

# Native American Studies

**Grade Level:** 5th

**Presented by:** Bob Barber and Brenda Rageth, Platte River Academy, Highlands Ranch, CO

**Length of Unit:** 3 – 4 weeks

## I. Abstract

The focus of this unit is on Native American cultures across the United States. It's a hands on unit that allows the students to explore Native American life from past to present.

## II. Overview

### A. Concept Objectives

The objective of this unit is to introduce students to various Native American cultures that existed across the United States. It focuses on lifestyles and cultures of various tribes. Hands on activities help the students understand tribal lifestyle, which include crafts, games, food, and arts.

### B. Core Knowledge sequence to be covered

1. Culture and life
2. American Government Policies
3. Native American conflicts
4. Geography of the U.S.
5. Gather data through research

### C. Specific skills to be taught

1. Graphing of the regions of the United States
2. Understanding of different social structures
3. Writing cinquain
4. Creating masks
5. Understanding of nutrition pyramid
6. Picture storytelling
7. Creating audiovisual interpretation of myth

## III. Background Knowledge

A. Culin, Stewart. *Games of the North American Indians*. University of Nebraska Press. 1992. ISBN 0-8032-6357-0.

B. Eagle/Walking Turtle. *Indian America*. John Muir Publications, 1997. ISBN 1-56261-238-7.

C. Harvey and Harjo. *Indian Country*. Fulcrum Publishing, 1998. ISBN 1-55591-428-4.

## IV. Resources

### A. Teacher Resources:

1. Cleary, Elaine. *Northwest Indians*. Evan-Moor, 1996. ISBN 1-55799-571-0.
2. Cleary, Elaine. *Woodland Indians*. Evan-Moor, 1996. ISBN 1-55799-389-0.
3. Hoven, Leigh. *Native Americans*. Teacher Created Materials, Inc., 1990. ISBN 1-55591-428-4.
4. Liptak, Karen. *North American Indian Sign Language*. Franklin Watts, 1990. ISBN 0-531-10869-4.
5. Mateo, Mary Ann. *Portraits of Native American Indians*. Good Apple, 1992. ISBN 0-86653-669-8.
6. Robbins, Mari Lu. *Plains Indians*. Evan-Moor, 1996. ISBN 1-55799-576-1.

### B. Books:

1. Matthaei, Gay. *The Ledgerbook of Thomas Blue Eagle*. Thomasson-Grant, 1994. ISBN 1-56566-063-3.

### C. Posters:

1. Native Americans, *Tribes by Region*, Creative Teaching Press.

2. Native Americans, *Past and Present*, Creative Teaching Press.
  3. Native American Ceremonies and Beliefs, Creative Teaching Press.
  4. The Earth is Precious, Creative Teaching Press.
- D. Audio-Visual:
1. *Keepers of the Animals. Native American Animal Stories.* Fulcrum Publishing. Audio. ISBN 1-55591-128-5.
  2. *Keepers of the Earth. Native American Stories.* Fulcrum Publishing. Audio. ISBN 1-55591-099-8.

## V. Lessons

### A. Day One:

1. Objective/Goal:  
Students will understand the region of the Northeast. Students will create map of area inhabited by the Northeast Native Americans. Students will learn of the Woodland Indian culture through folk tales
2. Materials:  
Map of the United States, atlases, and student maps
3. Key Vocabulary:  
Woodland Indians, Indian
4. Procedures/Activities:
  - a. Teacher will read the poem, *Woodlands*, by Elaine Cleary to introduce the woodland Indians and to generate interest among the students.
  - b. Teacher will display a large map of the U.S. for the class to see. Ask students to guess where the Woodland tribes are from. Ask students further questions: Why would they be called Woodlands? Where is the Northeast region?
  - c. Teacher will hand out individual maps for students to highlight the region in which the woodland tribes live.
  - d. Give the names of some names of various tribes from the Northeast region: Iroquois, Mohican, and Delaware. The teacher will give latitude/longitude coordinates of the tribes. The students will then fill in their maps where the tribes live.
  - e. Break into small groups with maps and atlases. Teacher will read various folk tales of the Northeast region while students' work on maps. Example of folk tales would be *Sootface an Ojibiwa Tale*.
  - f. Groups should label individual maps with Hudson River, Delaware River, Allegheny, Susquehanna, Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, Lake Superior, Lake Huron, and Iroquois.
5. Evaluation:
  - a. Teacher will check the accuracy of the student maps.

### B. Day Two

1. Objective/Goal:  
Students will understand that Native Americans had a different belief system.
2. Materials:  
Paper plates, yarn, markers, construction paper, mask worksheet.
3. Prior Knowledge:  
Read the False Face Society. Prepare questions to prompt students.
4. Procedures/Activities:
  - a. Read story of the False Face Society. Discuss why they might have felt it necessary to hide their faces. What might these masks have looked like? Students will listen to Native American folk tales from the tape *Keepers of the Animals*.
  - b. Individuals will gather materials to create their own false facemask.
  - c. Students will draw face on plate.
  - d. Students will color face, design mask to look the way that would portray this society.

- e. Attach string to hold onto face.
- 5. Evaluation  
Students will create a mask to symbolize the False Face Society.

**C. Day Three**

- 1. Objective/Goal:  
Students will learn the social structure of the Northeast Woodland Native Americans.  
Students will understand clan symbolism.
- 2. Materials:  
Matriarchal society worksheets, tagboard, markers, construction paper, glue
- 3. Prior Knowledge:  
Know what was expected of the men, women, and children.
- 4. Key Vocabulary:  
Matriarchal, clan, symbolism
- 5. Procedures/Activities:
  - a. Whole group will discuss what is expected of men, women, and children in our society.
  - b. Share with students that Woodland tribes were mainly matriarchal and what that means.
  - c. Whole group discussion of what was expected of the men, women, and children in the Northeast Woodland tribes.
  - d. Compare the two societies using a Venn diagram.
  - e. Have individual groups fill out the matriarchal worksheet.
  - f. Break class into small groups; this will be their clan. The clans will decide on a symbol to represent their group.
  - g. Students will design symbol to place in their area of study.
- 6. Evaluation:  
Symbol of clan that they have designed

**D. Day Four:**

- 1. Objective:  
Students will understand the importance of trees to the Woodland Indians way of life.
- 2. Materials:  
Worksheets
- 3. Procedure:
  - a. The teacher will ask students to brainstorm ideas of just how the Woodland Indians might use trees.
  - b. The teacher will read to the students a selection that demonstrates just how important trees were to the Woodland Indians. Important uses include: homes, food source, transportation, and protection.
  - c. Teacher will demonstrate to students that the Woodland Indians did not waste trees. Teacher will tell many ways in which a tree was used.
  - d. Teacher will pass out a worksheet (Appendix A) that has two columns. One shows the parts of a tree, the other, how it was used. Students will be required to match the columns to explain how they didn't waste resources.
- 4. Evaluation:  
Teacher will collect and grade the worksheets.

**E. Day Five:**

- 1. Objective:  
Students will learn the various food sources that sustained the Woodland Indians.
- 2. Materials:  
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Nutrition Pyramid, chart paper, blank nutrition pyramid (Appendix B)
- 3. Key Vocabulary:  
Nutrition, diet, grouse, sturgeon, walleye

4. Procedure:
  - a. Teacher will ask students what they think the woodland tribes ate. Answers will be put up on chart paper.
  - b. Teacher will read information to the students that tells what food sources the woodland tribes relied on.
  - c. Teacher will display on an overhead the USDA Nutrition Pyramid and fill it in according to what the Woodland Indians ate.
  - d. Teacher will ask the students to explain if the Woodland Indians diet was healthy according to the guidelines and how it compares to their diet.
  - e. Class will make corn meal mush during class according to recipe. (Appendix C) Students will discuss whether or not they liked it.
5. Evaluation:

Check answers on pyramid guide.

**F. Day Six:**

1. Objective:

Students will understand that storytelling was a big part of Native American life.
2. Materials:

Story Web (Appendix D), construction paper
3. Key Vocabulary:

Legend, folklore
4. Procedure:
  - a. Teacher will tell students that legends played a significant role in Native American cultures. Some told about heroes and adventures while others often explained things in nature.
  - b. Teacher will read two legends for the students: *The Three Sisters* and *Ga Oh and the Winds*.
  - c. Discuss the students' interpretations of the legends.
  - d. Inform students that they will now begin to write their own legend. Pass out the story web to the students.
  - e. Have students decide on a subject, for example, a star, a rock that sparkles, the color of a flower, shape of a leaf, the looks of animals. Students write their subject in the circle in the center of the web.
  - f. Develop a plot by asking "what question am I asking?" For example: "Why does a skunk have a white stripe down its back?" Then the students develop an explanation or answer. This should show a sequence of events. Write their questions in the big circle labeled plot and the three steps to their explanation in the three smaller circles.
  - g. Students now decide the setting of the story. They must develop a time and place. They should write these in the appropriate boxes.
  - h. Students now figure out characters. They should answer who made this story happen. Students should have one main character and a couple of minor ones. Students fill in the character circles.
  - i. Students write story. They should illustrate their story.
  - j. Combine all stories into a class book and display in the school.

**G. Day Seven:**

1. Objective/Goal:

Students will learn the geographical area of the Plains Indians.
2. Materials:

Maps, atlases
3. Procedures/Activities

- a. Introduce the Plains Indians to whole group. Where are the plains in the United States? What type of an area is this? What would the Indians have to do to survive (hunters, farmers, fisherman)?
- b. Share the names of some Plains Indians: Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Crow, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Apache, and Sioux giving the latitude and longitude.
- c. Small group will use an atlas to find, draw, and label the plains area on the large wall map.
- d. On individual maps, students will find and label the Rocky Mountains, Missouri River, and the Mississippi River.

#### **H. Day Eight:**

1. Objective/Goal:  
Students will understand that the belief system of the Native Americans was similar to other tribes, but was unique to each regional area.
2. Materials:  
Transparencies, markers, tapes, Native American myths
3. Procedures/ Activities:
  - a. Divide whole group into groups of three or four.
  - b. Read a variety of Plains Indians myths. **DO NOT SHOW PICTURES!** Have students take a few notes on the myth that they like.
  - c. Groups select story and divide it into scenes.
  - d. Illustrate each scene on a transparency with permanent markers.
  - e. Collaborate on narration to be recorded.
  - f. Share stories with whole group.
4. Evaluation:  
Student created audiovisual representation of the myth.

#### **I. Day Nine:**

1. Objective/Goal:  
Students will understand that Native Americans did not have a written alphabet as we do today, but instead used pictures to communicate.
2. Materials:  
Construction paper, overhead of Appendix D2, bearskin Appendix D3, picture dictionary Appendix D4
3. Key Vocabulary:  
Hieroglyphs, symbols
4. Procedure:
  - a. Teacher will inform students that long ago Native Americans did communicate, but not with words or letters, as we know them. They used pictures to represent words.
  - b. Display the overhead of D4 for the students to see. Explain that the various pictures represent words for Native Americans. Pass out bearskin templates to each student.
  - c. Have students use symbols to write the following sentences on their bearskin template. "The people were hungry. They had walked many days looking for buffalo herds. Even the crows circled looking for something to eat. The people had not meat for three days."
  - d. Pass out a copy of the picture dictionary to each student and a new bearskin template. Tell students to create a story from the symbols on the picture dictionary. Students may create their own symbols if they need to.
  - e. Students may share their stories with each other.
5. Assessments:  
Check picture stories for accuracy.

#### **J. Day Ten:**

1. Objective/Goal:

Students will understand that Indian children were given names that represented special qualities regarding abilities or personality traits.

2. Materials:  
Cinquain work sheet (Appendix E)
3. Background Notes:  
Name selection by the Native American culture should not be taken lightly as this may be offensive to them. Share with the students that this is of a serious nature.
4. Procedures/Activities:
  - a. Teacher will begin the class by asking students why they think they were named their particular name.
  - b. Teacher will ask students what traits they think go with particular names. For example: What traits or personality does a Michael have?
  - c. Tell students that Indians often had two or more names in their lifetime. Read *How People Got Their Names*.
  - d. Brainstorm names of animals, plants, natural phenomena, personalities, and what they represent.
  - e. Students will make a list of their own abilities and personalities. The students will pick the one animal, plant, or natural phenomena that will best represent them. Students will design a personal symbol to go with their name.
  - f. Students will turn in a final Cinquain complete with the symbolic name and symbol.
5. Assessment:  
Teacher will evaluate final Cinquain.

#### **K. Day Eleven:**

1. Objective:  
Students will understand that the nomadic Plains Indians were rigorous and harsh, yet they were very accepting of their lifestyle.
2. Materials:  
Flour tortillas, 4 bamboo skewers per student, and 3 toothpicks per student, food coloring, and Q-tips
3. Background Notes:  
Plains Indians were nomadic as they followed their food source
4. Key Vocabulary:  
nomadic
5. Procedures:
  - a. Teacher will introduce the term nomadic by asking students what they believe nomadic means. Ask the students if their family is nomadic.
  - b. Teacher will then explain that the Plains Indians were nomadic because they followed the buffalo herds. “Why did they follow the buffalo?” “Why didn’t they use all the buffalo up at once?” Review 3<sup>rd</sup> grade: buffalo was a food source.
  - c. Discuss the roles of men, women, and children. Ask if there is a distinction in their own life as to their roles. Are women limited as a Plains Indian or as a woman today?
  - d. Discuss why some men and women chose to be warriors and some women chose to do wifely chores. What are the distinctive roles and why were these important roles?
  - e. Students will work individually to create a nomadic home.
  - f. Fold half a tortilla into a cone shape.
  - g. Thread toothpicks to hold edges closed.
  - h. Thread skewers through bottom and out through the top of cone shaped tortilla.
  - i. Decorate outside by painting designs with colored water and Q-tips. Designs should be Native American pictographs.
  - j. Dry overnight. They will become very stiff.
6. Evaluation:

Students table top teepees

**L. Day Twelve:**

1. Objective:  
Students will recognize the tribes that make up the Southwest Indians and the location of the tribes.
2. Materials:  
Atlases, student maps
3. Key Vocabulary:  
Desert, arid
4. Procedure:
  - a. Introduce Southwest Indians with a poem by Elaine Cleary.
  - b. Teacher will ask students where they believe the southwest region is and what type of Native Americans would live there.
  - c. Teacher will tell students about the Southwest tribes we will focus on. The teacher will give latitude and longitude coordinates of the tribes. The students will then fill in their maps of where the tribes live.
  - d. Teacher will give summary of the Southwest tribes and how they survive in the desert region and various interesting facts.
5. Evaluation:  
Teacher will check the accuracy of the map.

**M. Day Thirteen:**

1. Objective:  
Students will recognize the ingenuity that Native Americans used in different areas of the United States.
2. Materials:  
Encyclopedias, worksheet (Appendix F), chart paper
3. Procedures:
  - a. Teacher will review with students what they have learned about Native Americans and place them on chart paper. Ask students what types of houses the Native Americans used, what foods they ate, and what resources were available.
  - b. Students will then brainstorm what the Southwest Indians may have done differently, such as food, shelter, and clothing.
  - c. Students will then be given worksheet to compare and contrast the different Native Americans and show their ingenuity for where they resided.
  - d. Students may use encyclopedias to check information.
4. Evaluation:  
Teacher will check the accuracy of the worksheet.

**N. Day Fourteen:**

1. Objective:  
Students will understand the climate also affects the lifestyle of Native Americans.
2. Materials:  
Hooks, twine small sticks, *Spider Woman*, and yarn of various colors.
3. Key Vocabulary:  
Weaving, supernatural, warp
4. Procedures:
  - a. Teacher will ask to remember what students like to do when it is extremely hot. Remind them it is too hot to play outside. Write ideas up on the board.
  - b. Teacher will ask students which of these activities Native American children could do in the desert.
  - c. Teacher will read the story of *Spider Woman*. Ask students to explain the moral of this story.

- d. Students will attach small sticks to hanging yarn from ceiling. They will then cut 5 equal lengths of twine and tie them onto the stick. Students will then attach the second stick to the bottom of the twine.
- e. Students will weave the colored yarn over the warp.
- f. Students will weave to the second stick.

**O. Day Fifteen:**

- 1. Objective:  
Student will learn some of the tribes that make up the Northwest Indians.  
Students will locate some of the Northwest tribes on a map.
- 2. Materials:  
United States map, student maps
- 3. Key Vocabulary:  
Coast, bluff, bay, estuary, gulf, range, sound, inland waterway
- 4. Procedure:
  - a. Teacher will read the poem, *Northwest Coast Natives* by Elaine Cleary to introduce the Northwest tribes to the students and to generate interest.
  - b. Teacher will display a large map of the United States. Students will be asked to guess where the Northwest tribes are from.
  - c. Teacher will provide information that describes the history of the Northwest tribes. Students will be required to take notes about what they have learned.
  - d. Teacher will use graph coordinates for students to locate various Northwest tribes.

**P. Day Sixteen:**

- 1. Objective:  
Student will identify the social structure of the tribes in the Northwest region.
- 2. Materials:  
Class pyramid (Appendix G)
- 3. Key Vocabulary:  
Pyramid, chief, social structure, democracy
- 4. Procedure:
  - a. Teacher will inform students that the tribes of the Northwest did not practice democracy.
  - b. Teacher will inform students that a person was born into a class and they stayed in it for life. Ask students if they know of another culture that has classes and what they know about it.
  - c. Teacher will inform students that this group of Native Americans also had facial hair. Ask students why this might be. Inform them of the belief that this group of Indians may have come from Asia.
  - d. Teacher will discuss a social structure students are already familiar with, such as school and family.
  - e. Teacher will discuss what made up the social structure of the various tribes, explaining that your level decided your benefits and way of life.
  - f. Students will fill in class pyramid and write a description of each level including duties and privileges of that level.
- 5. Evaluation:  
Assess student pyramids for accuracy and depth of information.

**Q. Day Seventeen:**

- 1. Objective:  
Students will understand that the ecosystem and the Native American were intertwined.
- 2. Materials:  
Shoe box for each student, cardboard, brown and gray construction paper
- 3. Key Vocabulary:

Cedar

4. Procedures:
  - a. Teacher will discuss the types of trees that are available in the northwest.
  - b. Teacher will inform students that Northwest tribes used the cedar tree. Every part of the tree was used. The fibers on the inside were used for diapers and blankets, the branches for tools and the large fallen trees were used for boats.
  - c. Teacher will inform students that they made their homes from the cedar tree. The homes also showed your level in social structure.
  - d. Teacher will ask students to create a Northwest pit house.
  - e. Students will cover the shoebox with brown construction paper showing that the planks were placed straight up and down.
  - f. Students will construct a roof that would keep the snow off and put the smoke hole in the middle of the roof.
  - g. Students will color the front with animal symbols.
5. Evaluation:

Decorated pit house will be evaluated.

**R. Day Eighteen:**

1. Objective:

Students will develop a sense of historical empathy.
2. Materials:

Note paper
3. Key Vocabulary:

European, landmark events
4. Procedures:
  - a. Teacher will review when the first European contact was made.
  - b. Teacher will ask students to brainstorm what the Native Americans may have felt as the Europeans began to settle. What would it have felt like to have neighbors that do not know how to live off the land? What would they have felt not being able to communicate these feelings? How it felt to be told to leave their neighborhood and go someplace else?
  - c. Students will take notes.
  - d. Students will then use these notes to write a journal entry about their feelings if someone asked them to do this.
5. Evaluation:

Analyzing how it felt to have your home changed by writing in a journal.

**S. Day Nineteen:**

1. Objective:

Students will develop a sense of historical empathy.
2. Materials:

Butcher paper, markers
3. Key Vocabulary:

BIA, assimilation
4. Procedure:
  - a. Teacher will explain that the BIA is the Bureau of Indian Affairs.
  - b. Teacher will explain that BIA is responsible for food, clothing, and education of Native Americans.
  - c. Divide students into two groups and ask them to take their roles seriously and not put either group down. One group will be the BIA and the other will be a group of Native Americans.
  - d. Have BIA students try to convince the Native American that moving to the reservation and assimilating into white American culture would be a benefit to them.

- e. Ask students to write in their journals how it felt to have this discussion and what they eventually decided to do if they were Native American and why they chose that path. If students were in the BIA group, they should describe what they had to do to convince the natives to move to white American culture.
  - f. Have students create a timeline on the butcher paper with the first European contact as the start. Continue timeline through remainder of unit.
5. Evaluation:  
Teacher may read and assess student journal entry.

**T. Day Twenty:**

- 1. Objective:  
Students will develop sense of historical empathy. Students will recognize the cultural difference of Native Americans and white America.
- 2. Materials:  
*The Ledgerbook of Thomas Blue Eagle*, worksheet of other perspectives
- 3. Key Vocabulary:  
Carlisle school, boarding school
- 4. Procedure:
  - a. Teacher will inform students that the Carlisle School was a boarding school where they sent Native American children to learn to read and write.
  - b. Teacher will read *The Ledgerbook of Thomas Blue Eagle*.
  - c. Students will take notes.
  - d. Pass out worksheet. Have students write as the event the Carlisle School. The right side is for white American views and the left for Native American views. Top is for positive and bottom is for negative.
  - e. Teacher and students will work the Native American side together, brainstorming what the positives and the negatives were.
  - f. Students will finish the worksheet alone.
- 5. Evaluation:  
Students will analyze what they think are positives and negatives on the worksheet.

**U. Days Twenty-one to Twenty eight:**

- 1. Objective:  
Students will understand that historical events have causes and effects.
- 2. Materials:  
Encyclopedias, camcorder, videotape, audiotape, map overhead, student maps
- 3. Key Vocabulary:  
Chief Joseph, Chief Sitting Bull, Custer, Chief Crazy Horse, Little Bighorn, Sand Creek Massacre, Wounded Knee Massacre
- 4. Procedure:
  - a. Teacher will inform students that some Native Americans fought the assimilation of the white culture.
  - b. Teacher will put map on overhead and pass out student maps. Students will listen to tape and pinpoint key areas on map for the Battle of the Little Bighorn.
  - c. Students will then be broken into three small groups.
  - d. Small groups will draw one battle out of the hat. They will then research these events taking notes.
  - e. Students will then create a news report script.
  - f. Teacher will encourage students to use props or wardrobe to lend authenticity to their news segment.
  - g. Videotape the news reports and share them with the class.
- 5. Evaluation:  
Students will judge their report for information.

**V. Day Twenty-nine:**

1. Objective:  
Student assessment
2. Materials:  
Test
3. Procedure:
  - a. Test according to regular practices. ESE modifications include reading test aloud, giving oral answers to teacher.
  - b. Collect tests.

**VI. Culminating Activity**

Have a Pow Wow with Native American foods and games.

**VII. Handouts/Worksheets**