Standard 8.56 Lesson

Say Thanks to the Authors
Click http://www.ck12.org/saythanks
(No sign in required)
8.56 Analyze the contributions of Sequoyah to the Cherokee. (C,TN)

The Sequoyah Birthplace Museum in Tennessee
http://www.sequoyahmuseum.org/

Sequoyah’s Alphabet

Savior of a Language
Sequoyah

When Sequoyah was a young man, he found a way to change the history of his people. He and other Cherokees had fought with General Andrew Jackson at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend. Sequoyah saw American soldiers writing and he believed that if he could make an alphabet for the Cherokees, it would be easier to communicate and write down the stories and legends of his tribe.

Sequoyah asked questions and studied how Americans wrote. He learned that the letters, or symbols, represented sounds. Those letters were put together to make words...words were put together to make sentences...and sentences were put together to make paragraphs.

Before Sequoyah’s alphabet, no Indian languages of the Americas had an alphabet. Every legend, every story, every event was passed down to or shared with others through oral tradition, or speaking. Sequoyah wanted his people to have an accurate tradition and way to record events or ideas.

Sequoyah tried to use the English alphabet, but the Cherokee had many sounds that the English did not use. In all, the Cherokee language had 86 different sounds. Sequoyah’s written language consisted of syllables, or word parts. Each symbol stood for a syllable. Sequoyah’s alphabet was a called a syllabary.

Sequoyah worked on his syllabary for 12 years. He taught his alphabet to his tribe and showed them how helpful it would be to them. To show the leaders how wonderful it was, he left the room so that the leaders could tell his daughter, Anyokah, a message to write. Whey Sequoyah entered the room, he would read the message. The Cherokee leaders were amazed and they had him do his “trick” over and over.

The written language was easy to learn and in a few short years, most Cherokee people could read and write. Cherokee newspapers and and books were soon written.

YouTube - Sequoyah

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGG1ZHur3g4
From [www.tnhistoryforkids.com](http://www.tnhistoryforkids.com), a short account of Sequoyah’s life is included.

[http://www.tnhistoryforkids.org/people/sequoyah](http://www.tnhistoryforkids.org/people/sequoyah)

[www.mrnussbaum.com](http://www.mrnussbaum.com)


**Hyperlink to full explanation of Sequoyah’s life at Encyclopedia.com.**


[Oklahoma Historical Society - Collect, preserve, share](http://www.okhistory.org/sites/sequoyahcabin.php)

Website of the home of Sequoyah in Oklahoma