

How to Read a Treaty

Reading Strategies to Understand, Analyze and Interpret Complex Text

Overview

This lesson is designed to teach students a “divide and comprehend” approach to reading technical documents of any kind. The focus of this lesson is on reading treaties, constitutions and other primary source historical documents, but these strategies can be applied to tasks as mundane, yet important, as reading a contract or even a credit card agreement. Almost any technical document can be made accessible by nearly any reader if the right combinations of temporary supports are employed. Here, the focus on repeated reading, annotation, purpose setting, prediction, group process and structured analytic tools allow for deep understanding of the text and high levels of student success as readers

Materials

- A clear copy of the selected treaty, one per student, without margin notes. Go to: <http://web.archive.org/web/20170728082625/http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/com0600.htm>. Note that these can be copied and pasted into a Word document to produce clean copies and also redact as needed to accommodate students reading levels / stamina.
- Highlighters for each student
- Word Work Form (one per group)
- Analysis of a Treaty Form(s) (one per group)
- Impacts Form (one per group)

Common Core State Standards Addressed as Learning Targets

Note that NMAI Essential Understandings 2, 3, 6, and 8 are addressed in this investigation as well as C3 standards. More detailed information is found at the end of this lesson.

- I highlight to find points of confusion for further research. (RI, W7, W9)
- I recognize the structure of a treaty and can use the structure to “chunk” the reading for deeper understanding. (R1, R3, R5, R10)
- I determine the meaning of unfamiliar words in context (RI4, L4, L5, L6)
- I translate from legal language into common language parts (articles) of a treaty (RI2)
- I collaborate with classmates to explore and clarify confusions, interpret text and infer regarding the impact of treaties on tribes, settlers and the US government. (SL1, SL6, R1, W4, W9, L as required)
- I write in my own words, a summary of articles from a treaty. (R1, R2, R3, R10, W2, W4, W9, W7, S1, S6, L as required)
- I interpret the intended purpose of each part of a treaty from two different points of view –tribal and federal. (R6, W2, W4, W9, W7, S1, S6)
- I know some of the rights, obligations and responsibilities determined by treaties. (R1, W7, W9)

Procedures

Day One (Approximately 1 hour)

- Bell ringer activity to write their way in, ask students to write their best guess definition of the word treaty in their notebooks, then draw a line under this thinking.
- Have them share with table partners, and see if they can come to consensus on a working definition.
- Have the class craft this working definition and write on the board.
- Have students individually read the selected treaty.
- Set a timer and give them up to 15 minutes for the first independent reading.
- During the reading they highlight words or phrases they do not know or points of confusion.
- Whole class, conduct a short discussion about the reading.
 - What does this document do?
 - Was it hard to read?
 - If yes, why?
 - Do you think there is a way to read this so you understand it?
 - Do you think others found the same parts or words to be troublesome or hard to understand?
- Conduct a line up activity with their highlighted papers.
- Holding their copies in front of them, facing out, have them mingle in the room looking for patterns in each other's highlighting.
- After checking out each other's areas of confusion and hard words, have students line up from most highlighter to least highlighter facing the teacher.
- Split the line in half.
- Fold the lines by having the individuals at the center lead and walk down the line until they face the person at the end of each line, and the second person faces the next person etc.... creating divergent pairs.
- Ask them to share and briefly discuss their areas of confusion and see if they have any tough terms in common.
- Seat students in divergent groups of four. (divergent = high, low and middle highlighting if these differences exist.)
- In groups, have them reread the treaty stopping when they come to an unfamiliar word.
- For each unfamiliar word, the group will develop a group "hunch" or a have-a-go definition and then they will cross check their hunch with a dictionary (online or text) selecting the definition that most closely matches their hunch.
- Have each group use the word work form attached to capture their thinking.

Day Two (Approximately 1 Hour)

- Seat students in groups from the previous day.
- Have groups conduct a third reading of the treaty, but this time, they work as a group to paraphrase article by article into simple, everyday language. The key question for groups to focus on is, "What does this article do, or require?"
- Encourage them to use their word work form from the previous day to aid in comprehension.

- Have groups capture their paraphrased summaries of the articles on the Analysis of a Treaty form attached.
- You may want to limit the number of words they can use in their paraphrased GIST statement to 12 or fewer to force them to be concise.
- You may select to require these statements to be complete sentences, or place other parameters to support strong language use. If not required today, have them do so in a subsequent day. Break the tasks up based on student stamina and frustration, but don't allow the final to be stated as fragments.
- Finally, have groups go back to the treaty again, but this time, article by article, discussing the following three questions.
 - What's in it for the Tribe? + -
 - What's in it for the non-Indian settlers? + -
 - What's in it for the US government? + -
- Use the data capture form attached to gather information from these different perspectives.
- When all groups are done, they process this information by reporting back to the entire class.
- Conduct a discussion or stage a Socratic circle to foster debate over divergent interpretations.
- You may opt to provide points of clarification as you can, or simply collect lingering questions for another day. Consider inviting an expert into the classroom for a discussion of treaties.
- Follow up questions and activities include:
 - Do we know, or how would we learn who had authority to sign on behalf of the tribes?
 - How can we tell if the signers had legitimate authority to represent their tribe?
 - How might language barriers have impacted "informed" consent?
 - How were interpreters used and did those individuals interpret clearly? How can we know?
 - What was the long-term intent? Short-term intent? Are there clues in the language?
 - How did the ability to provide (or promises to provide) food and other essential resources impact power and relationships during "negotiations?"
 - What was ceded, and in exchange for what?
 - What was reserved? By whom? Why?
 - Do you think this treaty has been honored by all sides? What evidence do you have to support your contention?
- Close this lesson by returning to the definition of "treaty" crafted at the beginning. In their individual note books, have them write about what they now understand a treaty to be. Ask them to be specific.
- Finally, post or project multiple dictionary definitions of "treaty." Which most closely matches their current understanding? How far off or close was their class prediction or hunch?

Assessment

- Definition and revised definition (whole class and individual).
- Highlighted individual copies of the treaty in question.
- Word work forms completed from each group.
- Analysis of a Treaty forms for each group.
- Direct observation of student discussion and equitable group participation.

- For older students, you may select to hand them another treaty and a new “Analysis of a Treaty” form and have them independently paraphrase each article in their own words to verify their reading comprehension, general understanding of treaty language and ability to write a gist statement or paraphrased summary.

Teacher Notes and Cautions

- Summarization and the ability to take complex content and translate it so you can more deeply understand it is a critical skill that needs to be practiced often. Use this same lesson format to support further development of this skill with other primary source documents such as constitutions, agreements or contracts.
- Repeated reading of primary source documents on complex and unfamiliar subjects is essential for comprehension. This lesson involves independent reading followed by at least three purpose-driven repeated readings in small group settings. Each exposure to a complex text needs to place different cognitive demands on the learner to increase depth of comprehension. When you use primary sources, work to stretch students thinking, shift perspectives or set new purposes for their reading.
- If the text is too difficult for independent reading for your students, consider scaffolding to support their reading comprehension. You might select to read a complex article aloud, then partner read (every other article...) along with the child in order to build confidence. Move them gradually to ever higher levels of independence while requiring them to engage actively in reading.

Vocabulary

treaty, article, allotment, assimilate, cede, confinement, removal, displace, equitable, promise, agree, negotiation, reservation, trust, unsettled, stewardship

Extension Activities

1. To adapt this lesson for younger students, begin by providing a whole class demonstration. Using a Smart Board, or overhead projector, take one treaty and model how to read it part by part and paraphrase into simple, clear and brief language. Fill out one entire analysis form.
2. Extend the learning for 4th- 6th graders by having them take their phrases and rewrite as a group in complete sentences.
3. Extend high school students ability to interpret the treaties by assigning additional research and advanced reading. Have students do this work in pairs or groups, chart out their findings over a day or two and then report back to the entire class.

Meeting Standards

Choices made by the teacher implementing this lesson can increase the standards addressed and also modify the rigor with which they are addressed. For example, a simple change like requiring reflections to be written in complete sentences, paragraphs or including a specific number of details can dramatically impact the way the writing and language standards are exercised in any lesson. The following standard sets are potentially exercised through this lesson.

Common Core State Standards - College and Career Ready Anchor Standards

Reading Information

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Writing

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. (if option selected)
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (if option selected)
7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking/Listening

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Language

Note that language standards 1-4 depend upon the focus or extension of the writing process required by the teacher. It is assumed that students are always required to use standard English conventions and to use language appropriate to the context. Direct instruction on any language sub-standard is provided to individuals based on patterns of errors present in their writing and whether they are required to take this assignment through the proof-reading or editing stages of the writing process.

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.
4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.
5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

C3 Social Studies Standards

Another way of organizing this lesson, and potentially the larger unit on removal that it is related to, is to examine the C3 Framework for Social Studies State Standards. This framework uses the lens of the disciplines for social studies. While four areas are emphasized, many others including psychology, sociology, anthropology etc. are equally viable lenses through which an investigation into Indian Removal could be conducted.

Following is an adaptation of the C3 Framework Disciplinary Inquiry Matrix found on pages 66 to 68 of the C3 Framework Document. It is useful to see how each of the four dimensions is expressed within the context of the disciplines. If this structure was selected for the overall unit by a teacher, consider having expert teams set up for each discipline and then work to develop a supportive “text set” unique to each discipline through which each team would engage in an investigation. The result as teams report their findings would be dynamic, as each discipline brings forward very different impacts of removal. The lesson above is predominantly presented from the perspective of the discipline of history.

WAYS OF KNOWING	CIVICS/GOVERNMENT POLITICAL SCIENTISTS SAY...	ECONOMICS ECONOMISTS SAY...	GEOGRAPHY GEOGRAPHERS SAY...	HISTORY HISTORIANS SAY...
DIMENSION 1				
POSSIBLE DISCIPLINARY COMPELLING AND SUPPORTING QUESTIONS	What political pressures impacted removal policy? What was the role of each branch of the federal government, states and tribes? Who held political sway or capitol and what was the effect?	What were some of the economic causes of Indian Removal? What were the economic consequences for each Tribe? What deals or exchanges were made? Who gained and how?	How was title to Indian lands transferred? How were boundaries of Indian lands determined? What patterns can be identified? How were lands selected for "ceding" and what resources played roles in this selection? What lands were "reserved" and why? How were the last reserved lands lost?	What happened and how do we know? What was the chronology of Indian Removal Policy and when was the policy conceived? What is the relationship between Indian Removal and earlier doctrines, like the Doctrine of Discovery? Was Indian Removal premeditated and systematic? How do we know?
DIMENSION 2				
DATA SOURCES NEEDED TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS	Government policies, policy pronouncements, speeches, congressional acts, statistics, leadership efforts, political behavior; observations of local conditions, interviews; news reports	Statistics and lots of them in as real time as possible (labor, capital, credit, monetary flow, supply, demand, assets, production capacity and cost of removal and who benefitted economically)	Spatial and environmental data; statistics, map representations, GIS data to measure observable changes to the planet; indicators of territorial impact	Accounts from eye witnesses, impacted individuals and primary sources of all types (oral history, diaries, journals, newspapers, photos, economic data, artifacts, evidence in treaties and policy docs)
KEY CONCEPTS AND CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDINGS NECESSARY TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS (non-exclusive examples)	Theories of political behavior, rationality, self-interest, political parties, power flow, government, fiscal policy; relationships between the state and markets; constitutional limits on government, debates about those limits; evidence (to make claims)	Application of different types of economic theories to gauge impact on labor, capital, wealth self-sufficiency and how these transferred hands between impacted groups and individuals; evidence (to make claims)	Theories of human land/resource use; spatial representation, scale, degree of distortion, map symbols, specialized GIS symbolic systems and representations; evidence (to make claims)	Theories of human behavior, thought, perspective, agency, context, historical significance; historical imagination; moral judgment; evidence (to make claims)
KEY STRATEGIES AND SKILLS NEEDED TO ADDRESS QUESTIONS (non-exclusive examples)	Reading statistics from polls, conducting polls and interview research; reading subtext into policies/pronouncements; reading power flow and blockage, converting such data into evidence to make arguments and claims that answer sub-questions	Capability to read statistics critically, for assessing agendas behind statistical representations; conducting survey research; capability to convert statistics into meaningful arguments and claims that answer the sub-questions	Cartography including using map symbol systems, critical reading and thinking, capability of using statistics to represent spatial change, capability to use statistical and spatial (often digitized) representations to make arguments and claims that address sub-questions	Critical reading and thinking, analysis and synthesis, reading subtext and agency in older sources; statistics; converting verbal, written, photographic, oral, artifactual accounts into evidence to make arguments and claims that answer the sub-questions
DIMENSION 3				
EVIDENCE-BACKED CLAIMS	Statistical analyses and theories of political and institutional behavior and outcomes point toward substantiating and justifying claims; adequacy judged within the community of peers	Statistical analyses coupled with economic theories show the way toward substantiating and justifying claims; adequacy judged within the community of peers, i.e., other economic investigators	Narratives, statistical and spatial analyses, and representations point toward substantiating and justifying claims; community of peers evaluates adequacy of claims	Accounts of human behavior and thought coupled with evidence corroboration and preponderance point towards substantiating and justifying claims; adequacy judged within the community of peers
DIMENSION 4				
FORMS OF COMMUNICATION AND ACTION (Illustrative examples)	Books, television appearances, articles, op-ed pieces, policy statements, blogs; supporting a public assistance non-profit organization	Op-ed articles, journal pieces, television appearances, policy statements, blogs, webinars, policy advisory roles, public action	Maps and other layered spatial representations for newspapers, web-based articulations, digital and analog geographical services; community mapping; other citizen-science experiences	Books, monographs, articles, websites, webinars, television appearances, blogs

Analysis of the Treaty of _____ By _____

Directions: Summarize each article in the fewest words possible. Use plain clear language. Do not use more than 10 words.

Article I	
Article II	
Article III	
Article IV	
Article V	
Article VI	
Article VII	
Article VIII	
Article IX	
Article X	
Article XI	
Article XII	

Impacted Parties	Positive Impacts +	Negative Impacts -
What's in it for each Tribal Nations?		
What's in it for the non-Indian settlers?		
What's in it for the US government?		