging of Joel Palmer, the Oregon superintendent of Indian affairs, and George Manypenny, the commissioner of Indian affairs. They advocated for removal and relocation of the Native people from across Western Oregon onto a single reservation. Ultimately, 4,000 Native Americans were forcibly relocated to the Siletz Coast Reservation and what would later become the nearby Grand Ronde Reservation between 1856 and 1860. Their stories have been largely concealed from the teaching of Oregon’s history. Today, we’re going to learn about the forced removal of Tribes to the Siletz Coast Reservation in 1856, known collectively as the Trails of Tears.*

## Activity 1 (Continued)

### Step 2

Share slide 3.

#### Say:

*U.S. government officials enforced removal by five different routes. The routes may have differed, but each journey was filled with fear, grief, danger, and deprivation for the Native people. Today, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians remember these events collectively as the saddest days of their entire history. This slide shows an overview of the multiple Trails of Tears. Many Tribal nations throughout North America endured similar removals from ancestral lands creating shared experiences that resonate across Indian Country. Today, we're going to learn about forced removal in Western Oregon.*

[Using the map and list of events below, provide an overview of the Trails of Tears.]

- **January 1856** – The first removals took place. Members of the Kalapuya, Molalla, and Umpqua Tribes were forced to leave their homes in the Willamette Valley and the Umpqua Reservation.
- **February 23, 1856** – Toquahear and 400 Taklema, Shasta, and Upper Rogue Athabaskan people were forced to march from Fort Lane (on the Table Rock Reservation near the present-day town of Medford) to a temporary camp at Grand Ronde.
- **June 21, 1856** – After conclusion of the Rogue River War, the U.S. Army rounded up Native people at Big Bend on the Rogue River and then marched them 50 miles to the military fort at Port Orford. At least 600 people were put aboard the steamer ship Columbia to Portland and then marched to Grand Ronde and Siletz.



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## Activity 1 (Continued)

- **July 1856** – Another voyage of the Columbia steamship took more lower-Rogue River people and the bands of Cholcultah (Tye George) and Lympy Tye along the same route.
- **July 1856** – The U.S. military marched men, women, and children from Tye John's (Tecumtum) band, along with people from the Pistol and Chetco Rivers, north along the coast in a grueling journey of more than 200 miles. Officials deliberately chose the slower and more difficult overland route to punish Tye John and other leaders for fighting to remain in their homeland.
- **Late summer 1856** – Hanis and Miluk people, who had been kept as prisoners near the town of Empire since the outbreak of the Rogue River War, were marched up the coast to the new army post at Fort Umpqua, joining the Lower Umpqua (Quitch) people.

### Step 3

Share slides 4–13 and review each key point. Allow time for students to take notes and ask questions.

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## Activity 2

# The danger of a single story

Time: 30 minutes

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### Overview

This activity unpacks two short stories about the uprooting of more than 4,000 Native people in Western Oregon in 1856.

### Step 1

Share slide 14 and ask for a student volunteer to read the Wilkinson quote.

### Step 2

[Think-Write-Share] Post the key question below and ask students to take out a piece of scratch paper or classroom journal. Give students three to five minutes to write down their thoughts. Next, tell each student to find a discussion partner (or use pre-assigned partners) and spend one or two minutes sharing their ideas.

**Note:** Some students may feel uncomfortable discussing their ideas with a partner or with the class. Allow these students to continue writing in their journal.

**Key question:** What does Wilkinson mean by, “There was no fully common experience, no single story”? Why is this important?

### Step 3

Share slide 15.

### Say:

*Today, we’re going to learn about stock stories and concealed stories. We begin with stock stories because they are the most public and common in dominant, mainstream institutions such as schools, government agencies, workplaces, and*

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## Activity 2 (Continued)

*the media. Concealed stories coexist alongside stock stories but often remain in the shadows, hidden from the public view. Concealed stories express and honor the experiences and aspirations of people in the margins, who often circulate, tell, and retell these stories. Concealed stories offer a very different perspective compared to stories told in mainstream institutions.*

### Step 4

Share slides 16–18. Read through each story with students. Explain to students that these are examples of a stock story and a concealed story about the forced removal of Native Americans in Western Oregon.

### Step 5

Share slide 19 and read aloud the discussion question. Ask students to take a minute to think about or write down the differences they notice between the stock story and concealed story about the forced removal of Native Americans in Western Oregon.

### Step 6

Facilitate a discussion with the whole class. Use the examples below to help guide student understanding.

- The stock story talks about the forced removal in a clinical, as a matter of fact, and ends with people leaving Southern Oregon/Northern California.
- The concealed story includes the way people continued to resist removal by working to make new lives on the reservations and even maintaining connections to their homelands.
- The stock story is told from the perspective of U.S. government officials and does not consider the meaning and impact removal had on the people forced from their ancestral homelands.

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## Activity 2 *(Continued)*

- The concealed story is told from a Native perspective (for example a granddaughter recounting her grandmother’s story) and considers the meaning, impact, and sense of violation from having to leave your home and everything you know.
- The stock story does not identify victims or perpetrators of the forced removal and does not include the physical or emotional abuse of Native people.
- The concealed story shares specific examples of the inhumane treatment of Native people (e.g., a mother being kicked for protecting her child, men being shot, the people not being allowed to stop and bury their dead) and names and identifies the victims of the forced removal (e.g., young daughters, children, women, mothers) as well as the perpetrators of crimes during removal (e.g., white soldiers, white militia, and the U.S. government).

### Step 7

After a 10-minute discussion, pass out the “Single-Story Analysis” handout and have students pair up and answer the questions in writing. Collect written responses to assess student understanding.



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## Activity 3

# Timeline activity

Time: 30 – 45 minutes

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### Overview

This activity continues from the previous lesson. The timeline should be constructed by students and should reflect their own learning. In this activity, students will consider the main events leading to the forced removal of Native Americans to the Coast (Siletz) Reservation and add details of the five phases of forced relocation to the timeline. The teacher should scaffold the previous Table Rock Treaty of 1853 and Rogue River War lessons as necessary.

### Step 1

Share slide 20 and ask students to take out their notes from activity 1.

### Step 2

Review the classroom timeline that was created collectively during the previous two lessons in the unit.

### Say:

*In this lesson, we learned that the forced relocation of more than 4,000 Native people in Western Oregon was grueling and traumatizing. The stories—and the psychological scars—of these events are still very present for the members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. It’s important to listen to those stories and to consider all viewpoints of the historical record.*

### Step 3

Next, ask students to get into groups of four or five (or create pre-assigned small groups) with the necessary supplies to extend the timeline with additional key events (e.g., index cards, markers, pens/pencils).

### Say:

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### Activity 3 (Continued)

*You will now work in small groups to review what we learned about the Trails of Tears. What notable events should we add to the timeline? Review your notes as a group and create a written or visual summary of two or three key events to add to our timeline.*

#### Step 4

Ask small groups to assign group roles. Each group should have a facilitator, recorder, presenter, and questioner.

- **Facilitator:** Ensures that the group stays on task and that everyone participates
- **Recorder:** Writes the title of each key event and a written or visual summary on index cards to post on the classroom timeline
- **Presenter:** Shares the group's ideas with the rest of the class and posts key event(s) on the timeline
- **Questioner:** Seeks assistance from either the teacher or another group if needed

#### Step 5

Walk around the room and check with each group for understanding and progress. Give groups about 20 minutes to complete two or three key events, then transition to a whole-class debrief.

#### Step 6

Share slide 19 and read each timeline reflection question. Provide students with two or three minutes to reflect with their group members, then ask for volunteers to share out.