

Name _____

Date _____

Who Created the Alphabet for the Cherokee People?

Sequoyah was a Native American who is remembered as the creator of the Cherokee writing system. Little is known about his early life. He was born in the 1770s. His father was likely a white fur trader. His mother, Wuteh, was Cherokee and a member of the Paint Clan. Wuteh raised Sequoyah and taught him to be a fur trader. Sometime in his early life, Sequoyah became lame and was no longer able to farm or hunt. Around 1809, Sequoyah went to live in the town of Willston, Alabama, and worked as a silversmith.



1770 - August 1843

While living in Willston, Sequoyah saw how white people communicated using paper and pen to write symbols. He called the books and writing he saw, "talking leaves."

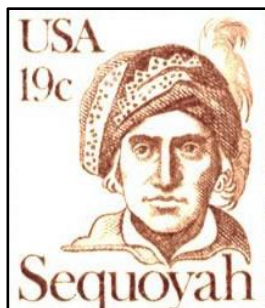
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Ꭶ wa	Ꭶ we	Ꭶ wi	Ꭶ wo	Ꭶ wu	Ꭶ wv
Ꭶ ya	Ꭶ ye	Ꭶ yi	Ꭶ yo	Ꭶ yu	Ꭶ yv

Sequoyah became fascinated with written language and decided he would create a way to write down the Cherokee language. Sequoyah spent 12 years preparing a language for his people. He created a system where every syllable had a specific character (a written symbol). The syllabic alphabet created by Sequoyah had 86 characters. Upon completion of his work, he taught his daughter to read using his alphabet. The Cherokee leaders were amazed by Sequoyah's work. His syllabic

alphabet was quickly put into use by the Cherokee Nation and became their official language in 1825. In 1828, it was used in the *Cherokee Phoenix*, the newspaper of the Cherokee Nation.



Sequoyah eventually started work developing written languages for all Native Americans and traveled through the Americas meeting with different tribes. He died sometime around 1843 and 1845 while meeting with tribes in Mexico.



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Answer The Questions.

1. What Native American tribe did Sequoyah belong to?

- A. Comanche
- B. Choctaw
- C. Pueblo
- D. Cherokee

2. What profession did Sequoyah take up when he lived in Willston, Alabama?

- A. Blacksmith
- B. Teacher
- C. Writer
- D. Silversmith

3. How many characters did Sequoyah's alphabet have?

- A. 28
- B. 29
- C. 35
- D. 86

4. What newspaper used Sequoyah's alphabet?

- A. New York Times
- B. Cherokee Press
- C. Cherokee Phoenix
- D. Native American Daily

5. What did Sequoyah call the books and writings?

- A. talking leaves
- B. whispering words
- C. audio books
- D. Phoenix

