Background: *You are* ***John Ross****, the main Cherokee chief. The Cherokee people elected you chief. You oppose Indian removal and the Treaty of New Echota, which required the Cherokee to move west. You represent most Cherokees.*

Dear President Jackson,

A small group of Cherokee signed a horrible treaty (Treaty of New Echota) with the United States. This treaty made us give up all of our lands and promise that we would move west. I did not sign it and almost all Cherokee Indians hate it. In fact, over 15,000 Cherokee Indians signed their name to a piece of paper saying they would not move west. Mr. President, this treaty should never have been signed and I call on you to let us live in peace on our lands in Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina. Please do not make us move west to a land we do not know.

We are a civilized group of Indians who have already learned to live like white men. We have a right to keep the land where we have always lived. Even if we agreed to be "removed," we will never really be safe on our new western lands because the United States might just make us move again. In 1828, Cherokees who had earlier moved west had to give up their land and move even farther west. Our only hope is to stay right here where we have always lived and to convince the United States that we are not their enemy.

Moving west will destroy the culture of the Cherokee nation. We will die like the deer in the forest. If the Indians move west, we will also be forced to live alongside other Indians who do not want us there and in lands we do not know. Where will we find food? Where will we find water? The Cherokee people strongly disagree with Indian Removal. But we have hope because we believe in our hearts that the United States will see how badly they have treated us and let us keep our lands. We call on you as President to support our right to keep our lands.

Guiding Questions:

1. Who is John Ross?
2. Why does he disagree with the treaty signed by some Cherokee Indians?
3. Why is John Ross afraid of moving west?
4. What does John Ross think should happen instead of Indian Removal? Where does he think the Indians should live?