



Ethnic Studies Lesson 2A: Native American History and Culture

TOPIC:

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

California Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Themes, Values, and Principles Alignment

Themes:

1. Identity
2. History and Movement

Values and Principles:

1. Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native People/s and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
2. Celebrate and honor Native People/s of the land and communities of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color by providing a space to share their stories of success, community collaboration, and solidarity, along with their intellectual and cultural wealth.
3. Center and place high value on the precolonial ancestral knowledge, narratives, and communal experiences of Native People/s and people of color and groups that are typically marginalized in society.

California English and Social Science Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards (11th and 12th Grade):**Reading—Informational Text (RI.9-10/RI.11-12)**

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums, including which details are emphasized in each account (RI.9-10.7/RI.11-12.7).

Lesson Purpose

Students have been exposed to Native American studies throughout their elementary and middle school years. This unit will help to consolidate that knowledge and prepare them for current civil rights discussions.

Essential Questions

How has life changed for American Indians in the United States over the last 350 years?

Materials

[KWL Chart](#)

[Shared Research Document](#)

[Administration for Native Americans](#)

[Native Lands Map](#)

[National Humanities Center](#)

[Bureau of Indian Affairs](#)

[Teaching Young Children about Native Americans](#)

[US Census: Detailed Data for Hundreds of American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes](#)

[Academy of Arts and Sciences](#)

[National Geographic](#)

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

[Native American Guardians' Association](#)

[National Museum of the Native American](#)

[Gladstone Institute](#)

[Native American Heritage Commission](#)

[Michigan State University](#)

[The Conversation](#)

[National Science Foundation](#)

Vocabulary

American Indian

Native American

tribe

colonization

pre-Columbian

nation

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- In order to prepare for Lesson 2F, students may be asked to read *Code Talker: A Novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two*, by Joseph Bruchac. This is optional but can be used in a future lesson. Point students to the essential question for this lesson: How has life changed for American Indians in the United States over the last 350 years?
- Remind students that the terms *Native American* and *American Indian* are both acceptable to use, but it is often preferable to use the specific tribal name ([Teaching Young Children about Native Americans](#)).
- As a class, ask students to share what they already know about Native American culture in the United States and correct/record their answers on a copy of this unit's shared [KWL chart](#). Pay particular

attention to Native American students' answers in your classroom. Ask students to reflect on what they would like to learn from this lesson. Record their answers on the KWL chart, and adjust the shared research Google document to reflect any additional lines of inquiry.

Step 2:

- Break the students into three heterogeneous groups. Share a copy of the [Group Research document](#) with each group and give edit access. Ask each group to research their topic and appropriately cite their source. Remind students to use appropriate and authoritative sources. Examples of such sources are listed in the research document. Review the shared document frequently, and seek out groups to adjust their understanding or point them to new resources during their discussion.
- Once the group research is completed, redistribute the groups so that each new group has one or more experts from each of the group research projects. Each student will share in their new group what they had learned from their group research project while trying to answer the question, "How has life changed for American Indians in the United States over the last 200 years?"

Step 3:

- As a class, go over the research project and check for source citations. Have a discussion with the class about how citing their sources across this class will be helpful in writing end-of-unit essays and the final essay for this class. Record what students learned on the "Learned" column of the KWL chart. As a class, ask students this lesson's question, "How has life changed for American Indians in the United States over the last 350 years?"

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

As time permits and for homework, ask students to write a short paragraph about what they hope to learn in this class in their journal. Their journal will be used for class notes, quick assessment paragraphs, and ongoing research.

Additional Readings and Resources

[JSTOR: The Actual Role of the Bird Woman: Purposeful Member of the Corps or Casual "Tag Along"?](#)

[National Park Service, Roger Williams: To Know a People \(Rhode Island and Native American Relationship Tolerance\)](#)

Schugg, Mark C. et al. *Economic Episodes in American History*, 2nd ed., 2019 (property rights among Indians 103-109, buffalo hunting 113-118).

Sowell, Thomas. *Conquests and Cultures*. Basic Books, 1999, chap. 5.

Thomas SowellTV: [The Civilization of the Americas](#)

[Thomas SowellTV: The Surprising Truth Behind the Disunity Among Indians](#)

[The true story of the first Thanksgiving](#)

[The True Story of Sacagawea](#)

[What is the Chief Seattle myth?](#)

NOTE TO EDUCATORS REGARDING ADDITIONAL READINGS AND RESOURCES: America is a pluralistic country, ethnically. It is also a pluralistic country politically—left, right, and center. Ethnic studies educators have ready access to resources from the left-of-center in the [2021 California Model Curriculum](#) and in the [Liberated Model Curriculum](#). This Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum favors teachers exposing students to views from across the political spectrum. Educators often lack guidance to materials from outside the left-of-center. Therefore, in the sections on Additional Readings and Resources, the Comparative Cultures Ethnic Studies curriculum alerts educators to credible resources that provide an alternative to the other Model Curricula. In doing so, this curriculum encourages educators to acquaint students with evidence-based views from left, right, and center.

Ethnic Studies 2A: KWL Chart

KNOW	WONDER	LEARNED
<p><i>What do we think we already know about this topic?</i></p>	<p><i>What do we wonder about this topic? Write your questions below.</i></p>	<p><i>After the research is completed, what did we learn? Make sure to cite your source.</i></p>

Ethnic Studies 2A: Group Research

Make sure to use reliable online sources, such as .gov or .edu websites. Google short answers are not reliable. Example websites are included below

Group 1: Demographics

QUESTION	ANSWER	SOURCE
Approximately how many pre-Columbian American Indians were in the present-day United States, and approximately how many tribes were there?		Administration for Native Americans Native Lands Map Bureau of Indian Affairs US Census
How many American Indian tribes exist today, and approximately how many people identified themselves as Native American or Alaskan Native in the last census?		
What was the primary cause of death for American Indians in the last 200 years?		
What states have the most registered tribes, and what states have the most people who identify themselves as Native Americans?		
How did roles differ for men and women in Native American society?		

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Group 2: Worldview and Religions

QUESTION	ANSWER	SOURCE
Even though there were hundreds of Native American religions at the time of colonization, what were some of the defining characteristics of Native American religion?		National Humanities Center Academy of Arts and Sciences
What were Circular No. 2970 and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act?		National Geographic
How have Native Americans interacted with Christianity?		

Group 3: Contributions of Native American Individuals

QUESTION	ANSWER	SOURCE
How did/do Native Americans influence American science, medicine, and education? (Make sure to touch on the Sequoyah and Cherokee alphabet.)		Centers for Disease Control
How did/do Native Americans influence American sports? (Make sure to touch on Jim Thorpe.)		Native American Guardians' Association

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<p>How did/do Native Americans influence American food?</p>		<p>National Museum of the Native American</p>
<p>How did/do Native Americans influence science?</p>		<p>Gladstone Institute</p>

Group 4: Native Americans and the environment

QUESTION	ANSWER	SOURCE
<p>How did Native Americans mark their territory to avoid the common use of resources?</p>		<p>Native American Heritage Commission Michigan State University</p>
<p>What are two sides to how Native Americans used or overused the buffalo?</p>		<p>The Conversation</p>
<p>What are two sides to Native Americans before and after having horses?</p>		<p>National Science Foundation</p>