



# TEACHER PAGE

## WESTWARD EXPANSION

### CHIEF JOSEPH'S WORDS OF SURRENDER

**GRADE LEVEL:** 5–8 **SUBJECT:** Social Sciences **DURATION:** One to two 40-minute class periods depending on the amount of discussion

**NATIONAL STANDARD:** Social Science, US History, ERA 4: Expansion and reform

**MATERIALS:** No special materials needed

*Use this lesson to have students reflect on the American Indian experience through the words of Chief Joseph.*

#### DESCRIPTION

Stanley Yelnats' great-grandfather, Stanley Yelnats – the first of the Stanley Yelnatses (son of the no-good dirty-rotten pig stealer) – loses his fortune while attempting to move west from New York to California. His journey is cut short when his stagecoach is robbed by Kissing Kate, so Stanley settles in Texas instead of California.

Stanley Yelnats' journey west was typical of the 1800s, the period of Westward Expansion in the United States. Westward Expansion was a time when many people envisioned the western United States as a land of opportunity and prosperity with the possibility of even finding gold. It was a time of pioneer heroism, adventure, and outlaws. Westward Expansion also resulted in a time of great loss for American Indians, who were driven from their land and forced to live on designated parcels of land called reservations.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To understand United States Westward Expansion and how it affected relations with American Indians
- To reflect on the American Indian experience(s) of Westward Expansion

#### ADAPTATIONS

- Ask younger students to write two or three sentences about the emotions they feel after hearing Chief Joseph's speech read aloud, and to give specific examples of what part of the speech makes them feel that way.
- Ask younger students to compare the experiences of the American Indians and the U.S. soldiers. Have them map out the hearts of the American Indians and the American expansionists. What was important to both parties?

#### ASSESSMENT

Design a five-point rubric to assess students on writing clear and well-reasoned responses to the writing prompt.

#### EXTENSIONS

For further study of the American Indian experience go to [www.holes.com](http://www.holes.com) to download the *Westward Expansion: The American Indian Experience* lesson plan.



#### USEFUL RESOURCES

PBS' *The West* provides a short biography of Chief Joseph: [www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a\\_c/chiefjoseph.htm](http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/a_c/chiefjoseph.htm)

For other important public statements by Chief Joseph visit: [www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/six/jospeak.htm](http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/six/jospeak.htm)

This teacher-designed web quest lets students explore differences and similarities between various tribes and their respective leaders: [www.southeastern.k12.oh.us/SEHS/Media/HoppesWebquest/NACHiefsWebQuest.htm](http://www.southeastern.k12.oh.us/SEHS/Media/HoppesWebquest/NACHiefsWebQuest.htm)



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### PROCEDURES

1. Review with students the motivating factors for Westward Expansion – wealth, land, and adventure. Ranchers, farmers, merchants, and miners, among others, made the move west. During the 1840s, the United States acquired Texas, California, and the Southwest. After the U.S. Civil War in the 1860s, the migration west accelerated, and the U.S. Army focused its military resources in that direction as well. As more and more whites settled in the West, the U.S. government demanded that the American Indians move to reservations, removing tribes from land rich in gold, silver, timber, oil, and farmland. On the reservations, American Indians were forced to live by the whites' laws and customs, and to speak English. Some American Indian tribes fought to maintain their tribal integrity and independence, and they resisted being forced onto reservation land. The Cheyenne, Sioux, Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, Arapaho, and Nez Percé were some of the tribes who fought the most dramatically to resist reservation life.
2. After several broken promises from the whites, the Nez Percé, who lived where the states of Oregon, Idaho, and Washington now come together, attempted to flee the United States to Canada. U.S. soldiers caught up with the Nez Percé just a few miles short of the Canadian border and battles ensued. After several of his people were killed, Nez Percé leader Chief Joseph surrendered and the Nez Percé were relocated to reservation land.
3. Read aloud from Chief Joseph's famous surrender speech in class (at right).
4. Ask students to think about Chief Joseph's words. What reasons does he give for surrendering? Compare the effect of his language and choice of words to the simple statement, "I surrender." Discuss whether surrendering can be a more courageous act than continuing to fight.
5. Ask students to write a paragraph expressing their thoughts about surrender and courage. Can surrendering be more courageous than continuing a fight? Why or why not?
6. Have students include an example from their own lives when they either chose to surrender rather than fight, or when they wished they had surrendered instead of fighting, or vice versa. How could the outcome of the situation have changed?

**"I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Toohulhulsote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food; no one knows where they are – perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more forever."**

**– Chief Joseph**