

Federal Indian Policy – Termination

Fast Facts

Curriculum Area: Social Studies
Grade Level: Grades 7-8
Suggested Duration: Two Class Periods

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

- (2) The economics content standards for sixth through eighth grade are that each student will:
- (a) explain how economic decisions impact individuals, businesses, and society, including Indigenous societies.
- (3) The geography content standards for sixth through eighth grade are that each student will:
- (e) explain the role and impact of spatial patterns of settlement and movement in shaping societies and cultures, including Indigenous cultures
- (4) The history content standards for sixth through eighth grade are that each student will:
- (f) understand that there are multiple perspectives and interpretations of historical events

Understandings

- The US Government has been interacting with tribes through various federal policies. The policy of termination and relocation was an attempt at "mainstreaming" American Indian people (Essential Understanding 5).

Essential Questions

- What reasons might an Indian person have for leaving their home and moving to a big city?
- Why would the federal government want to terminate American Indian reservations?
- To what extent did the policy of relocation help unite American Indians around common causes?
- How might the transition from rural reservations to big cities change an individual's understanding of life in the United States?
- How might the experience of having the government encourage you to relocate so they could sell your land to someone else impact your perspective of the United States?
- Was the relocation program successful in its assimilation goals?

Students will be able to...

- develop a better understanding of the unique issues regarding the history of American Indians and how interactions with the federal government have evolved over time.
- consider and evaluate both the pros and cons of American Indian relocation.



Indian Education for All Unit

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Students will know...

- through the shared story of the Juneau family's relocation experience, first-hand information about the policies of termination and relocation and how they impacted American Indian people both positively and negatively.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Watch Chapter 6 of the Montana Historical Society DVD entitled *Montana Mosaic*, take notes, and summarize key points put forth in the video.
2. Write a brief one to two-page paper that addresses the essential questions.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities

Day 1

Start the class off by showing the students the *Come to Denver* recruitment poster. Then provide them the following questions and ask them to briefly write down their thoughts.

- What images do you see in the poster?
- What message or messages does the poster seem to convey?
- Who is the audience the poster seeks to convince of that message?
- Are there any particular words or pictures on the poster that seem to stand out to you?

Lead a brief (5-7 minute) discussion regarding the students' thoughts on the poster. If students do not identify them, point out the use of the terms "Happy Homes" and "The Chance of Your Lifetime," along with the themes of good jobs, family values, and quality of life.

Tell students that in the 1950s and 1960s there were federal Indian policies enacted called termination and relocation that were intended to do away with American Indian reservations and move Indians into big cities so they could find work and be assimilated into "mainstream" society. These policies led to passage of the Indian Relocation Act of 1956. Cities in the West that had significant Indian migrations were Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Denver. These migrations were facilitated by the US government due to the feeling that American Indians had not gained economic independence or assimilated in the ways intended in previous policies such as boarding schools and land allotments. Explain that additionally, once Indians had relocated to big cities, their land could be sold to non-Indians for farming, ranching, or other purposes.

Have students watch chapter six of the *Montana Mosaic* DVD (approximately 20 minutes long). Prior to watching the video, explain they need to make a list of relocation pros and cons mentioned or alluded to in the video for discussion at the end. After the video, lead the discussion and ask the students to share the pros and cons they identified. Be sure that the following ideas are a part of the discussion if students do not identify or volunteer them.

Pros:

- In some cases, Indian people who relocated to big cities rediscovered their culture.
- Some Indian people discovered their ability to be a part of the governmental process and create positive change on their reservations because they saw other groups exerting their political power during their relocation experience.
- Indians from rural areas were exposed to different cultures and ideas than they had previously experienced in rural reservation areas. This benefitted them in their understanding of the world.
- Some Indians were able to successfully assimilate into urban areas and find better lives than they previously had on their home reservations.

Cons:

- Very little assistance was provided to Indians who relocated; e.g., finding jobs or housing, navigating public transportation.
- Many Indians who relocated were not successful in finding good paying jobs and living the better lives advertised on posters like the *Come to Denver* poster. Instead of living in poverty on their reservations, they lived in poverty in the cities.
- Indians often faced prejudice and discrimination when looking for housing, trying to find jobs, and in other ways when they relocated to big cities.
- Even though some Indians rediscovered their culture through their relocation experience, they lost opportunities to keep and learn their language and other cultural knowledge from elders and cultural leaders in their reservation communities.
- The Indian relocation policy was another example of a policy which was done *to* Indians by the US government versus a policy that Indians enacted for themselves because they thought it was a good idea and would help them.

Day 2

At the start of class, review the previous day's information and discussion with the class. Ask if any of them have had additional thoughts or ideas since the previous day. Explain to them they will need to write a paper approximately one-two pages long in which they answer the essential questions. If time permits, at the end of class, have the students share out some of the things they wrote in their papers or split them into small groups and have them discuss their thoughts and ideas with each other.

Resources

"Chapter 6: Federal Indian Policy," [Montana Mosaic: 20th Century People and Events](#). Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society, 2006.

Juneau, Stan, revised and updated by Walter Fleming and Lance Foster. "Chapter Six: Termination of Indian Tribes 1953-1975)," [History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy](#). Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2013.

Cajune, Julie. "Chapter Eight Tribal Histories Narrative – Relocation and Termination: Going, Going, Gone," [Montana Tribal Histories: Educators Resource Guide](#), Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2011, 2013.

Montanatribes.org. [See Essential Understanding 5.](#)

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