

## Lesson 3: Lessons of the Past

### LESSON INTRODUCTION

**Time Frame:** One 60-90 min. Lesson *or* Two 40-60 min. Lessons

**Materials:**

- White/chalk board
- Google Slides [Presentation](#)
- 2 fly swatters (or something similar)
- Projector and computer with access to the internet
- *Stewards of the Wild Sea* [short film](#) (*tip: open the video in the beginning of the lesson to load*)
- *Stewards of the Wild Sea* Quote Activity [pdfs](#)
  - pens/pencils, coloring utensils
  - tape/magnets
- “Native Power: Protecting Our Homelands” article, vocabulary sheet, and “What Did You Learn?” reading responses [pdf](#)
- “What Did You Learn?” Answer Sheet (last page of the article)

This lesson aims to share with students a Native perspective of California history through the personal stories of the Tribal peoples of the coastal and redwood forest regions of Northern California.

**Expressive Outcomes:**

*I know I can explain how history has impacted Native American communities.*

*I know I can explain how Native American communities show respect, reciprocity, and relationship to their homelands.*

*I know I can explain how I can support Native American communities.*

**Teacher Background:**

What does it mean to teach from a settler colonial perspective? This is what all educators should be asking as they work with youth from various ethnic backgrounds. The settler colonial perspective has dominated curricula of all grade-levels for decades;

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it can be difficult to imagine lessons taught from any other viewpoint. This lesson will challenge the dominant narrative that California land was free to be industrialized. On the contrary, there was a mass genocide of many California tribes that exposed Mother Earth's gifts for the taking, to be exploited and sold as commodities.

Before teaching this lesson, it is important to conceptualize how the settler colonial perspective is perpetuated in the classroom, so that educators may take all the precautions necessary for teaching anticolonial material.

To begin, theoretically speaking, there are two main types of colonialism: external and internal. *External colonialism* is an action taken upon by a state authority to dispossess pieces of Indigenous communities for the benefit of that state. It is within external colonialism that we see the commodification of "natural resources." Internal colonialism is the political management of people, land, flora and fauna within an imperial state/nation. Some examples of these modes of control are policing, schooling, and minoritizing. There are many different strategies of internal colonialism; all are both structural and interpersonal.

Both of these forms of colonialism are at work in *settler colonialism*, which is what operates here in the United States, and many other nation-states. In settler colonialism, the colonizer comes to stay. We see both external and internal colonialism strategies here because there is essentially no spatial separation of the colonizers and the colonized. As was the case in California during the Gold Rush era, many Indigenous peoples were forcibly removed from their homelands and relocated onto reservations, indentured, or separated from their families and sent to state institutions such as boarding schools (internal). Simultaneously, gold, mercury, timber, and other natural resources were being extracted from the land for pure profit, benefiting no one but the metropole (external).<sup>1</sup>

Settler colonialism is not a singular event, it is a system, because it is reinforced in each day of occupation. **As long as land** (water, soil, plants and animals) **is used as a source of capital, decolonization will never truly occur.** Thus, Native power and perspective are inextricably linked to the disruption of settler colonialism. The extensive violence that settler colonialism commits on Indigenous people is ongoing,

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, read Tuck and Yang's (2012) "[Decolonization is not a metaphor](#)"

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and yet Native resistance pushes onward. To share stories of power and perspective is to join the resistance!

While Native communities all over the country are fighting to rekindle relationships with their homelands, settlers are creating important allyships with First Nations. By teaching the success stories of the Native peoples of this place, we are moving the curriculum beyond learning *about* Native peoples and helping students learn *from* Indigenous perspectives. Schooling has been a key player in the perpetuation of settler colonialism by reinforcing Native American stereotypes through the oppressor's eye. Avoid using language such as "primitive," "wild," or "uncivilized" to describe Native Americans in the past. Contradict Native erasure in the classroom by highlighting the strengths and political victories of local tribal organizations. This simultaneously challenges damage-centered narratives about Native peoples. We must recognize Native peoples as both resilient and resistant despite all odds! Thus, in this lesson, you will look to the past from the perspective of the colonized to provide valuable stepping stones for students to move away from settler colonial ways of thinking to a more holistic and respectful worldview.

## ENGAGE

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### Vocabulary Game (5-10 minutes)

1. Below you will find a list of all of the vocabulary words we have presented thus far, including the ones that will be introduced in the reading assignment for this lesson (note: some words may be repeated in multiple lessons for emphasis):
  - a. **Intro Lesson - 3 R's**
  - b. **Lesson 1 - Place**
  - c. **Lesson 2 - Presence** (reminder: the lesson gave you a list of words to choose from! All of them are listed above)
  - d. **Lesson 3 - Power and Perspectives**
2. **WRITE** all of the vocabulary words you've used in past lessons on the board. We leave it up to each teacher to decide whether or not to include the new words in **green**, which are introduced in the reading assignment for this lesson.
3. **INTRODUCE** the Fly Swatter Vocabulary Game!

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- a. **SAY**, “We are going to warm up with a fun game!
- b. **DIVIDE** the class into 2 teams.
- c. Have one student from each team come to the board and hand them a fly swatter.
- d. **Warm-up round**: READ one of the vocabulary words.
- e. Students should race to see who can locate the word on the board the fastest.
- f. When they find it, they should hit the word on the board with the fly swatter.
- g. **Next round**: READ the definition of each word and REPEAT the same steps
- h. Play until everyone in the class has had at least one turn!

## EXPLORE

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### *Stewards of the Wild Sea Short Film (5-10 minutes)*

1. **INTRODUCE** the film:
  - a. “*Stewards of the Wild Sea*” tells a short story about Tribal leadership in the north coast region of California. The Native people in the video talk about why it is so important for them to return to this region, which is an important part of their traditional territory. As you watch, listen for examples of how these Tribes show respect and reciprocity for the land and sea, and how you would describe their relationship with this place.”
2. **PLAY** the video on [Edpuzzle](#).
3. **DISCUSS** examples of the 3 R’s from the film.

## EXPLAIN

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### *Quote Stations (20-40 minutes)*

1. **SET UP** each of the 5 Quote posters at a different station around the classroom.
  - a. Make sure each station has writing and coloring utensils.
2. **DIVIDE** the class up into 5 groups.

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3. **INSTRUCT** students to:
  - a. Read the quote from the film on the poster.
  - b. Then, work together to add to the poster:
    - i. What values are important to the speaker? (Respect? Reciprocity? Relationships? Something else?)
    - ii. 1 or 2 questions they have related to the quote or speaker
    - iii. Drawings that symbolize the quote's meaning
  - c. Give each group 5-6 minutes to work on each poster.
  - d. Groups will rotate 2 times, so will work on 3 posters total.
  - e. After the last rotation, tape the posters to the white board and give students an opportunity to share their contributions.

## ELABORATE

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### Article, “Native Power: Protecting Our Homelands” (15-30 minutes)

1. **HAND OUT** [“Native Power: Protecting Our Homelands”](#) article and vocabulary sheet.
2. Choose to read the article together as a class or in partners. Students should practice reading out loud.
3. When students reach a word in red, direct them to the vocabulary sheet to learn the meaning of that word.

## EVALUATE

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### Reading Responses, “What Did You Learn?” (15-25 minutes)

1. **HAND OUT** “What Did You Learn?” reading response sheet
2. **INSTRUCT** students to answer the questions at the end of the article based on their reading.
3. **GO OVER** the answers together as a class.
4. End the lesson with a short **CLASS DISCUSSION** about how you all can support

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local Native communities based on what was learned today.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

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1. [The Whale Child](#)
  - a. *The Whale Child* by Keith Egawa and Chenoa Egawa tells the story of Shiny, “a young whale turned boy tasked with teaching a young girl named Alex about the perils facing the ocean due to climate change.”
    - i. According to Shiny, what is happening to the oceans? How are humans to blame?
    - ii. Think about the role water plays in your life. What is its significance? What role does it play in Shiny’s life?
    - iii. Alex’s family believes that humans should “take only what you need from nature, waste nothing, and give thanks for what you take.” What does this mean to you?
  - b. This is a great book to supplement any of the lessons in this unit. It’s especially relevant leading up to Lesson 5: Partnerships.
2. Follow up this lesson with a visit to the museum!
  - a. Visit the [California Indian Museum and Cultural Center](#) in Santa Rosa, CA after teaching Native power and perspective.

## VOCABULARY

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**respect:** Caring about the feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions of a person or people

**reciprocity:** The sharing and receiving of things with an open heart

**relationships:** A connection through love and support

**ancestor:** A family member that came way before you

**territory:** Land and waters under the control of a town, state, or nation

**colonize:** The act of taking control of a territory that belongs to someone else

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**Tribal Nation:** A tribe that has the power to make their own laws over their land and people

**Time immemorial:** A time that was so long ago people have no memory of it

**Native:** The first inhabitants of this land (*note that Native and Indigenous are synonymous and always capitalized when referring to people*)

**proud:** The feeling of being good and worthy

**tradition:** A way of doing something that has been passed down

**culture:** The way of life of a group of people

**unique:** The only one of its kind

**community:** A group of people who come together for a common purpose

**diverse:** Different from each other

**extension:** Something that adds on to something else

**basketry:** The craft of weaving materials together to make baskets

**generation:** A group of people born around the same time

**settler:** Someone who moves to another place and plans to stay there

**reservation:** The land that belongs to a Tribal Nation

**genocide:** The crime of killing many people who are apart of a group

**ecosystem:** A home to living and non-living things that interact with one another

**traditional:** Relating to a way of doing something that has been passed down

**rights:** Basic needs that everyone should have

**Marine Protected Area:** Areas of the ocean that have laws protecting the ecosystem

## STANDARDS

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### **Common Core:**

#### **Reading: Informational Text**

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1

Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.2

Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.3

Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.4

Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.7

Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on Web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears.

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.8

Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.9

Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

#### **Reading: Foundational Skills**

##### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.4.3

Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.



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### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.4.4

Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.4.4.A

Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.

## Writing

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1.B

Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1.C

Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.

#### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1.D

Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.2

Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.3

Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.4

Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

## Language

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.3

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.4

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Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

### CA Indian Essential Understandings:

#### **Essential Understanding 1:** *Great Diversity Among Tribes*

There is great diversity among the 150+ tribes of California in their languages, cultures, histories & governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern California.

#### **Essential Understanding 3:** *Native Traditional Beliefs*

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 their own oral history beginning with their genesis that is as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

#### **Essential Understanding 4:** *Policies That Affected Tribes*

There were many foreign, state and federal policies put into place throughout American history that have impacted California Indian people and shape who they are today.

Much of Indian history can be related through several major policy periods. Examples: Mission Period, The Gold Rush Allotment Period, Boarding School Period, Termination and Self-determination.

#### **Essential Understanding 6:** *History From A California Native Perspective*

History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tells us.

### Native Knowledge 360° Essential Understandings about American Indians:

#### **Essential Understanding 2:** *Time, Continuity and Change*

Indigenous people of the Americas shaped life in the Western Hemisphere for millennia. After contact, American Indians and the events involving them greatly influenced the histories of the European colonies and the modern nations of North, Central, and South America. Today, this influence continues to play significant roles in many aspects of political, legal, cultural, environmental, and economic issues. To understand the history and cultures of the Americas requires understanding American Indian history from Indian perspectives.

- American Indian history is not singular or timeless. American Indian cultures have always adapted and changed in response to environmental, economic, social, and other factors. American Indian cultures and people are fully engaged in the modern world.

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- American Indians employed a variety of methods to record and preserve their histories.
- European contact resulted in devastating loss of life, disruption of tradition, and enormous loss of lands for American Indians.
- Hearing and understanding American Indian history from Indian perspectives provides an important point of view to the discussion of history and cultures in the Americas. Indian perspectives expand the social, political, and economic dialogue.
- Indigenous people played a significant role in the history of the Americas. Many of these historically important events and developments in the Americas shaped the modern world.
- Providing an American Indian context to history makes for a greater understanding of world history.

### **Essential Understanding 6: *Power, Authority and Governance***

American Indians devised and have always lived under a variety of complex systems of government. Tribal governments faced rapid and devastating change as a result of European colonization and the development of the United States. Tribes today still govern their own affairs and maintain a government-to-government relationship with the United States and other governments.

- Long before European colonization, American Indians had developed a variety of complex systems of government that embodied important principles for effective rule. American Indian governments and leaders interacted, recognized each other's sovereignty, practiced diplomacy, built strategic alliances, waged wars, and negotiated peace accords.
- After 1492, American Indians suffered diseases and genocidal events that resulted in death on a catastrophic scale and the rapid decimation of Native populations. These episodes greatly compromised the continuity of existing tribal government structures.

### **Essential Understanding 8: *Science, Technology and Society***

American Indian knowledge resides in languages, cultural practices, and teaching that spans many generations. This knowledge is based on long-term observation, experimentation, and experience with the living earth. Indigenous knowledge has sustained American Indian cultures for thousands of years. When applied to contemporary global challenges, Native knowledge contributes to dynamic and innovative solutions.

- Major social, cultural, and economic changes took place in American Indian cultures as a result of the acquisition of goods and technologies from Europeans and others.

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- Much American Indian knowledge was destroyed in the years after contact with Europeans. Nevertheless, the intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge, the recovery of cultural practices, and the creation of new knowledge continue in American Indian communities today.

### CA Social Sciences Framework:

4.2 Students describe the social, political, cultural, and economic life and interactions among people of California from the pre-Columbian societies to the Spanish mission and Mexican rancho periods.

1. Discuss the major nations of California Indians, including their geographic distribution, economic activities, legends, and religious beliefs; and describe how they depended on, adapted to, and modified the physical environment by cultivation of land and use of sea resources.

4.3 Students explain the economic, social, and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood.

1. Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics, and the physical environment (e.g., using biographies of John Sutter, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Louise Clapp).

4.4 Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power, tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850s.

2. Explain how the Gold Rush transformed the economy of California, including the types of products produced and consumed, changes in towns (e.g., Sacramento, San Francisco), and economic conflicts between diverse groups of people.
3. Describe rapid American immigration, internal migration, settlement, and the growth of towns and cities (e.g., Los Angeles).

### CA Environmental Principles and Concepts

#### Principle II - People Influence Natural Systems

The long-term functioning and health of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems are influenced by their relationships with human societies.

**Concept D.** The legal, economic, and political systems that govern the use and management of natural systems directly influence the geographic extent, composition, biological diversity, and viability of natural systems.

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### Principle V - Decisions Affecting Resources and Natural Systems are Complex and Involve Many Factors

Decisions affecting resources and natural systems are based on a wide range of considerations and decision-making processes.

**Concept A.** The spectrum of what is considered in making decisions about resources and natural systems and how those factors influence decisions.

**Concept B.** The process of making decisions about resources and natural systems, and how the assessment of social, economic, political, and environmental factors has changed over time.

## SOURCES

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- InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council's [website](#)
- "Stewards of the Wild Sea." (2013). [YouTube](#).
- Redbud's article "Native Power: Protecting Our Homelands" was adapted for educational purposes from:  
"Northern California Tribes Oppose Navy Training and Testing and Demand Stronger Protections for the Ocean and their Cultural Lifeways" (2019) and  
"Protecting Ancestral Tribal Lands and Waters" (2018). *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*.
- Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012). [Decolonization is Not a Metaphor](#).
- [Flyswatter Game](#)
- [The Whale Child](#) by Keith Egawa and Chenoa Egawa (2020)
- [California Indian Museum and Cultural Center](#)