

LESSON PLANS

Elementary Levels

Recording Your Community's History

In this lesson, students will act as keepers for their class's community history. As a class, students will discuss the events of each day and decide which event was the most unique and memorable. They will then each draw a pictograph that represents that event. At the end of the teaching unit, students will have created a pictographic calendar recording a shared community history. (Note: If class time is limited, students could also be asked to record their family's history. As a homework assignment, they should meet *with their family (or some form of small community) on a regular basis* and together they should decide an appropriate event to record for the day. After a week, students can share their "community's" pictographic calendar with the class.)

Curriculum Goals:

Because each state has its own social studies curriculum standards, the National Council for the Social Studies's 1994 publication, *Expectation of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* was used as a guideline for this lesson plan. In accordance with this set of standards, the lesson focuses on themes of Time, Continuity and Change. Within these themes, learners at the elementary level "gain experience with sequencing to establish a sense of order and time and begin to recognize that individuals may hold different views about the past." These objectives, or variations of them, are also found in several states' curriculum standards for younger students.

Performance Objectives:

After completing this lesson, students will be better able to:

1. Differentiate between personal history and community history.
2. Cooperate with others to achieve a consensus.
3. Appreciate visual representation as valid historical documentation.

Materials:

1. Image of a winter count, either for overhead projection or general distribution. (Digital images of the winter counts can be downloaded off the Lakota Winter Count online resource. They are located in the "Learning Resources" section, under the Teachers' Guide in "Downloadable Images.")
2. Paper (large format or standard)
3. Pencil and/or crayons
4. *Optional.* Map of the Great Sioux Reservation (also can be downloaded from online resource).

Procedure:

1. Discuss the concept of calendars. What are calendars for? How do we use them? What different kinds of calendars are there? (i.e. Lunar, Jewish, astrological, daily, weekly)
2. Instruct the students to write down the most memorable event that occurred the day before.
3. Provide background information on the Lakota. Locate the region of the United States that the Lakota people lived from prior to the 18th century to the present (South Dakota, North Dakota).
4. Introduce the winter counts. Show images of the winter counts, preferably a variety of them so that students can compare and contrast each keeper's style and medium (students should not think that winter counts were only produced on buffalo skin or hide).

5. Explain how the winter counts were used by the Lakota to remember their community's history.
 - a. Each pictograph represents a memorable event that occurred during each year of the community's history.
 - b. The pictographs are arranged in chronological order.
 - c. One person, the keeper, was responsible for meeting with important members of the community to discuss which event would represent the preceding year.
6. Ask the students to share the event they selected and have them choose, as a class, one event to represent the class's shared history. Guidelines for selection are:
 - a. It must be an event that was common to the entire class.
 - b. It must be an event that is unique to that day and has little chance of reoccurring tomorrow or later that week.
7. Once the event has been decided on, have each student draw an image that depicts that event. At the end of the lesson, collect and display the images so that students can see how their pictographs were similar or different to those made by their classmates.

Optional homework assignment:

Assign the students homework requiring them to create a pictographic calendar documenting their family's history over a set period of time. You may want to send a letter home with your students explaining the unit and this assignment. If there are students in your class who are unable to meet with their families on a regular basis, special allowances should be made to accommodate their home life. The main idea behind this assignment is to record a community history as opposed to a personal one. "Community" can refer to many groupings, not just a traditional family.

1. Ask the students to go home and explain the Lakota Winter Counts to their families. If students have internet access at home, have them write down the URL to the Lakota Winter Count online exhibit to show to their families.
2. Students should then meet with their families at regular intervals over a set period of time (e.g every night for a week, every other night for two weeks, etc.). At each gathering, the "community" should select an unique event to represent that period of time.
3. Once the event has been selected (using the guidelines from the classroom exercise), the student must draw a pictograph that represents that event. At the end of the week, each student should have a pictographic calendar documenting his or her family's history.
4. On the day the assignment is due, have students volunteer to share their families' pictographic calendar with the class. Display them in the classroom. Encourage discussion on any similarities or differences found among the collective calendars.

Teacher Notes:

Refer to historical and cultural content on Lakota Winter Count online exhibit.

Evaluation Tool:

Students will be assessed on:

1. Class participation and group discussion.
2. Ability to act cooperatively with class "community."
3. The finished product's value as a recognizable representation of the class's chosen event.

Middle School Levels

Oral Histories:

Over the course of this lesson, students will study the oral history tradition as an important scholarly resource as well as a rich cultural tradition. By studying Lakota oral histories and interviews given by members of the Lakota community, students will gain a better understanding of how scholars draw from various resources to ensure an accurate understanding of the past. They will also begin to appreciate oral history as a cultural tradition that connects a community's past with its contemporary population.

Curriculum Standards:

Because each state has its own social studies curriculum standards, the National Council for the Social Studies's 1994 publication, *Expectation of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* was used as a guideline for this lesson plan. In accordance with this set of standards, the lesson focuses on themes of Time, Continuity and Change. At the middle school level, students engage in a more formal study of history by understanding and appreciating differences in historical perspectives and by recognizing that "interpretations are influenced by individual experiences, societal values, and cultural traditions." These skill objectives, or variations of them, are also found in several states' curriculum standards for middle school students.

Performance Objectives:

After completing the lesson, students will be better able to:

1. Assess the historical and cultural significance of narrative accounts.
2. Seek multiple sources of historical information.
3. Examine the relationship between historical events and personal memory.

Materials:

1. Copy of *Honor the Grandmothers: Dakota and Lakota Women Tell Their Stories* (2000) by Sarah Penman. Specifically, the chapters recording the oral histories of Celane Not Help Him and Cecilia Hernandez Montgomery (both Lakota).
2. Image of a winter count, either for overhead projection or general distribution. (Digital images of the winter counts can be downloaded off the Lakota Winter Count online resource. They are located in the "Learning Resources" section, under the Teachers' Guide in "Downloadable Images.")
3. Writing material
4. *Optional.* Computer equipped to run digital video files over the internet. A single computer set for overhead projection is adequate if a computer lab is unavailable.

Procedure:

1. Provide background information on the Lakota. Locate the region of the United States where the Lakota people lived, prior to the 18th century up to the present day (South Dakota, North Dakota).
2. Introduce the winter counts. Show images of the winter counts, preferably a variety of them so that students can compare and contrast each keeper's style and medium (students should not think that winter counts were only produced on buffalo skin or hide).
3. Explain how the Lakota used winter counts as mnemonic devices to recall their community's history.

- a. Each pictograph represents a memorable event that occurred during each year of the community's history.
 - b. One person, the keeper, was responsible for not only maintaining the winter count, but also for remembering the entire history recorded within it.
 - c. Oral history is an important cultural tradition among the Lakota.
4. Discuss the concept of oral histories. What is an oral history? What examples of oral history might someone encounter in his or her daily life? (Stories from elder relatives, first-hand accounts, etc.)
 5. Run all or some of the digital video files found on the "Contemporary Perspectives" section of the Lakota Winter Count online exhibit. The video clips, excerpts of interviews recorded by members of various Lakota communities, discuss the winter counts' value to Lakota culture and their personal lives.
 6. Read aloud selections from the oral histories recorded by Celane Not Help Him and Cecelia Hernandez Montgomery in *Honor the Grandmothers*. Discuss the differences between the history documented in the book and the history documented in textbooks.
 - a. Is this (the oral history) a true history?
 - b. Is it different from what the textbooks say? How so?
 - c. Whose version of history is documented in the oral histories? Whose version of history is documented in textbooks? How many versions of history exist?
 7. Have the students write an essay discussing the importance of oral histories to understanding past events. Instruct them to answer the following questions:
 - a. Why are oral histories important to understanding what happened in the past?
 - b. What kind of information or insight can you gain from an oral history that you cannot get from a textbook?
 - c. Why is it important to study more than one account of history in order to get a better understanding of the past?

Optional homework assignment:

Have students interview an older relative or neighbor about an important past event (i.e. Viet Nam War, Gulf War, Civil Rights Movement, etc.) using a tape recorder, if possible. Instruct them to research books and periodicals for articles that corroborate the events discussed during the interview. The students should submit a list of the questions used for the interview, a transcript of the interview, and a bibliography of their research.

Teacher Notes:

Refer to historical and cultural content on Lakota Winter Count online exhibit.

Evaluation Tool:

Students will be assessed on:

1. Class participation and group discussion.
2. Written essay contains evidence of students' ability to identify and use oral histories as a source of historical information.
3. *Optional*. Research material gathered from oral history project (interview and bibliography).

High School Levels

Using Primary Sources:

For this lesson, students will become “investigative historians” whose task is to use the winter counts to learn as much as they can about the Lakota people’s history during the nineteenth century. Once divided into eight groups, the students will be assigned one of the eight pictographic winter counts to use as their primary resource (do not use the text only counts for this exercise). Using the searchable database of winter count entries, the students will look for general information about the community whose history is documented in the winter count. They will report back to the class as a whole with their findings, citing individual entries as evidence and correlating the events mentioned in the winter count with events studied in their textbooks.

Curriculum Standards:

Because each state has its own social studies curriculum standards, the National Council for the Social Studies’s 1994 publication, *Expectation of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies* was used as a guideline for this lesson plan. In accordance with this set of standards, the lesson focuses on themes of Time, Continuity and Change. At the high school level, students engage in “more sophisticated analysis and reconstruction of the past, examining its relationship to the present and extrapolating into the future.” Through the study of both primary and secondary resources, students integrate individual stories about people, events, and situations to form a more holistic conception, in which continuity and change are linked in time and across cultures. These skill objectives, or variations of them, are also found in several states’ curriculum standards for high school students. The ability to use technology for research is also a skill required of many states’ high school students.

Performance Objectives:

After completing the lesson, students will be better able to:

1. Identify, seek out and evaluate multiple perspectives of past events.
2. Obtain historical data from alternative sources of historical documentation.
3. Question issues of voice when evaluating historical sources.

Materials:

1. Computer Lab with at least eight computers equipped with high-speed internet.
2. Image of a winter count, either for overhead projection or general distribution. (Digital images of the winter counts can be downloaded off the Lakota Winter Count online resource. They are located in the “Learning Resources” section, under the Teachers’ Guide in “Downloadable Images.”)
3. Printouts of attached worksheets.
4. Writing material.

Procedure:

1. Divide the students in eight equal groups and assign each group a different pictographic winter count (Lone Dog, Long Soldier, American Horse, Battiste Good, Cloud Shield, Flame, Rosebud, Swan). If the majority of groups have more than three students, create more groups and overlap assigned winter counts. Each group should have its own computer to use for research.
2. Discuss the difference between primary sources and secondary sources. Ask the students to identify examples of primary sources and secondary sources that they have encountered during their studies. The definitions used by the Smithsonian Archives are as follows:

- a. **Primary sources** are documents or objects created as part of daily life—birth certificates, photographs, diaries, letters, etc.—or reports from people directly involved in the subject.
 - b. **Secondary sources** are documents that interpret, analyze, or synthesize information, usually produced by someone not directly involved in the subject.
3. Provide background information on the Lakota. Locate the region of the United States that the Lakota people lived from prior to the 18th century to the present (South Dakota, North Dakota).
4. Introduce the winter counts. Show images of the winter counts, preferably a variety of them so that students can compare and contrast each keeper's style and medium (students should not think that winter counts were only produced on buffalo skin or hide).
5. Explain how the Lakota used winter counts as mnemonic devices to recall their community's history.
 - a. Each pictograph represents a memorable event that occurred during each year of the community's history.
 - b. One person, the keeper, was responsible for not only maintaining the winter count, but also for remembering the entire history recorded within it.
 - c. The oral history tradition survived the U.S. government's campaign to outlaw the practice of both American Indian culture and language.
 - d. Winter counts are among the few primary sources that remain documenting U.S. history during the 19th century from a non-White perspective.
6. *Next class (in the Computer Lab)*. Describe to the students how the winter counts are accessible through the searchable database on the Lakota Winter Count online exhibit. Have them zoom in, zoom out and rotate the pictures of the whole winter count; view individual entries; scroll across the database; access collector's notes for individual counts; and "collect" entries as practice.
7. Hand out copies of the worksheets to each student. Students should work together, but they should complete their own worksheet.
8. Inform the students that they will be doing historical investigation using their assigned winter count to get an idea about how the community represented in their count lived and what happened to them during the 19th century.
9. Have students complete the worksheet using only their assigned winter count as a reference and citing individual entries as evidence. Students may not be able to find evidence to complete some parts of the worksheet, but they should do their best to extrapolate as much information as they can. In this case, it is best for them to "make an educated guess" rather than to leave a section blank. However, students should be instructed that if they are unsure of an answer, they should make note of it (as any good scholar should).
10. *Next class (in the classroom)*. Review winter counts with the class by asking them to explain why they are considered primary sources. Then, have groups present their findings to the class. Once all the groups have presented, work with the class as a whole to identify similarities and difference among the counts. Students should be taking notes on their classmates' findings as well as the class discussion. Issues that should be addressed are:
 - a. What would account for the differences among the counts? The similarities?
 - b. What events documented in the popular version of U.S. history are also documented in the winter counts?

- c. Why don't the winter counts seem as comprehensive as the textbook version of history? (Winter counts are not the definitive history of the Lakota community, but rather mnemonic devices used to support an oral history, which was more elaborate and detailed, containing not only the most memorable event, but other important events that are associated with the year. Unfortunately, the oral history tradition suffered greatly from the U.S. government's campaign to suppress American Indian culture during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.)

11. Discuss winter counts as primary sources.

- a. Whose perspective is represented in the winter counts? Who is the author?
- b. What traditional sources could they consult for additional information about the Lakota? Who is the author?
- c. What other types of primary sources could they reference for information on 19th century U.S. history? Whose perspective do they represent?
- d. Whose version of events is true? Can history be recounted through only one perspective?

Optional homework assignment:

Have students write an essay outlining (1) the history of the Lakota based on what they learned from the winter counts; (2) the history of the Lakota based on what they learned from their text books; and (3) an evaluation of how the two histories relate and where the student would go to research the topic further.

Teacher Notes:

Refer to historical and cultural content on Lakota Winter Count Web site.

Evaluation Tool:

Students will be assessed on:

1. Data collection methods (worksheet).
2. Class participation and group discussion.
3. *Optional.* Assigned essay's ability to reflect the student's understanding of historical research.

Data Retrieval Sheet

About the Lakota	Reference (winter count entry).
Where did the Lakota live? Describe geographical landmarks (rivers, streams, hills, etc) as well as environs (wildlife, plants and animals).	
How did the Lakota live? What did they eat? How did they get food?	
What health issues did the Lakota face?	
What other groups of people did the Lakota interact with? How did they interact? Were they friends or enemies? Did that change over time?	
When did the Lakota first meet the White explorers and settlers? What types of interactions occurred between the two cultures?	
What astronomical or meteorological phenomena are mentioned in the winter counts (star activity, extraordinary weather patterns)?	