



# Ethnic Studies Lesson 2B: Native American Geography

**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 how the author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text contribute to its overall structure and meaning (RI.11-12.5).

**Writing**—(W.11-12)

Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience (W.11-12.5).

***Social Sciences Standards (11th and 12th Grade):*****History-Social Science Content Standards**—(Grades 9-12)

Analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the early civilizations of Native Americans (History-Social Science Content Standard 6.1).

Analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of the major Native American cultural groups (History-Social Science Content Standard 5.3).

## Lesson Purpose

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Students will discuss the five major cultural regions of Native Americans across the United States and evaluate the role of geography in the development of American Indian culture.

## Essential Questions

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*How does the geography of the United States impact the development of Native American culture?*

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

## Materials

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[National Museum of the American Indian—Native Knowledge 360—American Indian Cultures](#)

[Native Knowledge 360—Northern Plains History](#)

[Native Knowledge 360—Pacific Northwest History](#)

[Support Worksheet](#)

[KWL Chart](#)

## Vocabulary

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culture	customs	generation
dynamic	Indigenous	viability
kinship		

## Lesson Steps

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### Step 1:

- Show students the key concepts from the American Indian Culture page of the National Museum of the American Indian's Native Knowledge 360 page found [HERE](#). Ask students to read the introduction and bullets (using a popcorn, round robin, or other method). Clarify the elements of culture and other vocabulary from the bullet points. Ask how these elements of culture are similar to what would be reflected in other cultures.
- Bring out a large map or atlas of the United States. If one is unavailable, this [National Geographic](#) map or this [Britannica map](#) with regional lines could be used. Ask students what they already know about five to eight Native American cultural regions. Make sure they are aware of Southeast, Southwest, California, Great Basin, Plains, Northeast, Plateau, Northwest Coast (or Pacific Northwest), American Subarctic (or Alaskan Native), and Pacific Islander regions.

**Step 2:**

- Let the students know they will be discussing two cultural regions in order to highlight the concept of culture and how its formation is still ongoing. Students will look at the Northern Plains and the Pacific Northwest. Divide the class into eight groups. Four groups will do activities on the [Native Knowledge 360 Pacific Northwest History and Cultures](#) page and four groups will do activities on the [Native Knowledge 360 Northern Plains History and Cultures](#) page. Students will do only one of the horizontal questions or bands and answer the questions on the lesson worksheet found [HERE](#). Encourage students to use quotes from their research to support their claims and cite their source.

**Step 3:**

- As a class, have each group present the answers to their questions. Students can fill in their own worksheets from the explanations of other groups in order to create more supporting evidence for their homework. Make sure students understand these important points about Native American culture:
  - There are five to eight recognized Native American cultural regions. There is no single native American culture.
  - Native Americans are individuals as well as members of a tribal group.
  - Culture is shaped by many factors and is ongoing.
  - Kinship is an important part of Native American culture.

**Step 4:**

- Continue to fill in the KWL chart from the first lesson. As a class, ask this lesson's question, "How does the geography of the United States impact the development of Native American culture?" and ask this unit'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**

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If time allows and for homework, ask each student to use their worksheet to write a two-paragraph essay on the essential question, "How does the geography of the United States impact the development of Native American culture?" The first paragraph should reflect the student's understanding of what culture is and how there is no one American Indian culture. The second paragraph should show examples of culture from their reading. Students should use quotes or details from the reading and cite their sources carefully.

## **Additional Readings and Resources**

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[Native Knowledge 360 Lesson Plans](#)

[Quakers in the World—Rights of Indigenous People](#)

Sowell, Thomas. *Conquests and Cultures*. Basic Books, 1998, chap. 5.

[The three main groups of Alaskan Natives: Indian, Eskimo and Aleut](#)

**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

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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>