

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 1: Intro to Native Identity

LESSON INTRODUCTION

Time Frame: 2 class periods

Materials: Butcher paper, writing utensils, laptops/computers with internet access

This lesson introduces students to elements of Native American identity with which they are likely unfamiliar. Through an exploratory station activity, students examine a series of sources that challenge common stereotypes and assumptions about Native Americans. Through their own inquiry process, students gain a fuller, more nuanced understanding of the larger Native community. **By the end of the lesson, students should understand that Native communities are diverse, political, and modern.**

The common stereotypes that are indirectly challenged during the station activity include:

1. Native people are mostly dead or extinct.
2. Native communities have little structure, or political power.
3. Native people must look a certain way.
4. Native people only live in rural environments.

To explore these stereotypes in greater depth in preparation for teaching this lesson, read **pages 9-24** in “Seeing Our Native Students: A Guide for Educators, by Redbud Resource Group.

ENGAGE

Teacher Directions:

Ask students to answer the following questions, using the circle diagram shown in slide 1:

1. In the inner circle: What do you already know about Native Americans?
2. Outside the circle: Where did you learn what you know? What sources can you cite?

As a class, discuss:

1. What patterns do you notice in your sources?
2. Are Native American perspectives and authors included in any sources?

Discussion tips:

Students will probably list information that aligns with stereotypes and assumptions about Native people. Because of this, it is important to have a conversation about the types of sources they list, as well as the quality. You might explore how a source written by a Native person could be different from sources by non Native creators, and whether that matters. You may even ask students to think about how stories are impacted by the teller's perspective. What information is lost, or altered?

EXPLORE

Teacher Directions:

[Before class begins] Prepare five large posters by placing **the Reflection questions** listed at the end of this document in the center of each poster.

Place posters around the room, creating five stations.

Place laptops at each station, or prepare to distribute the links corresponding with each station to students.

1. Divide students into groups and place them at their first station.
2. Review directions and examples for Big Poster conversation found on **slide 6-9**.
3. Project a timer, (we recommend 10 minutes per station) and allow students to watch the station video, and answer the reflection questions on the poster.
4. Rotate, repeat.

Station links:

Station 1: Political Identity

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOYcgvEU0V0>

Station 2: Appearance/Race

Link: <https://youtu.be/siMal6QV>

Station 3: Physical Existence:

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOWUDM1GBhk>

Station 4: Location:

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkq1XOZTXel>

Station 5: Contemporary Existence/assimilation:

Link: [youtube.com/watch?v=GHDW_LVfn28&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GHDW_LVfn28&t=1s)

For more information on Big Paper Conversations, including information about distance learning, visit:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/big-paper-silent-conversation>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/big-paper-remote-learning>

EXPLAIN

Teacher Directions:

Return students to their warm up activity. Ask students to add to their notes, adding new sources.

Discuss the following questions:

1. What do you know about Native American people/culture?
2. Are there any differences between your most recently added sources, compared to your original sources?

Review the definition of **erasure** with students on **slide 11**.

***Erasure** is the act of removing something from a place.*

***Cultural erasure** is when an entire community's existence, culture, values, and voice, are absent or not recognized by the general public.*

Ask students to reflect on their own experiences of feeling represented in their communities on **slide 12**.

ELABORATE

Teacher Directions:

Review the information provided in **slides 13-18** with students. You may choose to have students take notes as they are introduced to new vocabulary and ideas.

Slide 14:

The 573 federally recognized tribes in the U.S. have political sovereignty, meaning they have the ability to design their own laws, regulations, economies, and education systems, among other powers. Federally recognized tribes operate as their own nations, and have a nation to nation relationship with the U.S.. Tribal sovereignty is guaranteed through treaty signing processes. These tribes still pay certain taxes to the federal government, and the federal government has some obligation to support tribes.

There are many tribes that are not federally recognized. These tribes do not share the same freedoms as federally recognized tribes.

Slide 15:

Native people mostly live in urban areas, though some do live on reservations. Reservations are small plots of land that Native people were given by the federal government. Native people were often forcibly removed from their ancestral land, and placed onto reservations where the land was often of poor quality. Many reservations have little natural or economic resources available.

The U.S. government has incentivized Natives to move to urban areas through economic development and removal programs. The purpose of these programs is to provide vocational opportunities to Natives, and create physical divides among Native families as members move away from the reservation in search of economic opportunity.

Slide 16:

California has the highest number of tribal communities of any state. It has incredible linguistic diversity, though the number of languages has reduced over time. Most Natives in California live in urban settings. Many urban Natives in California are not from California Native tribes. Many Natives moved to urban areas from other states in search of economic opportunity during the 1960's and 70's.

Slide 17:

Native people do not all look the same. Depending on physical location (and distance from the equator), cultural practices (and fashion), and types of intermarriage, Native people can have vastly different appearances. Some Native people like to wear traditional-looking clothing, keep traditional hairstyles, etc., while many Natives wear Western clothing. The color of one's skin, eye color, and facial features, and fashion, do not determine whether a person is Native.

Slide 18:

In the last few centuries, over 5 billion acres of land has been confiscated from Native peoples by the U.S. government. Hundreds of thousands of Native people have been murdered and /or removed from their ancestral lands, in order for the U.S. to expand its territory.

Slide 19:

Native people today work hard to protect the earth's natural resources, provide opportunities for Native people in public and political spaces, support health and wellness, and raise awareness of Native existence.

EVALUATE

Teacher Directions:

To wrap up, ask students to complete a quick write, in which they answer the following questions:

1. How does the information you learned in this lesson enhance or change your understanding of Native peoples?

VOCABULARY

Federal recognition: Tribes that have federal recognition are recognized as sovereign, independent governing bodies. Federal recognition affords tribes the ability to set laws and regulations that apply to their land, however, tribes are still subject to certain oversights by the U.S. federal government.

Treaty: A formal, legally binding agreement that has been ratified.

Erasure is the act of removing something from a place.

Cultural erasure: When an entire community's existence, culture, values, and voice, are absent or not recognized by the general public.

STANDARDS

Common Core:

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.

Seven Essential Understandings:

Essential Understanding 1 - There is great diversity among the tribal nations of San Diego County in their languages, cultures, histories and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern U.S.

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 4 - Reservations are lands that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, statutes, and executive orders and were not "given" to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions: 1) Both parties to treaties were sovereign powers. 2) Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land. 3) Acquisition of Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists.

SOURCES

Facing History and Ourselves:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/big-paper-silent-conversation>

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/big-paper-remote-learning>

Seeing Our Native Students:

<https://www.redbudresourcegroup.org/resources>

Slide 12:

<https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>

Slide 14:

<https://news.berkeley.edu/2021/01/26/kroeber-hall-unnamed/>

<https://youtu.be/siMal6QVblE>

Slide 15:

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/calbk.051>

<https://youtu.be/lkq1XOZTXeI>

Slide 16:

<https://youtu.be/qYgZ1Pwx6al>

Stations:

Station 1: Political Identity

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOYcgvEU0V0>

Station 2: Appearance/Race

Link: <https://youtu.be/siMal6QV>

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Station 5: Contemporary Existence/assimilation:

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