

Sequoyah of the Cherokee Nation

Level 1

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Sequoyah

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence.

In 1831, an unusual man created a way to write the Cherokee language called Sequoyah. Sequoyah was born in about 1770 in the Cherokee Nation in what later became North Carolina. His father was probably white, and his mother was a Native American. A Cherokee woman named Wah-lah-see, Sequoyah's mother, helped his father raise him.

When Sequoyah grew up he became a silversmith, making items from silver. He was also a blacksmith, and made the tools for his work. Sequoyah had many other hobbies, such as hunting, and forge making.

Sequoyah had seen white Americans use writing. He thought it would be good for them to want to write in their own language. He thought this would help so many people to have a free or no free ticket to being able to write on a writing system.

At first, his people did not understand what Sequoyah was doing. They were told he was crazy, and Sequoyah did not give up. He worked on his syllabary. A syllabary is an alphabet where each character stands for a syllable instead of a letter. Sequoyah taught his little girl to write with his syllabary. Before long his wife, mother, and father learned to write with his syllabary. Before long all Cherokee people could read and write.

Sequoyah's syllabary is still used to write for poems, songs, books, newspapers, and websites. Thousands of over 100 websites, thousands of over 100 people of the Cherokee Nation speak and write this language.

Words to Know

Sequoyah

unusual
created
Cherokee
probably
silversmith
blacksmith
belows
forge
syllabary
characters
syllables
websites

Sequoyah the Cherokee Nation B

Sequoyah the Cherokee Nation B

Visit <http://www.cherokeenation.org> to learn more about the Cherokee Nation.

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Level 2

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Level 3 ■ ■ ■

Words to Know list, Reading Selection, and Reading Comprehension questions

Assemble the Unit

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student:

- Visual Literacy page: Sequoyah Timeline, page 11
 - Level 1, 2, or 3 Reading Selection and Reading Comprehension page and the corresponding Words to Know list
 - Graphic Organizer of your choosing, provided on pages 180–186
 - Writing Form: About Sequoyah, page 12

Introduce the Topic

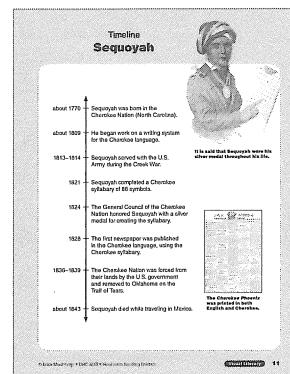
Review the timeline with students. Explain that Sequoyah was an American Indian of the Cherokee Nation. During his time, white people were taking over Indian lands. Sequoyah invented a writing system to help his people survive as a nation.

Read and Respond

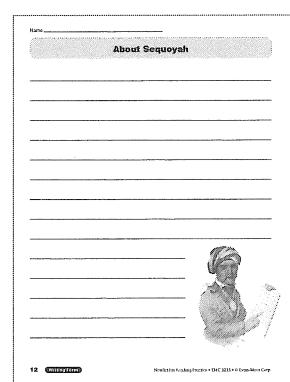
Form leveled groups and review the Words to Know lists with each group of students. Instruct each group to read their selection individually, in pairs, or as a group. Have students complete the Reading Comprehension page for their selection.

Write About the Topic

Read aloud the leveled writing prompt for each group. Tell students to use the Graphic Organizer to plan their writing. Direct students to use their Writing Form to respond to their prompt.



Visual Literacy



Writing Form

Timeline

Sequoyah

- about 1770 — Sequoyah was born in the Cherokee Nation (North Carolina).
- about 1809 — He began work on a writing system for the Cherokee language.
- 1813–1814 — Sequoyah served with the U.S. Army during the Creek War.
- 1821 — Sequoyah completed a Cherokee syllabary of 86 symbols.
- 1824 — The General Council of the Cherokee Nation honored Sequoyah with a silver medal for creating the syllabary.
- 1828 — The first newspaper was published in the Cherokee language, using the Cherokee syllabary.
- 1836–1839 — The Cherokee Nation was forced from their lands by the U.S. government and removed to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears.
- about 1843 — Sequoyah died while traveling in Mexico.



It is said that Sequoyah wore his silver medal throughout his life.



The Cherokee Phoenix was printed in both English and Cherokee.

About Sequoyah

A black and white illustration of an elderly man with a pipe and a map. The man has a weathered face, a prominent nose, and a mustache. He wears a dark, patterned turban and a dark, textured coat over a light-colored shirt. A large, round pendant hangs from a chain around his neck. He holds a smoking pipe in his right hand and a piece of paper or a map in his left hand, which is pointing towards the bottom right corner of the frame. The background is plain white.



Words to Know

Sequoyah

unusual

created

Cherokee

probably

silversmith

blacksmith

bellows

forge

syllabary

characters

syllables

websites

Sequoyah of the Cherokee Nation ■■



Words to Know

Sequoyah of the Cherokee

uncommon

created

Cherokee

probably

trading post

silversmith

blacksmith

bellows

forge

familiar

culture

syllabary

characters

syllables

medal

Internet

Sequoyah of the Cherokee Nation ■■■

Words to Know

Sequoyah, an Uncommon Man

uncommon

created

probably

trading post

silversmith

blacksmith

bellows

forge

government

syllabary

symbols

syllables

medal

culture

websites

Sequoyah of the Cherokee Nation ■■■■

Sequoyah

In 1821, an unusual man created a way to write the Cherokee language. His name was Sequoyah. Sequoyah was born in about 1770 in the Cherokee Nation in what later became North Carolina. His father was probably a fur trader named Nathaniel Gist. Sequoyah's mother was a Cherokee woman named Wuh-teh. Sequoyah helped his mother with her trading business.

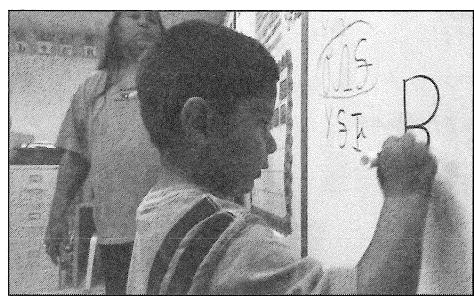
When Sequoyah grew up he became a silversmith, making items from silver. He was also a blacksmith, and made the tools for his work. Sequoyah made his own hammers, drills, bellows, and forge.

Sequoyah had seen white Americans use writing. He understood that writing stood for words, and he wanted to write in his own language. He thought this knowledge would help the Cherokee people to stay a free nation. So he began work on a writing system.

At first, his people did not understand what Sequoyah was doing. They were fearful and gave him trouble. But Sequoyah did not give up. He created a syllabary. A syllabary is like an alphabet, but the characters stand for syllables instead of single sounds. Sequoyah taught his little girl to read and write with his syllabary. Before long, his people realized that Sequoyah had given them a gift. Soon, almost all Cherokee people could read and write.



Sequoyah wears a large silver medal given to him by the General Council of the Cherokee Nation in 1824. The medal honored him for creating the syllabary.



This boy is learning to write Cherokee.

Photograph provided by: Neddy1234

Sequoyah's syllabary is still used today for prayers, songs, books, newspapers, and websites. Thanks to Sequoyah, over 10,000 people of the Cherokee Nation speak, read, and write their language.

Sequoyah

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence. Then answer questions 3, 4, and 5.

1. Sequoyah's parents were _____.
 A silversmiths
 B traders
 C writers
2. Sequoyah got in trouble because _____.
 A his writing was used by Americans
 B he couldn't read and write in his own language
 C people didn't understand what writing was
3. At first, people gave Sequoyah trouble about his writing system, but he didn't stop working. What does that show about him?

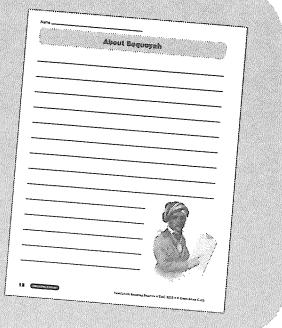
4. Do you think Sequoyah was wise to teach his daughter first? Give a reason.

5. Did people change their minds about Sequoyah? How do you know?

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Compare the Cherokee syllabary and the English alphabet. Explain how they are alike and different.



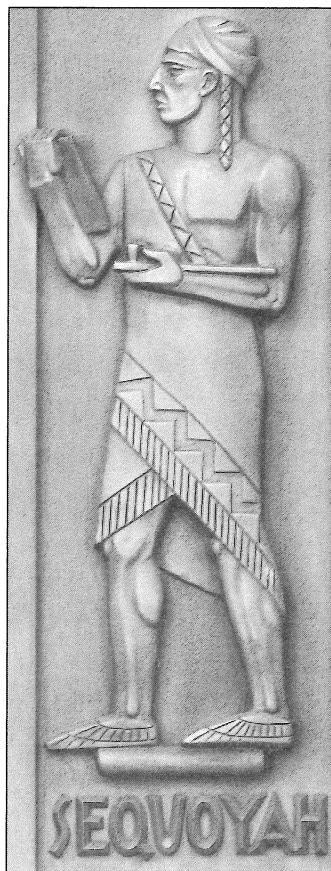
Sequoyah of the Cherokee

In 1821, an uncommon man named Sequoyah created a way to write the Cherokee language. There are many different stories about Sequoyah's life, and some things are not known for certain. Sequoyah was probably born around 1770 in what later became North Carolina, in the Cherokee Nation. His English name was George Gist. His father was probably a fur trader who was part Cherokee and part German. Sequoyah's Cherokee mother was Wuh-teh. Sequoyah was raised by his mother, and he helped her in her trading post.

Sequoyah was good with his hands. He became a silversmith and a blacksmith. He made beautiful items from silver. He used his skills as a blacksmith to make his own hammers, drills, bellows, and forge. Sequoyah was familiar with writing, and he understood that writing stood for words. He thought it would help the Cherokee people if they could read and write. White people were trying to take away Cherokee land. Writing might help the Cherokee to keep their land and culture.

Sequoyah worked on a Cherokee syllabary. A syllabary is like an alphabet, but the characters stand for syllables. At first, his people did not understand writing and were fearful. So Sequoyah taught his young daughter to read and write with his syllabary. People came to realize that writing stood for words. Before long, almost all Cherokee people could read and write. In 1824, Sequoyah was honored by the Cherokee Nation with a large silver medal.

Sequoyah's syllabary has helped to keep the Cherokee language alive into the present day. Thousands of people speak, read, and write Cherokee. Sequoyah's people use it in prayers, songs, books, and newspapers, as well as on the Internet.



This bronze panel in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., honors Sequoyah.



This U.S. postage stamp honored Sequoyah.

Sequoyah of the Cherokee

Fill in the circle to complete the sentence. Then answer questions 3, 4, and 5.

1. A syllabary has symbols that stand for _____.
Ⓐ letter sounds
Ⓑ syllables
Ⓒ words

2. Sequoyah was _____.
Ⓐ honored by the Cherokee Nation
Ⓑ trying to take away land
Ⓒ fearful of writing

3. What do you think gave Sequoyah the idea to make a syllabary?

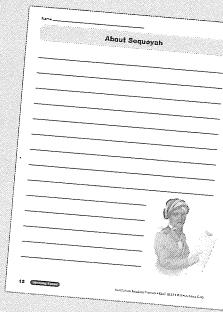
4. How do you know that people realized the value of Sequoyah's syllabary?

5. What was the author's purpose for writing this text?

Write About the Topic

Use the Writing Form to write about what you read.

Write about what made Sequoyah an uncommon man.



Sequoyah, an Uncommon Man

In 1821, an uncommon man named Sequoyah created a system for writing the Cherokee language. Some of the facts about Sequoyah's early life have been lost, and other things aren't known for certain. We do know that Sequoyah was born around 1770 in what later became North Carolina, in the Cherokee Nation. His father was probably a fur trader who was part Cherokee and part German. Sequoyah's Cherokee mother was Wuh-teh. Sequoyah was raised by Wuh-teh, and he helped out in her trading post. Sequoyah was his Cherokee name, and he also went by George Gist (or Guess) in English.

Sequoyah had many talents. He was a silversmith who fashioned items from silver. He used his blacksmith skills to make his own hammers, drills, bellows, and forge.

Sequoyah understood that writing stood for words. He also knew that people in the United States government were planning to force the Cherokee to move west. He thought his people could stay a free nation and keep their homelands if they could read and write.

Sequoyah invented a Cherokee syllabary. The syllabary is a type of alphabet in which the 86 symbols stand for syllables. Sequoyah taught his young daughter to read and write. Before long, people realized the value of Sequoyah's work, and soon almost all Cherokee people could read and write their language. The Cherokee Nation honored Sequoyah with a large silver medal in 1824.

Sadly, the Cherokee were forced out of their homelands starting in 1836. But Sequoyah's syllabary has helped to keep the Cherokee language and culture alive. Today, thousands of people speak, read, and write Cherokee. Sequoyah's people use it in their prayers and songs, books and newspapers; they even use it on websites.



This statue stands in the United States Capitol building in Washington, D.C., in honor of Sequoyah.