

Goshute Adaptability in a Delicate Homeland...

Summary

The student will be able to relate the ingenuity and adaptability of the Goshutes to the environmental conditions and historical events that characterized the Goshute experience in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 45 minutes each

Materials

Teacher Materials

- [At a Glance: Goshute Ingenuity in a Challenging Desert Ecosystem](#) (pdf)
Goshute Interactive Map (available online at www.UtahIndians.org)
Video: [We Shall Remain: The Goshute](#)

Student Materials

- [Jedediah Smith Travels through the Goshute Homeland in 1827](#) (pdf)
- [Goshute Elder Maude Moon Talks about Goshute Plant Use](#) (pdf)
- [Scientist Ralph Chamberlin Writes about Goshute Ethnobotany](#) (pdf)
- [Goshute Worksheet](#) (pdf)

Background for Teachers

Prior to contact with Europeans, the Goshutes showed remarkable ingenuity in their ability to live in the harsh environment of the desert and mountains south and west of the Great Salt Lake. In their attempts to survive and maintain their traditional homeland after whites started moving into Utah, they displayed that same adaptability. However, while prior to the arrival of whites, they constructed a complex culture rooted in deep ethnobotanical knowledge of their homeland, white incursions placed the Goshutes on the brink of extinction. To persevere, they relied on both their ties to their land, some of which they still occupy, and their culture.

Instructional Procedures

Describe the objective of this lesson to the students; then either distribute copies and have students read or read aloud the excerpt from *The Travels of Jedediah Smith*. Show students where Smith was. Ask students what sort of environment Smith encountered. Remind them that the very same desert is a place of extremes in the winter as well as in the summer.

Brainstorm on the following questions. What would people need to survive, and what would they value if they lived in such a place? What would they eat and drink--and where would they get it from? Where would they want to live? Do seasons make a difference? What about mobility? Would they need to move around for food and water? If so, how would they move their homes? What skills and personal characteristics would they need to live in such a place, and how would they learn these skills?

Maude Moon, a Goshute elder, and Dr. Ralph V. Chamberlin, a renowned ethnobotanist, answer some of these questions for us. Distribute the excerpt of Moon's oral history to half the class and Chamberlain's *The Ethno-Botany of the Gosiute Indians of Utah* to the other half of the class. Have these two groups prepare a mini-report on their source based on the question: what do Moon and Chamberlain tell us about how the Goshute survived?

We Shall Remain: The Goshute provides even more answers to the question of what traits

characterized the Goshutes. Show clips from chapter 2, 0:23--4:25; chapter 3, 4:25--6:15; and chapter 4, 14:42-- 17:00. Ask students what traits characterize the Goshutes. (Teachers: a good summary of these traits is found at the end of the film, chapter 5, 22:00--24:00.) Then ask them what they think would happen if the delicate balance of Goshute life was disrupted. Could ingenuity and adaptability carry the day even in such a challenging environment?

The answer is YES and NO. Either use the Goshute Interactive Map or lecture from the At a Glance to tell the story of the arrival of whites in the Goshute homeland and how the Goshutes attempted to adapt. Ultimately, they did survive, but their cherished way of life, with its seasonal movement and use of all parts of the land, did not.

Have students complete the Goshute worksheet.

Extensions

Teach this lesson plan using the Goshute Interactive Map that corresponds with this material and is available on www.UtahIndians.org.

Have students look up articles about the fish, water, and nuclear waste issues facing the Goshutes over the last three decades and give a presentation on how these issues tie to the story of Goshute ingenuity, adaptability, and love for their land.

Extend the lesson to two class periods and show the entire Goshute documentary, asking students to concentrate on Goshute values.

Assessment Plan

Goshute Worksheet

[End of Unit Assessment](#)

Bibliography

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The University of Utah's [American West Center](#) (AWC) produced the curriculum materials in consultation with the [Utah Division of Indian Affairs](#), [Utah State Office of Education](#), [KUED 7](#), and the Goshute, Northwestern Band of the Shoshone, Southern Paiute, and Ute nations.

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