

Cultural Lit. 30: The Constitution & Native Americans

Summary

Students will: Identify and consider US Constitutional origins in American Indian culture, after receiving direct instruction from instructor, reading selected texts, and working in group structures, within 1 class period.

Time Frame

1 class periods of 60 minutes each

Materials

1. Daly, Janet. 1997. [*US Constitution: Is it a Native American Myth?*](#) . Fitchburg, MA: Fitchburg State College Social Science Journal.
2. Grinde, Donald A. 1987. [*The Iroquois and the Origins of American Democracy*](#) . Speech delivered at Cornell University, September 11, 1987.
3. The Constitution of the United States
4. Iroquois Constitution (Gayanashagowa)
5. Stephens, E. and Brown, J. 2000. *A Handbook of Content Literacy Strategies*. Norwood, MA: Christopher Gordon.
6. Journal or notebook.

Background for Teachers

Note: This unit entails that the students have previously studied the US Constitution and that the teacher read both the following articles, and peruse the Iroquois Constitution (Gayanashagowa).

1. Daly, Janet. 1997. [*US Constitution: Is it a Native American Myth?*](#) Fitchburg, MA: Fitchburg State College Social Science Journal.
2. Grinde, Donald A. 1987. [*The Iroquois and the Origins of American Democracy*](#) . Speech delivered at Cornell University, September 11, 1987.

Instructional Procedures

Anticipatory Set:

Post the words 'substantiate, unification, endemic, feat, consensus, solidarity' on the board, on a flipchart, or on a projection device and ask the class if they are familiar with these words and their meaning. Conduct a collective brainstorming session and add the generated vocabulary words to listed words. Allow students to postulate the meaning of words and their understanding of concepts.

Activities:

1. Students will be given copies of US Constitution (or use class textbook) and Iroquois Constitution (Gayanashagowa) for reference during lessons.
2. Instructor and/or students will read aloud while student's follow along, or students will read in cooperative group structures, Janet Daly-- paragraphs 1-10, and articles 1-2 in the Iroquois Constitution text.
3. Working in cooperative group structures, students will discuss and consider what it means to them to attribute the origins of the US Constitution to American Indian oral tradition. Students will compare the present day US symbol of the eagle to the Iroquois use of the eagle symbol.
4. Students will record ideas in their journals (see Stephens & Brown--Content Journal, p. 28) and report to class from groups.

Assessment Plan

Students will record their responses in a content journal.

Authors

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