

Native Americans: Political Systems, Ceremonies & Rituals

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Grade level: 8th

Standards

IL.5.B.4a > Choose and evaluate primary and secondary sources (print and nonprint) for a variety of purposes.

IL.14 > GOAL: Understand political systems, with an emphasis on the United States.

IL.14.B> STANDARD: Understand the structures and functions of the political systems of Illinois, the United States and other nations.

IL.27 GOAL: Understand the role of the arts in civilizations, past and present

IL.27.ASTANDARD: Analyze how the arts function in history, society and everyday life.

IL.27.A.3b> Compare and contrast how the arts function in ceremony, technology, politics, communication and entertainment.

Objectives

- Students will know how to access the Library of Congress website to research sources.
- Students will be able to discuss the differences between fictional accounts and primary sources.
- Students will be able to identify various reasons for Native American ceremonies.
- Students will be able to explain the Native American political system
- Students will be able to identify how many ceremonies interact with the political system of the Native American people.

Procedure

1. Introduction:

Various pictures and posters of Native Americans will be displayed around the room. Students will be asked to find out if they are of Native American heritage, as well as if they know any of the Native Americans portrayed in the pictures and posters on the walls. If they know less than 5 of those portrayed, they will need to find the names of at least 5 Native Americans. The beginning of the first day of the lesson the students will discuss what they found out to in response to the requests from the day before. They will also be asked to describe a family tradition or ritual. Then the class will discuss preconceptions concerning Native Americans and how they celebrated, worshiped, and dealt with their life experiences.

2. Lesson:

- a. Teacher will introduce movie or TV show showing Native Americans as depicted by Hollywood.
- b. Students will write down examples of Native American ceremonial practices.
- c. Discussion of what was written
- d. After the initial discussion the movie will be shown.
- e. Class will discuss ceremonies shown in movie and whether accurate or not.
- f. Teacher will explain how ceremonies can sometimes help with political policies and traditions as well.
- g. Introduce the concept of primary sources by going to [Lewis and Clark Then and Now: The Reservation Today](#)
- h. Discussion of differences between fiction and primary sources by reviewing previously discussed information and what they just saw on the website.
- i. Divide class into groups of 3 or 4, groups will pick a U. S. region, and move to the computer center.
- j. Class Introduction of The Library of Congress website.
- k. Students will log into www.loc.gov and navigate sections found on the website to access sources dealing with various Native American groups.

- l. Groups will then be instructed to research primary sources involving interviews and information about Native American ceremonies. Each person will be required to access at least two primary sources.
- m. The students will also be instructed to find resources explaining political systems of the nations they are studying
- n. Students will then try to connect some of the ceremonies found to the political systems and beliefs of their nation.
- o. Students will then develop the assessment and be evaluated

3. **Closing:**

Class will then discuss the differences and similarities of the different regional groups researched. The class will also discuss their experience researching primary sources using the LOC website.

Assessments:

1. Students then must compare and contrast the story read with the experiences found in their primary sources in a written assignment as well as complete one of the following options:
 - a. individually write a journal chronicling 2 ceremonies performed in their life as a Native American in the early days of settlers coming to America.
 - b. individually create a photo album of sorts using the computer showing at least 5 ceremonies performed by Native Americans
 - c. as a group act out a ceremony they researched including an explanation of why the ceremony was performed.
2. Students will then present their assignments to the class.
3. Students will also write out a description of the political system practiced by their nation and how some of the ceremonies practiced are also of political value to the nation/tribe.
4. Students will have a short quiz to assess what they learned during this portion of the unit and how it applies to what they already learned.

Rubric attached.

Materials:

The class will utilize the following items:

- computers
- CD player
- various books
- movie or TV show clip
- video cameras
- poster boards
- digital cameras

Students will need the following items:

- pencils
- paper
- various types of media (paper, cloth, books., etc)

Resources:

- Feldmann, Susan ed. *The Storytelling Stone: Traditional Native American Myths and Tales*. Reprint of 1965 ed. New York, NY: Dell Publishing; 1991.
- Fichter, George S. *American Indian Music and Musical Instruments*. New York, NY: David McKay Co.; 1978.
- Murdoch, David. Freed, Stanly A., consultant; Gardiner, Lynton, photog. *North American Indian*. Alfred A. Knopf in association with the American Museum of Natural History. Eyewitness Books. 1995.
- Wolfson, Evelyn; Bock, William Sauls (Delaware), illus. *From Abenaki to Zuni: A Dictionary of Native American Tribes*. New York, NY: Walker Publishing Co., Inc.; 1988.
- THE BIRCHBARK HOUSE by Louise Erdrich (Ojibway) (Hyperion, 1999).
- A movie portraying a Native American ceremony
- [Native American Ceremonies](http://www.loc.gov) www.loc.gov “American memory” search

Adaptations/enrichments for students with special needs:

- students may dictate their journal into a tape recorder before actually writing it out
- students may use computers or an AlphaSmart instead of writing out assignments by hand
- students may use PowerPoint to present their photo album or comparison of the two types of sources
- students may also interview Native Americans in their family or neighborhood and incorporate their interviews in their presentations
- students may take digital pictures to use in their photo album
- students may make a video instead of a computerized photo album
- students may compare to the US political system
- students may discuss which aspects of the political system are still in place today.

Rubric

Journals:

- Has at least 2 ceremonies
- Will cover appropriate time frame
- Will cover feelings as well as ceremonies
- Will utilize complete sentences (grammatically correct)
- Will explain ceremony as well as reasoning behind ceremony
- Will share role in ceremony

Photo album:

- Appropriate choices of photos
- Captions name ceremony and explain reason for ceremony and possible description of ceremony
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Photos are actual photos of ceremonies practiced by Native Americans (not “Hollywood” depictions)
- Shows at least 5 ceremonies

Play:

- Everyone in group has role in production
- Is accurate in time frame, depictions, ceremony, etc
- Props are all accurate to time and region depicted

Political system:

- Accurate description of system
- Spelling
- Grammar
- Connection to ceremonies

Presentations of finding:

- Speaks clearly
- Information is presented in clear and concise manner
- Visuals, if used, are appropriate
- Covers comparisons of sources as well as reaction to information researched
- Discusses research on Native Americans
- Discuss difficulties they encountered
- Discuss interesting items they discovered while doing their research

Quiz:

- Distinguish between real ceremonies and Hollywood ones
- Describe the political system
- Explain purposes for ceremonies including political connections