

AIH-1: Life for the First Inhabitants

Summary

Throughout this lesson students will learn about the contributions of the American Indian culture on the development of Utah.

Group Size

Individual

Background for Teachers

This is the first of four lessons in the Fourth Grade American Indian History Lesson Plan Unit:

- AIH-1: Life for the First Inhabitants
- [AIH-2: Five Utah Indian Tribes](#)
- [AIH-3: Utah Indian Contributions](#)
- [AIH-4: Utah Indian - Future Changes](#)

There is a general misconception in Utah that the first inhabitants of this land were the pioneers. Throughout this lesson students will learn about the culture and land of the people who were the first inhabitants of Utah. Lesson strategies introduce students to ancient cultures through rock art, creation stories, and living styles. Migration maps help students understand how tribes moved and settled in certain areas. The lessons are designed to assess students' knowledge through a KWL chart and develop their knowledge as they study the significant tribes of Utah and begin to appreciate the people who called this land home.

Student Prior Knowledge

Introduction:

[Additional Background Information - PDF](#)

People walked upon the face of the land known as the United States of America long before it was a country. Some archeologists estimate that the first inhabitants arrived 40,000 years ago, and others 13,000 years, before the present day. Many American children are taught about Christopher Columbus discovering America and the First Thanksgiving at Jamestown. Yet, this is not the correct history. As so the history now unfolds.

The Indians that inhabited the lands of the Americas learned of this great land by experience. They were eclectic biologists and scientists in their own right. They knew of the waters, the trees, and the various animals. They tilled the earth, grew food, and walked the paths through this great land. It was their homeland. They were the first people to inhabit this land. Their history is one of pride, sacredness, and knowledge of the land. Learning this history requires a look into their past, their trials, and the story of the days when others came to their land and began to change the face of their world forever. However, some of their traditional cultural values, ethics, and sacred beliefs exist to this day.

This unit is an attempt to help children understand the first people of this land and develop an even greater appreciation for their diversity, culture, and the generations whose hands helped forge this land and were pivotal in the building of this nation.

Some general information about American Indians:

Today there are many terms that describe the people who first inhabited this land. There is conflict about what to call these people. Part of the problem is that they are not one people, but many. Traditional names translated from their native languages generally mean "the People." Yet, they are called Native Americans, American Indians, First People, aboriginal and Indigenous People, and by a very general term "Indian." The word "Indian" is wrongly used, in

its application as a term, which collectively designates tribal groups as "one people." Christopher Columbus' erroneous geography and impression that he had landed among the islands off Asia led him to call the peoples he met "los Indios." His casual use of the term "Indios" in his letters introduced the New World to European populations; thus, similar words in other European languages evolved, such as the French "Indien," the German "Indianer," the English "Indian." Subsequent usage of the term "Indian" for the New World's inhabitants evoked descriptive words as "savages," "infidels," and "heathens." However, Europeans had limited contact with groups of people with such diverse cultures and languages.

Initial establishment of the imagery of the "Indian," like the word itself, came from the pens of Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci. Such imagery and stereotypes have prevailed to the present through inaccurate written accounts and Hollywood movies. Each Indian tribe has its own language, which is different from those of other tribes; its own history and origins; its own customs (social and spiritual); its own traditional dances; its own styles of clothing; its own foods; its own values; its own culture; its own spiritual beliefs and practices; its own life styles; and its own tribal governments. Most tribes also have an extended family system.

Indian tribes are not one people, although many tribal philosophies and concepts are similar--e.g., nearly every tribe's beliefs have reference to a Supreme Being; refer to the earth as "Mother Earth" and sky as "Father Sky"; have a belief that all things in creation must have balance and harmony; and have respect for all animals, sea life, and birds, and for all things. There were 560 federally recognized Indian tribes and bands, as of January 2000, in the forty-eight mainland United States of America. Alaska has the Aleuts, Eskimos, and Athapascan tribal groups that number 229. But there are perhaps 300 more Native Entities in Alaska which, while eligible to receive services, are not federally recognized as tribes/nations.

Indian tribal groups also exist in Canada, Mexico, Central America, and South America. Tribes of the Caribbean were mostly destroyed by diseases that the Europeans brought, and the remaining Caribbean tribal peoples intermarried with the French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and black slaves.

There are 378 treaties which the U.S. government entered into with Indian tribes, the first being the treaty with the Delawares (September 17, 1778) and last the agreement with the Columbia and Colville (July 7, 1883).

There are 292 reservations, rancherias, and pueblos. These land areas are held in trust under the United States Department of Interior.

Today there are many new findings about the Indians. Science is linking peoples and their migrations as far away as Siberia. Someday these links to the past may open up explorations of where the native peoples really came from. Does the theory of the Bering Strait link peoples of two continents? Do the glaciers of Alaska hold secrets? What about connections with the people of South America? We are now in the process of interweaving cultures, people, and evidence that in the near future might establish these connections.

Instructional Procedures

Essential Question:

How did the first inhabitants live and develop?

Assess student knowledge using the [KWL Chart](#) (pdf).

Introduce ancient cultures using rock art activity and rebus .

Help students understand the meaning of the rock art and how a rebus can help tell a story that defines the culture and people. [Rock Art Handout - pdf](#)

After showing examples and discussing American Indian rock art, have students create their own rock art by using signs and images that show something meaningful in their life: a day at school, a family story, how to do something, or any idea they have and can put as much as possible into

pictures.

Web Resources

- [Utah Rock Art Research Association](http://www.utahrockart.org/)
<http://www.utahrockart.org/>
- [Fremont Rock Art](http://www.thefurtrapper.com/fremont_indians.htm)
http://www.thefurtrapper.com/fremont_indians.htm
- [Rock Art from the Southwest United States](http://net.indra.com/~dheyser/rockart.html)
<http://net.indra.com/~dheyser/rockart.html>
- [North American Indian Rock Art](http://www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/outreach/rock_art.html)
http://www.nmnh.si.edu/anthro/outreach/rock_art.html
- [Canyon Echos Rock Art](http://www.theroadwanderer.net/rockart.htm)
<http://www.theroadwanderer.net/rockart.htm>
- [American Indian Rock Art, Vol. 25](http://www.arara.org/AIRAV25.html)
<http://www.arara.org/AIRAV25.html>
- [Ancient Anasazi Rock Art Panels - Moab, Utah](http://www.moab-utah.com/anasazi/rockart.html)
<http://www.moab-utah.com/anasazi/rockart.html>

Lesson plans that could be adapted: [1st Grade - Act. 10: Rock Art](http://rla.unc.edu/lessons/Lesson/L502/L502.pdf) Students will create and share their own rock art. Part of this lesson is done as a shared reading experience

<http://rla.unc.edu/lessons/Lesson/L502/L502.pdf>

Creation stories can be used to develop an understanding of the depth of the culture and people. A variety of activities could be used to develop student understanding of creation stories.

Creative writing

Story mapping

Comparing similarities and differences between stories

Illustrating a creation story

Web Resources

- [Ute Creation Stories](http://www.colo-ute-cultural.org/text/legends.html)
<http://www.colo-ute-cultural.org/text/legends.html>
- [Creation / Migration / Origin Stories](http://www.indians.org/welker/legend.htm)
<http://www.indians.org/welker/legend.htm>
- [The Navajo Creation Stories](http://www.lapahie.com/Creation.cfm)
<http://www.lapahie.com/Creation.cfm>
- [Navajo Curriculum Materials - Creation Stories](http://www.sanjuan.k12.ut.us/media/mediaweb.htm)
<http://www.sanjuan.k12.ut.us/media/mediaweb.htm>
- [Native American Creation Stories](http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/8962/creation.html)
<http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Prairie/8962/creation.html>
- [Creation Story Lesson Plan](http://collections.ic.gc.ca/curriculum/iroquois/lesson4.htm)
<http://collections.ic.gc.ca/curriculum/iroquois/lesson4.htm>
- [Navajo Stories](http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/~tomshoemaker/yazzie/)
<http://www.mc.maricopa.edu/~tomshoemaker/yazzie/>

Research migration information (Utah information) <http://indian.utah.gov/>

Research dwellings and storage, climate / geography. (Utah information) <http://indian.utah.gov/>

Video Resources:

- Native American Indians
VHS Item No: NAIH
Teacher's Video Company
<http://www.teachersvideo.com/>
Phone: 1- 800-262-8837

Fax: 1- 800-434-5638

Mail:

Teacher's Video Company

P.O. Box 4455

Scottsdale, AZ 85261

- Native Americans: The First Peoples

VHS / DVD Product #: P3734

100% Educational Videos

<http://www.schoolvideos.com/>

Phone: 1- 800-483-3383

Fax: 1- 888-478-1426

Mail:

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After researching migration, dwelling, and climate/geography information, students can choose a project to express their understanding of the concepts learned. It is important to remember that some dwellings are still used by various tribes, such as the Navajo hogans, Ute brush huts that may be used in summer time, or the Apache wickiup, also used in summer. Plains Indian tribes use the tipi in the summer and tree shades.

Handout: [Student Project](#) (pdf)

Students can choose to complete one of the following projects.

Create a dwelling -- using a box, create a scaled model of a dwelling used by people that inhabited Utah.

<http://www.ebuildingconnections.com/>

Indian village -- simulate an Indian village, or show a simulation of different tribes.

Report format -- write a report focusing on one area of the development of Utah's first inhabitants.

Presentation -- develop a computer presentation of information to present to the class about a facet of Utah's first peoples.

Create a map illustrating migration patterns of diverse groups that inhabited Utah.

Develop a timeline that shows when different groups lived in Utah.

Oral presentation -- prepare a 3-5 minute presentation that informs others about Utah's first people.

Music or art -- create either a song or artwork (beaded rings, weaving, carding wool, research on natural dyes, etc.) that will tell the story of the first people of Utah.

Learn Dine' string games (traditionally played in the winter) and accompanying stories to share with the class.

http://dine.sanjuan.k12.ut.us/string_games/index.html and

http://chinleusd.k12.az.us/ces/navajo_string_games.htm

Bibliography

Utah State Office of Education

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American Indian History

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[Utah LessonPlans](#)