

The Origin and Culture of Local Native Americans

Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 6-8

Curriculum Focus: Native American Studies

Lesson Duration: 2-3 class periods

Student Objectives

- Trace the migration routes of various Native American tribes.
- Study the lifestyles and survival strategies of Native Americans who lived long ago in the students' own geographical area.
- Create a project designed to disseminate information about local Native Americans.

Materials

- Video on *unitedstreaming: Native Americans: People of the Desert*

Search for this video by using the video title (or a portion of it) as the keyword.

Selected clips that support this lesson plan:

1. Migration and Geography of the Desert Tribes
 2. Life in the Anasazi Tribe
 - Hunting
 - Preparing Meals
 - Making Tools and Weapons
 - Fun and Games
- Books and magazines and other resource material about Native Americans in your geographic area
 - Materials for making posters, pamphlets, etc.
 - If you add a technology component: computer(s) with Internet access; word processing software; creativity software such as Microsoft Publisher, Microsoft PowerPoint, HyperStudio, KidWorks Studio, Ultimate Writing, Creativity Center, ClarisWorks, KidPix (See Procedures)

Procedures

1. **KWL Chart:** Divide a piece of large chart paper into three sections: What I Know; What I Want to Know; What I've Learned. The last column will be filled in later. Ask students what facts they know about Native American tribes that lived in their geographic area, and enter their responses in the first column. Next, ask students what they want to know about Native American tribes that lived in their geographic area. Enter their responses in the second column.
2. Explain to the students that they are going to perform some detective work by investigating the lives of the Native American peoples who lived in your area long ago. In addition, they are going to attempt to discover how those people may have migrated to your area. The amount of information available to your students may vary according to the region in which they live, but clues to the past can be found if they look carefully. Have the students brainstorm possible resources that might be useful in their search. Keep your KWL chart posted in the classroom so students can add what they learn from their research to the third column.
3. **Cooperative Grouping:** Divide the students into groups. Each group will investigate a different aspect of the tribes that lived nearest to you, including lifestyle, clothing, food acquisition, social relationships, religious beliefs and practices, and shelter. At least one group should investigate the traditional and current theories about the migration of people to North America. To ensure equal participation by all group members, have each member pick a job, such as reader, note taker, computer keyboarder, Internet searcher, or reporter to class.
4. **Research:** Have students use the print, online, and primary resources available to gather information to share with their classmates about their particular topic. Make sure students take notes and document each resource used, so that appropriate citations can be made later. If specific information on tribes in your immediate area is not available, direct students to the best available sources for tribes in your greater region.
5. **Presentations:** Once information is gathered, students can select a project to present their findings. Here are some suggestions:
 - Create a pamphlet that describes and illustrates each aspect of the life of Native Americans in your area.
 - Write a storybook to teach younger students about Native American migration either by hand or using creativity software (KidPix, KidWorks Studio, or Ultimate Writing and Creativity Center for younger students; ClarisWorks or Microsoft Publisher for older students).
 - Create an informative poster or annotated time line about a local Native American tribe.
 - Publish a mock historical newspaper that reports on Native American migration on the North American continent by hand or using any of the software mentioned above.
6. Make sure to provide plenty of time for students to present their research and projects to the rest of the class. You may wish to extend their audience by inviting other classes to visit your classroom or by planning a night for families to visit.

7. **Follow-up Discussion:** Help students understand the issues underlying their research and examine how American culture's assumptions about and stereotypes of Native American life have had an impact in the past and the present. For example, students can discuss or debate some of the conflicting theories about the earliest North American migrations. What are some of the political and social issues involving Native Americans? Subjects such as treaty disputes, discrimination against Native Americans, insensitive treatment of Native American burial grounds, and the practice of using tribal names for sports teams can provide stimulating discussions. If they had the opportunity to rewrite history, how might your students have treated the Indians differently? Ask them to predict what the outcome today might have been if we could rewrite history.
8. Return to your KWL chart and ask students to add what they've learned about Native American tribes in your geographic area to the third column.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the Native Americans in your area adapt to the local environment? Compare and contrast their adaptations in the past with the adaptations citizens in your environment might have to make today. Discuss ways in which each culture has adapted the most to nature and ways in which each has tried to make nature adapt to it. Which is the best course? What evidence can you supply to support your evaluation? On what cultural values are you basing your assessment?
2. If there were no electricity or other sources of power, how prepared would you be to survive? How could you find food? Build shelter? Survive the winter? What are the five most important resources you would like to have at home if you were to have an extended power outage? Justify your choices.
3. Why do you think the practice of naming sports teams after Native American tribes persists in American society, even though many Native Americans have expressed their displeasure about it? Why do you think they object to the practice? Should society change, or should the Native American minority accept the wishes of the majority?

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- 3 points: Students were active in class discussion; worked cooperatively with their group combine their research findings; demonstrated strong research skills; presented information in a class presentation that is creative, thorough, and engaging.
- 2 points: Students participated in class discussion; worked well with their group combine their research findings; demonstrated satisfactory research skills; presented information in a competent class presentation that provided basic information.
- 1 point: Students did not participate in class discussion; did not work well with their group combine their research findings; demonstrated weak research skills; presented information with difficulty; class presentation was incomplete.

Vocabulary

archaeology

Definition: The science that deals with past human life as shown by fossil relics and the monuments and tools left by ancient peoples.

Context: The discovery of a 9,000-year-old skeleton that does not appear to be Native American may forever change archaeology and its theories, dating the arrival of Native Americans on the North American continent.

evolution

Definition: The history of the development of a biological group (as a race or species).

Context: It is fascinating to observe changes in the human body's structure that have occurred after thousands of years of evolution.

forensic

Definition: Relating to or dealing with the application of scientific knowledge to legal problems.

Context: Forensic science has solved many mysteries about human origins through examination of skeletal remains.

repatriation

Definition: The act of returning to the country of origin or citizenship.

Context: Under the Native American Graves Protections and Repatriation Act, many ancient Native American skeletons being studied by scientists must be returned to the tribe.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- World History – The Beginnings of Human Society: Understands the biological and cultural processes that shaped the earliest human communities.
- U.S. History – Three Worlds Meet: Understands the characteristics of societies in the Americas, western Europe, and western Africa that increasingly interacted after 1450.
- U.S. History – Colonization and Settlement: Understands why the Americas attracted Europeans, why they brought enslaved Africans to their colonies, and how Europeans struggled for control of North America and the Caribbean.



- U.S. History – The Development of the Industrial United States: Understands federal Indian policy and U.S. foreign policy after the Civil War.
- U.S. History – Expansion and Reform: Understands the U.S. territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861 and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans.
- U.S. History – Postwar United States: Understands the struggle for racial and gender equality and for the extension of civil liberties.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) has developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching social studies. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/strands/>.

This lesson plan addresses the following thematic standards:

- Time, Continuity, and Change
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Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>