

Plains Indian Culture: Yesterday and Today

Tour (Grades 3 – 12)

Teacher Guide

Tour Description

Discover how Plains Indians enrich their lifestyles by incorporating contemporary and historical aspects of their culture. Much of this culture is rooted in their past traditions.

Objectives

- To define culture and its importance to communities.
- To provide opportunities for students to enrich their understanding of the Plains Indian culture, both past and present.
- To demonstrate Plains Indians' ability to incorporate new technologies and methods while maintaining traditions.

Standards

Wyoming

- SS.4.2.1 – Students describe how human needs and concerns (i.e. freedom, justice, and responsibility) are addressed within cultures.
- SS.8.2.2 – Students understand the historical perspective and issues involved in the development of the U.S. Constitution.
- SS.8.4.3 – Students analyze the impact of historical events and people on present conditions, situations, or circumstances.
- SS.11.2.2 – Students communicate how shared cultural experiences influence peoples' perceptions of prominent historical figures, groups, institutions, and world events.
- SS.11.4.4 – Students explain how past events impact the present and the future.

Montana

- SS.4.3.3 – describe and illustrate ways in which people interact with their physical environment (e.g., land use, location of communities, methods of construction, design of shelters).
- SS.4.3.4 – describe how human movement and settlement patterns reflect the wants and needs of diverse cultures.

- SS.4.4.1 – identify and use various sources of information (e.g., artifacts, diaries, photographs, charts, biographies, paintings, architectures, songs) to develop an understanding of the past.
- SS.4.4.7 – explain the history, culture, and current status of the American Indian tribes in Montana and the United States.
- SS.4.6.2 – describe ways in which expressions of culture influence people (e.g., language, spirituality, stories, folktales, music, art, dance).
- SS.4.6.3 – identify and describe ways families, groups, tribes and communities influence the individual's daily life and personal choices.
- SS.4.6.4 – identify characteristics of American Indian tribes and other cultural groups in Montana.
- SS.8.3.3 – analyze diverse land use and explain the historical and contemporary effects of this use on the environment, with an emphasis on Montana.
- SS.8.3.4 – explain how movement patterns throughout the world (e.g., people, ideas, diseases, products, food) lead to interdependence and/or conflict
- SS.8.4.7 – summarize major issues affecting the history, culture, tribal sovereignty, and current status of the American Indian tribes in Montana and the United States.
- SS.8.6.2 – explain and give examples of how human expression (e.g. language, literature, arts, architecture, traditions, beliefs, spirituality) contributes to the development and transmission of culture.
- SS.8.6.3 – identify and differentiate ways regional, ethnic and national cultures influence individual's daily lives and personal choices.
- SS.8.6.5 – explain the cultural contributions of, and tensions between, racial and ethnic groups in Montana, the United States, and the world.
- SS.12.3.4 – analyze how human settlement patterns create cooperation and conflict which influence division and control of the Earth (e.g., treaties, economics, explorations, borders, religion, exploitation, water rights).
- SS.12.4.7 – analyze and illustrate the major issues concerning history, culture, tribal sovereignty, and current status of the American Indian tribes and bands in Montana and the United States (e.g., gambling, artifacts, repatriation, natural resources, language, jurisdiction).
- SS.12.6.2 – analyze human experience and cultural expression (e.g., language, literature, arts, traditions, beliefs, spirituality, values, behavior) and create a product which illustrates an integrated view of a specific culture.
- SS.12.6.3 – analyze the impact of ethnic, national and global influences on specific situations or events.
- SS.12.6.5 – analyze the conflicts resulting from cultural assimilation and cultural preservation among various ethnic and racial groups in Montana, the United States, and the world.

Pre-Visit Activities

Brainstorm Museum Etiquette

Discuss your upcoming trip to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Engage students in a brainstorming session. Ask them to name rules they should follow when visiting the museum.

Introduce Vocabulary

Discuss the vocabulary terms below.

Culture – a shared pattern of learned behavior; a shared way of thinking, believing and acting that is passed from generation to generation. Examples include language, stories, folktales, music, roles of men, women, elders, and children, spiritual beliefs, and economic development

Language – spoken or written communication

Euro-American – United States citizen of European ancestry

Tradition – custom or belief passed down from generation to generation

Reservation – area of public land set aside by the United States government for the use of American Indians

Beliefs – an opinion or conviction considered to be true

Adversity – difficulty

Generation – people who are born and living at around the same time

Who Are the Northern Plains Indian Tribes?

Helps students define the Native American tribes of the Northern Plains. Review the list of tribes below that make up these groups of people.

Shoshone

Lakota

Arikara

Crow

Hidatsa

Blackfeet

Arapahoe

Mandan

Cheyenne

Nez Perce

Post-Visit Activities

Comparing Cultures and Traditions

Have students summarize the culture of their home, family, and community. Then have them compare their own culture to that of Plains Indians today. They should base this comparison on what they learned during their tour at the museum.

Why Move?

Materials: journals or notebooks, pencils or crayons

Ask students to spend some time writing or illustrating a time in their lives when they moved or had a change in their lives. Allow time for student volunteers to share their experiences. Ask students if these changes were made by choice or by force. Engage in further discussion about when people may have been moved from their homes by force and why. Examples include wars, natural disasters, and reservations.

Tribes of your Region

Have students research the different tribes that are native to their region or area. Research should focus on comparing and contrasting the tribes' beliefs and traditions. Allow time for students to present their findings to their classmates through creative methods of delivery, such as skits, artwork, journal entries, photographs, etc.

Governmental Influence on Reservations

Spend time reviewing what students learned about reservations on their tour at the museum. In particular, engage students in research and discussion about the government policies that placed Plains Indians onto reservations. Hold a classroom debate arguing the reasons for and against moving tribes onto reservations.

Resources

Buffalo Bill Center of the West Resources

Plains Indian Art Trunk – available through our lending program

This trunk fosters an understanding and appreciation for the culture of Plains Indian people. Materials in the trunk include examples of traditional Plains Indian arts such as beadwork, quillwork, and rock art. A new teacher's guide is included.

Powwow Trunk – available through our lending program

Music and dance have long been central to American Indian cultures, and today's powwow is a celebration of that heritage. Learn about powwows in their present form and the history behind them with a video, dance outfits, musical instruments, accessories, and a teacher guide.

Shoshone Learning Kit – available through our lending program

Sacagwea, Chief Washakie – the Shoshone Tribe has prominent historical figures that many people recognize. Learn about the Shoshone people, their culture, language, and history. Hear contemporary Shoshone youth speak about issues today. Try your skill at playing a hand game by using observation skills, concentration, and a bit of luck. An audiotape, photographs, a game, and teacher's manual are included in this kit.

Other Resources

Fiction Books

Cohlege, Terri. *Quillworker: A Cheyenne Legend*. New York: Macmillan, 1990.

DePaola, Tomie. *The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush*. New York: Putnam, 1988.

Friskey, Margaret. *Indian Two Feet and the Grizzly Bear*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1974.

Larrabee, Lisa. *Grandmother Five Baskets*. Tucson: Harbinger House, 1993.

Sandoz, Mari. *The Story Catcher*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Highwater, Jamake. *I Wear the Morning Star*. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.

Non-fiction Books

Andrews, Elaine. *Indians of the Plains*. New York: Fact on File, 1992.

Blackfeet Gallery Committee. *The Story of the Blackfeet People: Nitsitapiisinni*. Ontario: Firefly Books, 2002.

Bruchac, Joseph. *Native American Stories*. Golden Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1991.

Glubok, Shirley. *The Art of the Plains Indians*. New York: Macmillan, 1975.

Hofsinde, Robert. *Indian Arts*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1971.

MacDonald, Fiona. *Plains Indians*. New York: Barron's, 1993.

National Museum of the American Indian, *Do All Indians Live in Tipis? Questions and Answers from the National Museum of the American Indian*. Washington, DC.: Smithsonian, 2007.

Wolfson, Evelyn. *American Indian Tools and Ornaments*. New York: McKay, 1981.