

Ute Sovereignty and the Competition Over Resources...

Summary

The students will understand the history of the Utes' displacement and dispossession, as well as how vital land and resources are to the sovereignty of the Ute nation in Utah.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 90 minutes each

Materials

Teacher Materials

- [At a Glance: Conflict over Land and Resources on the Uintah-Ouray Reservation](#) (pdf)
Ute Interactive Map (available online at <http://UtahIndians.org>)
Video: [We Shall Remain: The Utes](#)

Student Materials

- [Henry Harris, Jr., Describes Allotment](#) (pdf)
Daniel McCool, "Utah and the Ute Tribe are at War," *High Country News*, June 27, 1994, <http://www.hcn.org/issues/9/285>
Nancy Lofholm, "Tribe Seeks Hunting Rights," *Denver Post*, May 23, 2000, <http://extras.denverpost.com/news/news0523i.htm>
" [Court Victory Restored the Utes's Homeland of Desert, Forest and Oil](#) (pdf)," *Deseret News*, Oct. 9, 1988

Background for Teachers

Since lands in eastern Utah were first set aside for the Utes by Abraham Lincoln in 1861, various Ute people of what is now known as the Uintah-Ouray Reservation have struggled with the federal government and non-Indian interests to maintain their access to land and the necessary resources with which to sustain their nation. Because land and resources are crucial to the economic security of the tribe, this conflict is an important element of American Indian sovereignty.

Instructional Procedures

Using the textbook, *At a Glance*, and [Appendix B](#) (pdf), "Understanding the Political Sovereignty of American Indian Nations," lead the students through a discussion about sovereignty, its importance, and the resources required to maintain sovereignty. Some possible discussion questions include: What is sovereignty? Why is sovereignty so important? Why is it important to Native American tribes? What would be required for a nation to exercise sovereignty? What resources does a nation need to be successful? What might challenge the sovereignty of an American Indian nation?

Using the Ute Interactive Map or the *At a Glance* materials, describe to the students the land loss that occurred historically to the Ute tribe. As a homework assignment or group activity, have the students think about what such land loss might have meant to the Ute nation. Point out to students that the dispossession of land limited the resources the Utes could draw from for cultural and economical development. Have them write a brief paper or essay about the link between land loss and resources, focusing on how it might have impacted the Ute people and the nation.

Discuss the assignment the students were given on land loss and sovereignty. Pass out the oral history excerpt and have students read it. Then show *We Shall Remain: The Ute*. If time is limited you could show the clips at about 11:00 (end of chapter 2) and 21:00 (end of chapter 5) minutes into the film, which show the reactions of the Ute people to the loss of their land. Have the students look for evidence of things they thought of--or things they may have missed--in their own essays.

Discuss the ways that reservations serve as a basis for Indian sovereignty today, and explain to students that this competition over land and resources continues to be a problem for many Indian nations, including the Utes in Utah.

As a homework assignment or in-class activity, give the students the links to the three newspaper articles. As individuals or in groups, have them read these articles and use them as a starting point to do research on the water, hunting, land, and oil rights of the Ute nation. Ask the students to search for a mix of Indian and non-Indian resources. For example, in addition to searching for mainstream newspaper articles, they could look at *The Ute Bulletin* (online at <http://www.utetribes.com/component/weblinks/category/38-ute-bulletin-paper.html>) or the Ute oral histories at <http://UtahIndians.org>.

Have the students compare/contrast the contemporary issues they researched with the historical challenges the Utes have faced. Have the students write a paper or create a presentation based on their findings. Reinforce that while many people think of American Indian land and resource loss as something that only occurred in the past, these issues are still being dealt with today.

Extensions

Allow students to compare the Utes' experience to the Indian experiences shown in *We Shall Remain: Tecumseh's Vision* (chapter 2, available to Utah Educators in [eMedia](#)), *We Shall Remain: Trail of Tears* (chapter 7, available to Utah Educators in [eMedia](#)), or *We Shall Remain: Geronimo* (chapter 3, available to Utah Educators in [eMedia](#)).

Assessment Plan

- Paper on land loss and resources
- Discussion responses
- Research paper or presentation

[End of Unit Assessment](#)

Bibliography

- Conetah, Fred A. *A History of the Northern Ute People*. Ed. Kathryn L. McKay and Floyd A. O'Neil. Salt Lake City: Uintah-Ouray Tribe/University of Utah Press, 1982.
- Duncan, Clifford. "The Northern Utes of Utah." In *A History of Utah's American Indians*. Ed. Forrest S. Cuch. Salt Lake City: Utah State Division of Indian Affairs and the Utah Division of State History, 2000.
- O'Neil, Floyd A., and Kathryn L. McKay. *A History of the Uintah-Ouray Lands*. American West Center Occasional Papers. Salt Lake City: University of Utah, n.d.

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.

Authors

[Utah LessonPlans](#)