



## Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing

*James Rumford, Anna Sixkiller Huckaby (Translator)*

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The story of Sequoyah is the tale of an ordinary man with an extraordinary idea—to create a writing system for the Cherokee Indians and turn his people into a nation of readers and writers. The task he set for himself was daunting. Sequoyah knew no English and had no idea how to capture speech on paper. But slowly and painstakingly, ignoring the hoots and jibes of his neighbors and friends, he worked out a system that surprised the Cherokee Nation—and the world of the 1820s—with its beauty and simplicity. James Rumford's Sequoyah is a poem to celebrate literacy, a song of a people's struggle to stand tall and proud.

## **Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing Details**

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Author : James Rumford , Anna Sixkiller Huckaby (Translator)

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# From Reader Review Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing for online ebook

## Becky B says

A picture book biography of Sequoyah, the Cherokee who created a written language for his people in the 1800s.

This book is bilingual, written in both English and Cherokee. In back of the book is a pronunciation guide for Cherokee so readers can give reading in the language Sequoyah created a whirl. Also, not to be missed in the back of the book is a note from the author in why he chose to use phrases such as "they tell us" or "they say" (basically because there are many legends about Sequoyah and few hard facts). I love that Rumford provides kids with a great model in how to write about debatable facts in a way that doesn't mislead the reader. Fantastic reading pick for those curious about linguistics or the Cherokee.

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## S10\_Abby Alley says

Grade Level: 1-4

Award: The Robert E. Sibert Honor Book

This is a picture book describing the true story of a man, Sequoyah and how he invented the Cherokee written language. Sequoyah was born in the 1760s into the Cherokee tribe in Tennessee. Although he was crippled he was able to work as a metalworker, making things like forks and spoons. Later in his life, growing tired of his people not having a voice to combat the ever-present White Man's voice, he put his mind to develop a way of writing for his people. At first he tried making symbols for each word he knew. But when people saw this they thought him to be crazy and burned down his cabin, with all of his work in it. Sequoyah did not give up! He set to work again, but this time rather than giving each word its own set of symbols, he designated a symbol for each sound. Finally people began to see what amazing work Sequoyah was doing and started to learn how to write and read. Now his people had a voice and could take their books and stories with them – even when soldiers forced them away from their land.

The most powerful part of the book is that each page in the story has the Cherokee translation written under or next to the English text. It reminds the reader that this is a true story and that the language is alive today to prove it. This is a fascinating story that I had not heard before. I would recommend this book for the primary grades. It is written in a way for younger students to access the information. It is not bogged down with historical dates or vocabulary. The illustrations are done in a way that give evoke a sense of the time period the story is written about.

I have done a Native American unit in my second grade class where groups become experts on different tribes. This would be a great informational story to include for the Cherokee group to complement compliment myths and folktales. Additionally, it could be a fun activity to write a short letter in both English and Cherokee to Sequoyah or someone else in the Cherokee tribe. In my experience it has been rare to read a picture book having to do with Native Americans and education or Native American inventors. The stories I usually see are Native American myths, which are wonderful, but don't always paint a realistic picture of the culture. Therefore, stories like the one of Sequoyah are very important to tell.

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### **Kamaron Carter says**

This concise biographical story tells of the journey and struggles of the Cherokee man who created a syllabary despite trials and tribulations. The book includes the English text translated into Cherokee on each page. Not only is it a social studies informational, but an introduction to language and syllabic alphabets!

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### **Amy Edwards says**

Good book. Important note at the end explains that it is difficult to separate fact from legend when writing about Sequoyah. This book does a good job explaining the syllabary system of Cherokee writing that Sequoyah used.

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### **Susan says**

I've been reading a lot of children's nonfiction lately. This is an excellent work!

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### **Wendy Gardiner says**

quick read, telling how Sequoyah developed the Cherokee writing system. also a story of perseverance. written in both English and Cherokee. a limitation is that there is a lack of source material. one benefit is the emphasis of the long literacy history of Cherokee people.

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### **538am\_Allison Nork says**

Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing is a multicultural non-fiction book that I would recommend for 1st-3rd grades. It tells the story of a metalworker who was crippled that no one payed much attention to. He realized that he loved his Cherokee people and did not want their amazing voices and stories to ever disappear. Because of this he decided to create a language for the Cherokee people to use. Through many trials and tribulations he was successful and is looked to as the man who gave his people writing as the title implies. There are many themes and lesson that are great to point out to children while reading this. From the cruelty of bullying to the fact that anyone can accomplish anything they want, children will benefit from this story. A beautiful feature in this book is that it was written in conjunction with a Cherokee translator who is fluent in the Cherokee language Sequoyah created. Every page has the Cherokee translation of the English paragraph under it. At the end the alphabet is written out and explained in further detail. This is great to explain to students how this alphabet is different than ours because it goes by syllables not letters. It even ties in how other parts of the world also use syllabary alphabets. This is a wonderful tie for children to further explore other cultures and differences and similarities between our alphabets and theirs. Rumford offers six more interesting facts about Sequoyah on the very last page and points out that is it customary to have two spellings, one for the tree and one more the man. While the illustrations do not personally blow me

away, there are so many other good things for students that it is not as necessary. This book has won tons of awards including the ALA notable in 2005, the BELA notable books of the English language arts in 2005, the Jane Addams book honor in 2005, and Robert F. Sibert Information book honor in 2005.

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### **Sharon says**

I knew that the giant redwood trees in California are called sequoias, and I separately was aware that the Cherokee Indian Sequoyah created the Cherokee syllabary, thus preserving their linguistic heritage for all time. In James Rumford's poetic text, "Sequoyah: The Cherokee Man Who Gave His People Writing," I discovered that Steven Endlicher, the botanist who named the sequoia species, was also a student of linguistics and that he wanted to honor Sequoyah for his creative achievement. We also learn the struggle that Sequoyah went through to invent the written language for his people, a truly stunning feat: "Only a handful of people in the last seven thousand years can claim to have invented a writing system." I love that this book includes a side-by-side Cherokee and English translation of the entire text and, perhaps most importantly, it illustrates for students the lasting power of being able to read and write.

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### **Sarah says**

Through adversity, Sequoyah persevered to create a writing system for the Cherokee language- reviving it and preserving it for the generations.

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### **Jane Raskauskas says**

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It taught me about the man who created the Cherokee written language. man the book is written about, Sequoyah, was a average Cherokee man who did not what the invaders to kill their culture. He created a written language and taught others to read so his people's history would never disappear. When an Austrian man discovered sequoia trees, he named them after this strong man who created an entire language for his people. I would use this book in a 1-3 classroom because it was an easy read, but also very informational. This book was a WOW book for me because I have heard of sequoia trees, but never knew how they got their name and also learned about one man who created an entire written language for his people! Sequoyah's story is truly one that should be told more because it shows how on man can make a difference. This book could be used to teach students how they can make a difference, but also could be used if the students were learning of sequoia trees in the Redwood Forest.

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### **Barb Middleton says**

Terrific book on a Cherokee man named "Sequoyah" who invented a language. Very few people in history have invented languages in use today making this all the more remarkable. He was persecuted for writing and was also a cripple. A remarkable person.

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### **T. Denise says**

I loved this book. This is a story of struggle, perseverance, and sustainment of a culture. Rumford pens the life of Sequoyah, a Cherokee man responsible for the creation of a syllabic alphabet for the Cherokee people that still exists today. Interestingly, Sequoyah's first attempt at creating an alphabet was ridiculed and rejected by the Cherokee people.(They even claim that he is possessed and burn his home), but Sequoyah responds by teaching his daughter to read. Soon, everyone is reading and writing!

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### **Rachel Aranda says**

Only a handful of people have invented a writing system in the last ten thousand years. This fact shows how absolutely brilliant Sequoyah was. He was a crippled half white-half Cherokee that needless to say wasn't entirely respected during his time. Thankfully he never gave up and did what nobody expected him to do (succeed). He is without a doubt inspiring.?

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### **Crista says**

2005 Jane Adams Award Honor Book

This is an amazing bilingual story that tells the tale of how the written Cherokee language came to be that is in both English and said Cherokee. A family of unknown ethnicity visits the Redwoods in California in 1958. The dad begins to tell the story of how they got their name and why their namesake was so important. Sequoyah was an everyday person who didn't want the voices of the Cherokee to fade away and blend into the white man's world so he decided to capture their voices in writing. Through trial and error he created characters and symbols that represent the sounds of the tribe. This written language is still used today.

The simplistic illustrations remind the reader that this is an old story that is to be respected. Each one has a title written only in Cherokee. I am very glad that there is a translation guide in the back as well as the 84 signs and symbols used. I also enjoyed reading the fact pages at the end which give more information on Sequoyah the person as well as sequoia the tree.

This would be a great book when discussing how languages came to be as well as Native American, and great leaders.

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### **Emily Elkins says**

Reading Level: 3.7

**Book Summary:** This is a book about a man who invented writing for the Cherokee people. No one believed him that they could learn to read and write, but he never gave up and soon all of the Cherokee people were reading and writing.

**Bookshelf Genre:** Multicultural Literature

Characteristics that support the genre: This book is written in both English and Cherokee. It discusses how the Cherokee never gave up their writing, even when the white people forced them from their lands.

Bookshelf Mentor Writing Traits:

Ideas: The big idea of the book is Sequoyah and his development of writing for the Cherokee people.

Classroom Integration: I could possibly use this book when discussing the Cherokee people or part of a Native American unit.

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