

Veterans Legacy Program Curricular Materials

Major David Moniac

Grade(s):

9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th

Time (minutes):

3 or 4 – 45-minute class periods

Lesson Overview:

Students will be able to explain the importance of Major David Moniac to, not only the US Army but to Native American history as he was the first Native American to go to the US Military Academy. He's also very important to the US history as he was a member of the US Army during the Second Seminole War.

Relevant Social Studies Standards:

SS.912.A.1 Use research and inquiry skills to analyze American history using primary and secondary sources.

LAFS.1112.RH.1.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Required Materials:

- [UCF VLP biography of David Moniac](#)
- Article: [“Creek Indians”](#)
- Article: [“Seminole History”](#)
- Article: [“Admission to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point”](#)
- Article: [“From West Point to Wahoo Swamp: The Career of Cadet David Moniac, Class of 1822”](#)
- Article: [“Veterans Legacy Program: Major David Moniac”](#)
 - o Online access to articles or printed copies (class set) will suffice for each article
- White paper
- Crayons, markers, color pencils
- Chart paper
- Computers

Learning Objectives:

Students will be investigating Major David Moniac's life to get the understanding of the challenges faced by Native Americans that were trying to straddle the lines between white society and the Native American society.

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Special Vocabulary:

None

Procedure:

1. **Bell Work** – have students look at the requirements for West Point. Have them write a reflection – would they qualify? Why do they think it is so difficult to get in? After their reflection is complete, let them know that a Congressional representative or Senator must nominate them.
2. Have students read the article “Creek Indians” and then “Seminole History.” Students should draw comparisons between the two tribes.
 - a. What are some of the major differences between the two groups? As the class is separating the information, ask them what information surprised them about the two different groups.
3. Pass out the article “From West Point to Wahoo Swamp: The career of Cadet David Moniac, Class of 1822.” The article is broken up into different sections, so break up the class into groups of three or four. Each group gets one section. They are to read the section and become the expert on that section.
 - a. Each group will make a presentation of their section, either in PowerPoint or by making a list on chart paper.
 - b. Have each group present their sections.
 - c. Ask the students the following:
 - i. Section 1 – Thinking back on the information you read about the Creek Indians, why do you think Moniac was pushing to go the Academy? What do you think he was trying to do?
 - ii. Section 2 – How was Moniac’s road to the Academy different than what you would have to do to get accepted? Why do you think the Academy allowed students as young as 13 to apply and be accepted?
 - iii. Section 3 – Why is the school in such disarray? Is it a big deal that only 40 graduated from Moniac’s class? Do you think the changes that come from Thayer actually made the school better or worse? Why?
 - iv. Section 4 – How do you feel Moniac did? Did he truly graduate second to last? What do you think about his time at the academy?

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- v. Section 5 – Why was Moniac a reluctant celebrity? Was it deserved? Did Moniac’s Creek upbringing have anything to do with his reluctance? Why or why not?
 - vi. Section 6 – Why did Moniac leave the service after graduation? Why did he re-enlist? What happened to Moniac after re-enlisting?
- d. Ask all of the students, do they think Moniac had any difficulties fighting against a Native American group? Why or why not? Are there any other periods of history where we see one ethnic group having to fight themselves? (German-Americans in WW2, Japanese-Americans in WW2)
- e. Have each group then turn their section into a comic book. I take a piece of white paper and put a black frame around it, so all the comic blocks are the same size, and make enough copies for every student. If you have a large class, create two other groups and have them do comic strips of the *Creek Indian* article and the *Seminole History* article. After they are completed, put the strips in order so there is a graphic novel of Major Moniac’s life.
- f. As you finish up the lesson, show Major Moniac’s tombstone at Bushnell National Cemetery (<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/48181/major-david-moniac-first-native-american-west-point-graduate-and-leader-of-the-creek-volunteers/>). Spend a few moments explaining the information on the actual headstone and tell the story about how he was buried nearby but when the National Cemetery opened, they moved his grave. Students may also read the UCF VLP biography of David Moniac.