



Ethnic Studies Lesson 2I: Native American Civil Rights Effectiveness

TOPIC:

NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY

GRADE LEVELS:

11-12

TIME:

1½ HOURS

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

Themes:

2. History and Movement
4. Social Movements and Equity

Values and Principles:

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.
6. Connect ourselves to past and contemporary social movements that struggle for social justice and an equitable and democratic society, and conceptualize, imagine, and build new possibilities for a post-racist, post-systemic-racism society that promotes collective narratives of transformative resistance, critical hope, and radical healing.

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)

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence (W.11-12.1).

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 social, economic, and political factors that contributed to the Native American civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s (History-Social Science Content Standard 11.10).

Lesson Purpose

Students will understand the events leading up to the Native American civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s and discuss the effectiveness of the movement.

Essential Questions

What events precipitated the Native American civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s? How effective was the movement, and what are some of its legacies?

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

Materials

[Library of Congress: Indian Citizenship Act](#)

[National Congress of American Indians \(1924\) About: From Imminent Threat to Self-Determination](#)

[University of Alaska, Fairbanks: Tribal Governance: Termination Era, the 1950s, Public Law 280](#)

[Digital Public Library of America: The American Indian Movement 1968-1978](#)

[*We Hold the Rock*](#)

[Bureau of Indian Affairs: Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act \(1975\)](#)

[KWL Chart](#)

Vocabulary

civil rights

self-determination

citizenship

protest

occupy

Lesson Steps

Step 1:

- As a whole class, discuss what the term *civil rights* means. What type of rights do we take for granted as US citizens? Ask students what they have studied so far that might have led Native Americans across the US to protest for better civil rights by the 1960s. Let them know that they will be researching four events that came before the civil rights protests. Break the students into four groups and have them research the who, what, when, and where of the following events in order to create an event card for the timeline.
 - [Indian Citizenship Act of 1924](#)
 - [National Congress of American Indians \(1924\) About: From Imminent Threat to Self-Determination](#)

- [University of Alaska, Fairbanks: Tribal Governance: Termination Era, the 1950s, Public Law 280](#)
- [Digital Public Library of America: The American Indian Movement 1968-1978](#)

Step 2:

- As a class, have student groups present their event cards to the class and place them on the timeline. Let students know that after the relocation and termination period, there are several protest events, including: the occupation of Alcatraz Island (1970), the Trail of Broken Treaties walk (1972), the occupation of Wounded Knee (1973), the formation of the Women of All Red Nations (WARN) (1974), the Longest Walk from Alcatraz to Washington, DC (1978), and many others.
- As a class, watch [We Hold the Rock](#) (video 25 minutes, 39 seconds). As students watch the video, they should take notes to answer the question, “How effective was this movement?” Let students know that they should cite their evidence from the time frame of the video. The video should be stopped frequently to allow students to take notes.
- As a class, ask students to share their notes on the effectiveness of this act of protest.

Step 3:

- As a class, use a group reading strategy such as round robin or popcorn to read [Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act \(1975\)](#). While reading, students should take notes on the who, what, when, and where of the event. As a class, complete an event card from the students’ notes.
- Follow up with these class questions: “How does becoming a US citizen, understanding government functioning, laws, land rights, and freedom of speech, empower people to seek improvement for themselves? Does this happen in all countries? What types of countries does this happen in?”

Step 4:

- As a class, ask students this lesson’s questions, “What events precipitated the Native American civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s? How effective was the movement and what are some of its legacies?” and 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

As time permits and for homework, have students complete an essay (five paragraphs or longer) summarizing their learning of “How has life changed for American Indians over the last 350 years?” All students should have access to this unit’s KWL chart, timeline, class supports, and homework assignments and should cite the sources of their information carefully.

Additional Readings and Resources

Bernstein, David E. *Classified: The Untold Story of Racial Classification in America*. Bombardier, 2022.

[Interview with Russell Means](#)

[New York Historical Society: Women and the American Story: Women of All Red Nations](#)

NATIVE AMERICANS

Kalt, Joseph P. "The Role of Constitutions in Native Nation Building." In *Rebuilding Native Nations: Strategies for Governance and Development*, edited by Miriam Jorgensen. University of Arizona Press, chap. 4, 78-114.

[Kalt, *Rebuilding Nations*, chap. 4 PDF](#)

Lawrence, William J. "In Defense of Indian Rights." In *Beyond the Color Line: New Perspectives on Race and Ethnicity in America*, edited by Abigail Thernstrom and Stephan Thernstrom. Hoover Institution Press and Manhattan Institute, 2002, 391-404.

[The Property and Environmental Research Center: Un-American Reservations](#)

Sowell, Thomas. *Conquests and Cultures*. Basic Books, 1998, 317-319.

[Thomas Sowell: The Bureau of Indian Affairs](#) (video 6 minutes, 1 second)

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>