

Indian Education for All

Model Lesson Plan for Teaching About Uses of Tobacco – both Traditional and Commercial.
Includes Tobacco Facts and Promotes Media Literacy.



Many American Indian tribal nations and Indian people use tobacco for ceremonial purposes. Not all tribes may use tobacco in the same way but in general it is used for ceremony. Some tribal nations may be more open to explaining how they use tobacco for ceremonial purposes and other tribal nations may have cultural protocols regarding tobacco use that aren't shared with the general public.

Buffalo and Porcupine

Northern Cheyenne Trickster Story

Told by Phillip Whiteman, Jr.

Illustrated by Cory Wheeler

Running time 0:5:15:00

Buffalo and Porcupine has a powerful message and gives the listeners an opportunity to reflect upon their own relationships with people; the consequences of individual choices; and how a traditional story can relate to our modern world.

This project was produced in collaboration between Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Tobacco Use Prevention Project and the Office of Public Instruction, Indian Education for All. There is a lesson plan following the video that facilitates discussion and draws comparisons between traditional American Indian tobacco use and commercial tobacco use.

Health Enhancement Model Lesson Plan – Examining Traditional Ethics and Uses of Tobacco

Suggested Grade Levels: Middle School – High School

Lesson Plan Introduction

Evidence of tobacco use among American Indian tribes dates back as early as 3000 B.C. Today many American Indian tribal nations and Indian people continue to use tobacco for ceremonial purposes. Not all tribes may use tobacco in the same way but in general it is used for ceremony and reserved for special or sacred occasions.

Some tribal nations may be more open to how they use tobacco for ceremonial purposes and other tribal nations may have cultural protocols regarding tobacco use that are not shared with the general public.

Traditional tobacco is a gift from Mother Earth. It should be respected and used properly just like sweetgrass, sage, and cedar. Tobacco is a medicine used by our people to pray with. It provides us with spiritual strength, guidance, discipline and protection. You should never abuse such a gift. – <http://keepitsacred.itcmi.org/>

Commercial tobacco, on the other hand, is used recreationally, individually and habitually. Tobacco companies have long used Native American images and targeted this population group in order to sell their deadly product. Affecting more lives in America annually than AIDS, alcohol, car accidents, murders, illegal drugs and fires combined, tobacco use is the single greatest cause of preventable death! Smoking kills 1,400 Montanans every year, an average of 4 per day. (See attached appendix.)

Please keep in mind these relevant “Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians” as you teach about tobacco prevention and traditional use among American Indians:

Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

Essential Understanding 1

There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

Essential Understanding 2

Just as there is a great diversity among tribal nations, there is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined, and redefined by many entities, organizations, and people. There is no generic Indian.

Essential Understanding 3

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Health Enhancement Standards

Montana Health Enhancement Standards and Benchmarks for grade 8:

Health Education Standard 1—*Comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention to enhance personal health.*

Health Education Standard 2 - *Analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.*

Health Education Standard 5—*Demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health and safety.*

Health Education Standard 7 - *Demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks.*

Relevant Benchmarks

HE1.1.d - Analyze the potential consequences of engaging in risky behaviors

HE2.1- Explain how family and culture influence the health of adolescents

HE2.2- Describe how peers influence healthy and unhealthy behaviors

HE2.4- Explain how messages from media influence health behaviors

HE5.4.a- Predict the potential short-term and long-term impact of health and safety related options on self and others

HE5.4.b- Analyze the outcomes of safety and health-related decisions

HE7.2- Explain the importance of assuming responsibility for personal health behaviors
HE7.3.a- Describe behaviors to avoid or reduce health risks to self and others

Stage One

Established Goals

Use a traditional American Indian Story and apply the lessons learned to making positive health choices for today. Analyze comparisons between Buffalo's choice to carry Porcupine and his ultimate demise/eventual death. Compare Porcupine to commercial tobacco companies.

Understandings

Students will explore how commercial tobacco companies market to youth, target population groups, specific cultural groups and look for ways to increase market research.

Students compare how commercial tobacco use is portrayed to be a "friend."

Students will be able to...

- have classroom discussions.
- brainstorm ideas and make comparisons.
- explore examples of media literacy
- research background information on contemporary tobacco political control.
- research traditional tobacco use among various American Indian Tribal Nations and/or individuals using tobacco for ceremony.

Essential Questions

- Life choices sometimes present dilemmas.
- Something that may seem benign or harmless can change your health and your life.
- What can we learn from stories, even if they do not pertain to present day situations?

Students will know...

- tobacco companies are there to make a profit.
- tobacco companies will use current trends, cultural activities, and also utilize research regarding human behavioral patterns to sell their product.

Stage Two

Performance Tasks

- Watch and analyze/discuss a traditional Northern Cheyenne trickster story told by Phillip Whiteman a member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe.
- Relate the story to current tobacco use prevention issues (applicable for other current issues as well).
- Understand commercial tobacco companies' marketing strategies.

Stage Three

Learning Activities

Watch the on-line video of Phillip Whiteman telling the story [Buffalo and Porcupine](#)

Follow with a classroom discussion using these suggested talking points:

- a. What was the story about? How does Phillip Whiteman use the terms “friend” and “relative” and how do these compare with your own definitions? Would traditional tobacco be a friend or relative? What about commercial tobacco?
- b. So what? How can this pertain to you and current issues? Can you see a comparison with commercial tobacco companies and other companies marketing unhealthy substances to youth?

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|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Elements in Story | Initial meeting between Porcupine and Buffalo | Crossing river, what is inside Buffalo’s body | Porcupine’s curiosity to know everything outside body | Buffalo’s demise, lessons learned |
| Relation to Commercial Tobacco | social interaction, trust, friendship, ritual around smoking, desire to fit in. | Tobacco use can lead to cancers and heart disease, the two leading causes of death in the United States | Tobacco companies do research in populations to better understand how to market their product. | Tobacco company CEOs aren’t with you in the hospital when you are dying of lung cancer. Your relatives are! |

- c. Now what? How do peers, family, and environment influence personal health? What are some personal health enhancing strategies?
- d. Further exploration, have students research one of the aspects/issues discussed utilizing the supplemental materials and resources:
 - New FDA regulation and laws pertaining to tobacco use
 - 2012 Surgeon Generals’ Report
 - Media Literacy and tobacco advertising
 - Social marketing and company donations
 - Environmental impact of commercial tobacco
 - Traditional tobacco use among American Indian tribes
 - Short and long term health effects

Appendix I

Native American Ethical Behavior, Gabriella Many Shots

MSW Practicum Student Intern

As Native People, we have an obligation to nature. As Native people we believe everything in our universe has a spirit. Everything in our world is a living thing. Because of our belief, we are obligated to take care of these living beings. This does not mean we own the land, only that we are its care-taker. This environment is the earth and all that inhabit it. It includes the water, the animals, and plant life.

Our grandfathers were aware of this relationship with the land; they understood the importance of taking care of Mother Earth. To take care of the land and its surroundings, they practiced *Ethical Behavior*. This unique relationship was guided by a code of ethics.

Our ancestor's lives were guided by values and belief systems. A large part of this value system was *Gratitude*. Historically, Native Americans were a thankful people. They consistently and constantly gave thanks for all they were able to acquire. This meant they gave thanks to animals for giving their lives, as food, to nourish the people. They gave thanks to the heavens for rain, snow, sunshine and thunder for sustaining their lives with water and warmth. They thanked the trees for the wood that kept them warm and the shrubs that were used for sweat-lodges. They gave thanks to the various roots and herbs used for medicinal and ceremonial purposes. There are many things they were thankful for.

Native American people also practiced reciprocity. *Reciprocity* is a relationship involving mutual exchange. A reciprocal relationship or act happens when something is done mutually or in return. Traditionally, Indian People offered tobacco as gifts to the land, water, plant-life whenever something was taken for their purposes. This form of behavior assured the people, sustenance, for their livelihood. They were careful not to take too much of anything, and were taught just to take enough. Everyone knew if too much was taken, there would be less for next time or there would be less for other people in need.

So this *Ethical Behavior* we have with the land and its beings, means offering tobacco as a gift. Whenever we take from Mother Earth, we also need to give back to her. Whether it is a rock, mint leaves, sweet-grass or a feather, we need to give something back. This something is tobacco and prayer. Anything we take from nature, we need to remember to practice *Ethical Behavior* and offer tobacco and prayer. When we offer tobacco with prayer, it ensures we'll always have plenty for next time. There will always be an abundance to go around, for the people, if we practice *Ethical Behavior*.

Supplemental Materials and Resources

[Montana K-12 Health Enhancement Content Standards](#) 8th grade (#1, #5, #7)

[Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program](#) website, local community and tribal contacts
Presentations
Information Fact
Sheets
Prevention Needs Assessment Survey statistics

[Tobacco Free Kids](#) website, national issues
FDA regulations
2012 Surgeon General's Report

Traditional Tobacco - [Keep it Sacred](#) website
Ethical Behaviors – (**Appendix I** above)

[Industry Watch](#) – more information can be found at this site.

[Native American Tobacco Education Fact Sheets](#) – easy reference sheet on traditional vs. commercial use.

Special thanks to Phillip Whiteman (Northern Cheyenne) for granting DPHHS and OPI permission to record and share the story of *Buffalo and Porcupine*.