

## **A Cheyenne Odyssey** Content Advisory

*MISSION US: “A Cheyenne Odyssey”* focuses on Northern Cheyenne life in the latter part of the nineteenth century. During that time, the Cheyenne experienced tremendous upheaval in their way of life as the United States expanded into the West. This upheaval led to conflict that was at times violent and sometimes resulted in disastrous (and deadly) consequences on both sides.

The history presented in “A Cheyenne Odyssey” is difficult. While the game does not directly depict graphic violence, it includes events such as forced relocation of Native Americans, multiple acts of sabotage (including raids on white settlers and the derailment of a train), and the Battle of the Little Bighorn (called “The Battle of the Greasy Grass” by the Cheyenne). Some characters in the game perish from disease, famine, acts of war, and rough treatment. The game does not cast moral judgment on these events, which are true and authentic to history, based on careful research and scholarship about Northern Cheyenne life and conflict with white people. It does, however, more prominently feature the perspective of the Northern Cheyenne over that of the United States government, settlers, or soldiers.

As with the other games in the *MISSION US* series, students playing “A Cheyenne Odyssey” are in-role as a “peer from the past.” In the case of “A Cheyenne Odyssey,” they are Little Fox, a Northern Cheyenne boy who grows into adulthood over the course of the game.

As Little Fox, they are making choices appropriate to a specific time, place, and culture. These choices—including hunting and killing game, participating in battles, and committing other violent acts, often in retaliation against violent acts previously perpetrated on the Northern Cheyenne people—will be extremely different from your students’ day-to-day, 21<sup>st</sup>-century lives and norms of behavior. However, they are appropriate for a young Cheyenne man on the Northern Plains in the 1860s and 1870s. Little Fox handles weapons, including guns. Little Fox can choose to steal or raid. Little Fox can choose to kill in defense of his homeland. By not sanitizing this history we invite students to think critically about the actions and motives of Cheyenne and whites on the Plains, to practice historical empathy, and to understand multiple causes in history.

Before integrating “A Cheyenne Odyssey” into your curriculum, we strongly encourage you to play the game yourself, and make certain it is appropriate for your students and your community. On this site, we have provided background information, activities, suggestions for further reading and research, and other resources to assist you in helping your students understand Little Fox’s world and the difficult choices and circumstances faced by Plains Indians in the face of “Manifest Destiny.” In addition, here are some general tips for dealing with issues around violence in the classroom:

- Preview the issue with your students.
- Remind students that what is considered acceptable behavior changes over time, and from culture to culture.
- Set ground rules for classroom talk.
- Debrief and discuss episodes where violence occurs.

We are proud to have partnered with members of the Northern Cheyenne Nation on the

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development and creation of “A Cheyenne Odyssey,” and we hope you will find it a valuable tool for teaching this important—but difficult—period in American history.

---The MISSION US team