

Unit Essential Questions:

1. What is cultural erasure and how does it impact communities?
2. Who should tell our stories, and why does it matter?

Lesson 6: Cultural Revitalization

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Time Frame: 1 class period

Materials: Slideshow, “Change Your Name” song lyrics, Cultural Revitalization notetaker

Students begin this lesson by engaging with a song by Native/Japanese artist Raye Zaragoza. Her song “Change Your Name” details her mother’s migration story from Japan to the U.S. where she married her husband, who is Native. The song lyrics illustrate the pressure to assimilate that both Native people and immigrants experience. Many students may be able to relate to the lyrics, or have family members or friends who can.

Next, students explore the effects of cultural erasure, and its impacts on community health. Cultural erasure is shown to lead to increases in suicide rates, among other health disparities in Native communities. On the flip side, increased access to traditional culture is shown to improve these rates. Because of this, supporting cultural revitalization efforts is essential. This concept can apply to other groups of people/students as well, not just Natives.

To learn more about this topic, read *Seeing Our Native Students*, by Redbud Resource Group

At the end of this lesson, students analyze an example of cultural revitalization in California by watching a short documentary on a topic of their choosing. Topics range from art, to ecology, to medicine, to food.

ENGAGE

Teacher Directions:

Ask students to complete a journal entry answering the following:

1. Describe a time that you, or someone you know, had to change something about themselves in order to fit in.

Provide students with copies of Raya Zaragoza’s “Change Your Name.”

Have students read and/or listen to the song, and discuss the following:

1. What does it tell us about erasure?
2. What does it tell us about resilience?

Discussion Tips: Students will notice examples of both resilience and assimilation in the lyrics. The lyrics are likely relatable to students from lots of different backgrounds, not just Native students. Students whose families have had to immigrate or migrate away from their ancestral homelands, who have had to learn a new language, change professions, or assimilate in other ways, should be encouraged to reflect on those experiences.

EXPLAIN

Teacher Directions:

Review the definition of erasure/cultural erasure with students on **slide 5**.

Next, lead students through an analysis of the data presented on **slide 6**.

Students will notice that 100% of Native languages in the U.S. are in danger. Students might wonder why this is. Challenge students to consider the relationship between land loss, dehumanization, and language loss. Ask students to consider the impact that language loss can have on a community or culture.

Review the definition of revitalize/cultural revitalization with students on **slide 7**.

EXPLORE

Teacher Directions:

Guide students to the Tending the Wild episodes on the KCET website.

Link: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/tending-the-wild>

Provide students copies of the “**Cultural Revitalization**” notetaker, located at the bottom of this lesson.

Allow students to pick an episode that interests them. Provide time for students to watch the episode, and take notes on their notetaker.

You may allow students to create a visual representation of the episode, based on their notes.

ELABORATE

Teacher Directions:

Allow students to share the information they gathered about their episode with a partner.

EVALUATE

Teacher directions:

As a class, discuss the essential questions explored in this unit:

1. What is one way that Native people are reclaiming their cultures and increasing visibility?
2. How can cultural visibility support all people?

VOCABULARY

Reclaim: retrieve or recover (something previously lost, given, or paid); obtain the return of.

Resilience: the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

Revitalize: imbue (something) with new life and vitality.

STANDARDS

Common Core:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.7

Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Vocabulary:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5

Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

Seven Essential Understandings:

Essential Understanding 2 - There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined and redefined by entities, organizations and people. A continuum of Indian identity, unique to each individual, ranges from assimilated to traditional. There is no generic American Indian.

Essential Understanding 3 - The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date European contact, i.e., the "discovery" of North America.

Essential Understanding 5 - There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have affected Indian people and still shape who they are today. Many of these policies conflicted with one another. Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods: Colonization/Colonial Period 1492 – 1800s;

Treaty Period 1789 – 1871; Assimilation Period - Allotment and Boarding School 1879 – 1934; Tribal Reorganization Period 1934 – 1958; Termination and Relocation Period 1953 – 1971; Self-determination Period 1968 – Present.

SOURCES

KCET: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/tending-the-wild>

MATERIALS

“Change Your Name”

Raye Zaragoza

Raye Zaragoza is a singer/songwriter of Native and Japanese descent. Her song “Change Your Name” explores the themes of assimilation and cultural erasure. Her lyrics discuss the ways that migration impact culture, often leading to cultural loss.

Many people, including Native people, were forced to change their names during the Mission system, and during colonization. For some Native communities, this step was the first step in complete language loss. Native communities who were forcibly removed from their homes also experienced cultural shifts, as they assimilated into mainstream American society.

Lyrics

On a boat from Japan
Five stitches in my head
To America to meet my Dad
Holding on to paper dolls
Different food and different talk
I wonder if I'll like this new land
Holding on to what Mama said to me
They may change your name
They may change your name
To something they can say
But you're gonna be okay
We arrive one room flat
Between Columbus and Amsterdam
I see other girls but I don't look like them
Papa opens up a store
Selling smokes and trinkets from back home
Searching for some form of an American dream
Holding on to what mama said to me
They may change your name
They may change your name
To something they can say
But you're gonna be okay

They may call your names
We'll make it anyway
They can't change your ways
They may change your name
But you're the same to me
You're the same to me
You're the same to me
We'll call you Shirley
They may change your name
They may change your name
To something they can say
But you're gonna be okay
They may call your names
We'll make it anyway
They can't change your ways
They may change your name

Cultural Revitalization: Tending the Wild

1. What episode did you choose?
1. How does the episode show an example of cultural revitalization?
1. How does the work of the people featured in the episode counter “Historical Erasure” or the “Myth of Inevitable Extinction”?
1. What are some of the ongoing challenges and barriers to cultural revitalization?
1. How can cultural revitalization support all people?