

Living Conditions of Utah's First People

Summary

This lesson is to help students recognize that the living conditions of Utah's Native Americans were contingent upon the geographical area in which the group of Indians lived. Being assigned to groups, the students will collect information about the living conditions of a given tribe. Then they will summarize for the class what they found. Hopefully, this lesson will also help the students to appreciate the proud heritage and cultural contributions that our Native American people have given to our fine state of Utah.

Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Social & Civic Responsibility

Materials

Slide projector, tray, and screen; Slides and cassette from Mesa Verde National Park, published by Finley Holiday Film Corp., Whittier, CA; Class book - Discovering Utah, Nancy D. and John S. McCormick, p. 20-23; Book - Utah!, Willard and Celia Luce, p.29-31; Native Americans, Time Life Books; internet access; paper and pencil for each group

Background for Teachers

This lesson is more effective after the different geographic areas of Utah have been introduced and the students can describe the differences from one area to the next. It is also helpful to have spent another day prior to this lesson discussing the timeline of Utah's Early People and identifying the five different tribes of Indians in Utah's history.

Intended Learning Outcomes

The students will be able to describe the different living conditions (home, food, clothing, activities) of Utah's early Native Americans and explain that these conditions were primarily a cause of the area in which they lived.

Instructional Procedures

Ask students to name those conditions in today's society which help make their life bearable, such as: soft beds, indoor bathroom, grocery stores, etc. While they mention these pleasures, the teacher will list ideas on board. Next, ask students to share ideas of what their life would be like if they had to live out in the deserts of the Great Basin near the Nevada border. In contrast to the deserts, then ask them what their life would be like if they lived in the high Wasatch mountains near Park City. How would their homes, food, clothing, and family activities be the same or different from one area to the next? Show slides, which have been purchased from the Mesa Verda National Park, depicting the living conditions of the Great Pueblo people and the cliff dwellings. Upon completion, discuss how the geographic area played an important part in the living conditions of this particular people. Next, compare/contrast to modern day living. Divide class into five groups - assigning each group a

different early Utah tribe (Navajo, Paiute, Gosiute, Shoshone, Ute.) Together they are to research the living conditions of their assigned tribe. Depending on the size of each group, each group member needs a given assignment; e.g.: scribe, keyboard operator at the computer, individual readers for differing books of reference, etc. They are to use different reference materials within the classroom (or make a visit to the school's media center if classroom material is unavailable): encyclopedias, classroom text book, classroom set of Utah! by Willard and Celia Luce, internet using bookmarks which have already been marked by teacher. (Depending on availability of computers and internet access will determine classroom setup. Groups could rotate from reference sections which includes the computer as one section; or perhaps if there is a computer lab in the school, the students during their computer time could then look at the previously bookmarked locations of their assigned tribe.) The students will be given approximately 8 minutes at each reference section in which to research the living conditions of their assigned tribe. After 8 minutes at one reference section, the students will rotate to the next reference section to search for more information concerning their tribe. The rotation will continue until all sections have been viewed. The scribe of each group will keep the notes of the research. At the beginning of the third day, have the different assigned groups meet together to organize their notes and prepare a short presentation of their research. After 30 minutes of group collaboration, each group is to be prepared to present to the rest of the class their particular findings.

Extensions

Teacher could purchase pine nuts at the grocery store and share them at the end of this lesson. This could lead into discussion of nutrition of the Native American people and its contrast to our modern society's nutritional habits.

Assessment Plan

Upon the closure of this lesson, each student is to list the different tribes with their varying living conditions, which is to include food, clothing, shelter, and any activity which is typical of that given tribe.

Bibliography

Slides, Mesa Verde National Park (Finley Holiday Film Corp., Whitt, ?) McCormick, Nancy D. & John Discovering Utah (Peregrine Smith Books, Salt Lake, 1991) 20-23 Luce, Willard & Celia UTAH! (Peregrine Smith Book, Salt Lake, 1980) 29-31 Native Americans (Time-Life Books, 1995)

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