



Ethnic Studies Lesson 2G: Native Americans in Alaska

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.11-12)**

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (RI.11-12.4).

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)**

Lesson Purpose

Students will learn about the Alaskan Native tribes and the Alaskan Inuit and some of their challenges.

Essential Questions

What are some defining characteristics and challenges of Native Alaskans and the Inuit?

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

Materials

[Alaskan-Natives, Eskimo, Inuit, and Inupiaq](#)

[C-Span, Alaska Native Heritage](#)

[Minority Rights Group: Alaska Natives in the United States of America](#)

[BLM Alaska Native Tribes](#)

[KWL Chart](#)

Vocabulary

Athabaskan

Inuit

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a class, ask students what they know about the first peoples of Alaska. Students know that there are two distinct groups in Alaska, based on where the people were from and their languages: Native Alaskans and the Inuit. Use a group reading strategy such as round robin or popcorn to read [Alaskan-Natives, Eskimo, Inuit, and Inupiaq](#). As students read, have them take notes on the preferred terms for the Inuit.
- When students have completed reading, as a class, have students share their notes.

Step 2:

- Have students watch [C-Span, Alaska Native Heritage Center](#) (video 22 minutes, 30 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes on the major people groups and what surprises them about their cultures. Their notes should help them answer the question, “How did Native Alaskans adapt to their environment?”
- When students have finished watching, have students pair up with another student to share their notes. As a class, have student pairs share their notes.

Step 3:

- Prepare a printed copy of [Minority Rights Group: Alaska Natives in the United States of America](#) for pairs of students. As a class, ask students how many treaties were made and how many reservations there are in Alaska. Show students [BLM Alaska Native Tribes](#). Ask students what kinds of issues they believe are unique for Native Alaskans and what issues they believe are similar to those of Native Americans in the lower 48 states.
- Form student pairs and give them the printed copy of [Minority Rights Group: Alaska Natives in the United States of America](#). As student pairs read, have them highlight issues that are similar or different between Alaskan Natives and other Native American tribes.

NATIVE AMERICANS

- When students have completed their reading, have pairs of students join another pair to share their notes. As a class, have groups of students share their notes.

Step 4:

- As a class, ask students this unit's questions, "What are some defining characteristics and challenges of Native Alaskans and the Inuit?" and this unit's question, "How has life changed for American Indians in the United States over the last 350 years?" Add to this unit's KWL chart.

Essential Question Assessment, Application, Action, and Reflection

As time permits and for homework, have students watch [PBS: An Unpredictable Environment](#) (video 3 minutes, 12 seconds). As students watch, they should take notes on how a changing climate is impacting some Alaskan Native peoples. Students should write a short paragraph and cite their source.

Additional Readings and Resources

[PBS: An Unpredictable Environment](#)

Sowell, Thomas. *Conquests and Cultures*. Basic Books, 1998, 317.

[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

KNOW

WONDER

LEARNED

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