

Native Americans & Thoreau
Annette Luongo, Huff Elementary
Mountain View, California
Grade 3



Essential Question: How can we as anthropologists create museum exhibits that celebrate the history and culture of Coastal California Tribes?

Standards:

California Grade 3 Social Studies

Standard 3.2

- Describe the American Indian nations in their local region long ago; describe national identities, religious beliefs, customs, and various folklore traditions.
- Discuss the ways in which physical geography, including climate, influenced how the local Indian nations adapted to their natural environment (e.g., how they obtained food, clothing, tools).

Standard 3.3

- Trace why their community was established, how individuals and families contributed to its founding and development, and how the community has changed over time, **drawing on maps, photographs, oral histories, letters, newspapers, and other primary sources.**

- Common Core ELA R.1.3.3, R.1.3.4 (informational reading)
- Common Core Informative Writing W 3.2 a-d

Objectives:

- Students will be able to research a Coastal California tribe and describe ways they adapted to their environment
- Students will be able to analyze primary sources to better understand the history of a group of people

Materials:

- Native American websites, books, and articles that provide information on history/culture, etc.
- Example:
<https://betterlesson.com/community/lesson/35298/california-native-american-tribes>
- Links to Ohlone stories:
<http://www.native-languages.org/ohlonestory.htm>
<http://www.sacred-texts.com/nam/ca/scc/>
<https://multoghost.wordpress.com/2016/06/29/eagle-hummingbird-and-coyote-an-ohlone-creation-myth/>
- Muwekma Tribe link (including a “contact us” section)
<http://www.muwekma.org>

Pre-requisite:

In a previous lesson earlier that week, students will have already discussed the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter.

Procedures:

- Revisit the wooded/creek area near our school. Walk over in small groups with parent volunteers.
- Ask: how do you think the Native Americans entertained each other? After discussing with students, explain that in the time of the Ohlone,

computer games and movies were not available for entertainment, so one way they entertained each other was by storytelling. They are to imagine that there is a campfire and we are sitting around it listening to this tale. Read one of the Ohlone Indian stories from the links listed in the “Materials” section above.

- Discuss the story and explain its value as a small window into the culture of the Coastal California tribes.
- Then invite the children to imagine that we have taken a huge step back in time, and that they are now Native Americans, one of the Coastal California Tribespeople.
- Review what it means to meet one’s basic needs (food, clothing shelter), and have the children then look for items in the wooded/creek area that they could use to meet those survival needs as a Native American. Some items could be used for cooking, some for clothing, etc.
- Have the children bring items back to the “campfire” to share what they found and why they believe it would make sense to use in order to help them survive in this tribe.
- Walk back to class
- Closure: Brainstorm all the methods we might employ to learn more about how the Coastal Californians actually lived. Launch the project that we will be working on over the next few weeks, which is a study into the lives of the Coastal Californians. Explain that Thoreau, who we discussed earlier in the year, documented the ways of the Native Americans and sought to learn from them. Highlight the importance of researching artifacts, articles, online sources, books, etc. to gain more insight into their life. Explain that we will be embarking upon a research project where we’ll learn about the lives of the Natives and create exhibits for a “museum” in our classroom to share with others so that they may have a window into the lives of the Coastal Californians.

Day 2:

Procedure:

- Review activities from previous lesson (In previous lesson the students brainstormed various ways one could learn more about the history of California Coastal Tribes)
- Gather students at the rug to explain the connection we will make via Skype with a museum spokesperson.
- Once connected via Skype, co-facilitate a discussion about the analysis of primary sources that are being presented. Coach students to make observations rather than play guessing games.
- Work alongside Museum contact to ensure that the discussion also leads to a basic understanding of museum exhibits, their characteristics, features that make the exhibits successful, etc. This will be one of the building blocks for this project, as students will be creating their own “museum exhibits” for our Coastal California Museum that we create at our school
- As items are discussed, teacher takes notes of key learnings as we interact with our Museum contact.
- Closure: once the Skype session is over, students and teacher recap on chart paper the key learnings from today. Save chart paper to use at a later date when students begin planning out their museum exhibits.
- Release students to work in pairs to analyze websites/books/articles that showcase some primary sources related to the Coastal California tribes. Students take notes of their learning in their research notebook.

Materials:

- Computer and Internet connection (Skype-ready)
- Chart Paper
- Website Links to primary sources

Assessment:

Exit ticket where students explain what a primary source is and how they analyze a primary source to better understand those who came before us.

Follow-on Lessons/Activities for this unit will include the following:

- Students will be working in pairs to investigate an aspect of Native American Life. They will be assigned one topic, and will have a choice on a second topic. These will be the areas of study:
 - Clothing
 - Food
 - Lodging
 - Folklore
 - Economy/Trade
 - Medicine
 - Customs and ceremonies
 - Tools
- Future mini-lessons:
 - Model for the students how to effectively take notes on what they're learning about the Native Americans
 - Model how to write an organized informational paragraph
 - Model how to create a poster to display information gathered

Assessment at the culmination of this unit project:

- Each student will turn in an informative report, create an exhibit, and present his/her findings to visitors in our classroom. These products will be used to evaluate each child's progress toward the objectives.