

American Indian Heroes and Role Models

Fast Facts

Curriculum Area: Social Studies

Grade Level: 4

Suggested Duration: 2 weeks

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

Social Studies

(4) The history content standards for fourth grade are that each student will:

- (a) understand tribes in Montana have their own unique histories;
- (b) identify events and policies that have impacted and been influenced by tribes in Montana;
- (c) explain how Montana has changed over time given its cultural diversity and how this history impacts the present; and
- (d) describe how historical accounts are impacted by individual perspectives.

Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

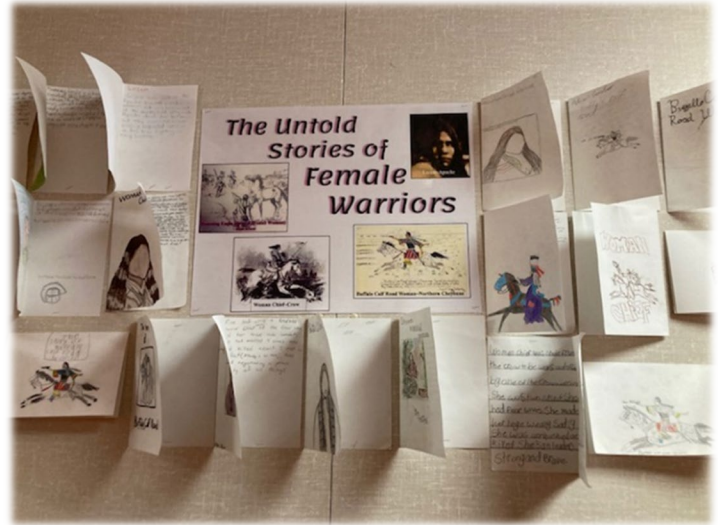
History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell. (EU6)

Understandings

- Students will understand the lives of ordinary American Indian people and extraordinary American Indian people, place them in time and context, and explain their relationship to important historical and contemporary events. This will be done through the use of biographies, stories, narratives, the Internet, and interviews.

Essential Questions

- Who is a hero?
- What is a role model?
- Who are the Montana Indian historical heroes?
- Who are the Montana Indian contemporary heroes?
- Who are the Montana Indian contemporary role models?



Hardin Middle School Student Project



Students will be able to...

- identify historical and contemporary Montana American Indian role models and heroes.
- research a Montana American Indian hero or role model.
- demonstrate their understanding that people view and report historical events differently, American Indians want the true story of their histories told, elders are especially important to Indian people, and Indian people have struggled but have made and continue to make important contributions to their people and others.

Students will know...

- how to conduct research and prepare interview questions.
- about the contributions of American Indian historical and contemporary heroes.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence Performance Tasks

1. Conduct research about Native American Role Models
2. Demonstrate understanding through oral, written and group projects.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities

Unit Goal

Students will get to know, do, or read an interview about, and do a presentation, on a Native American role model. Students will learn to work in cooperative groups to complete a project.

This unit works well in grades 3-8 but can be modified and adjusted to K-2. Young students can work, as a class, on one role model with the teacher as a guide.

This unit takes a few weeks to complete. The work sessions last about 30-60 minutes. It is best if students work in cooperative groups of two. Use one role model per cooperative group.

Be proactive. Learn as much as possible about Native American role models in your area. Have role models come in and share a short synopsis of their lives, if possible. Final presentations are amazing, as students will go all out when the learning is personal.

If possible, preplan to have Native American role models come into your classroom. It is nice to have more role models than you have cooperative groups. Remember to approach the guests with a small token of goodwill for the time they spend in your classroom. If a role model is not available, there are numerous on-line resources available that profile Native American role models.

Day 1

Objective: Students will better understand what a role model is.

Have students close their eyes and think about a time when they were very little and learned something new. Ask them who taught them this and how they learned it. Then ask them to discuss this with a neighbor. Have a few students share.

Then ask them to close their eyes and think about something new they learned last year. Ask how they learned it and who taught it to them. Tell them to share with a neighbor and choose a few students to share with the whole group.

Discuss that role models are people that “teach us things” by example. Teacher should give examples of role models in their life and what they learned. Now begin to talk about role models the students have had in their lives.

Get students ready for research. Pair students off into groups of two and have them brainstorm a list of notable Native Americans. Facilitate a class discussion and ask each student pair to share their list. How many role models were contemporary vs. historical? Provide a structure so students have a good balance between historic and contemporary role models.

Suggested tribal specific example of contemporary and historic Apsáalooke/Crow role models are Plenty Coups and Kevin Red Star.

The Crow Chief Plenty Coups lesson plan has some good background information about Plenty Coups and his contributions to the Crow people. Share information about Plenty Coups with the class and facilitate a discussion.

Next, show the Montana Stories clip of Crow artist Kevin Red Star. Facilitate a class discussion of why he is considered a contemporary role model for not only Crow students but for all students.

Day 2

Objective: Students will, in cooperative groups, decide on a role model to research and present on.

Utilize individuals who are featured in the resources section from the OPI Poster Series and individuals from the Native American Hall of Fame.

Have students think about and discuss with their partner what they thought of the role models. They can review what they learned about each one. Have a list of role model names hanging in the room.

Have each group decide on a person they want to research and do a presentation on. The groups will need to make a first, second, and third choice. With the names of the three role models, they will need a reason or two for each choice.

Each student pair will stand in front of class and tell the role models they chose and why they chose them. If more than one group chooses the same role model, the class votes on who gets that person, based on the group’s reasons for their choice.

Day 3

Objective: Students will understand how to write interview questions.

Discuss how students make new friends. Guide them to see they ask question of each other until they know that person.

Tell students they will be writing interview questions in their cooperative groups. They will write questions they think will help them get to know their role model better. Model a few appropriate interview questions on the board. Discuss what a “too personal” questions would look and feel like. Let students have fun creating questions.

As students complete questions, have them read some of them out loud. Other groups may be able to piggyback off these questions.

Sample interview questions:

- What is your full name?
- Where and when were you born?
- Who were/are your parents?
- What tribe/reservation are you from? Tell about it.
- What were your interests as a child?
- Tell about your family, past and present? (Names, ages, etc.)
- What is your job?
- What do you like best about your job?
- What do you like least about your job?
- Tell about your three favorite things in life and why you like them best.
- Who is your best friend? Why?
- What do you do for fun?
- What major obstacles do you feel you have overcome?
- What person most influenced you? Why?
- If you could spend time with anyone living or dead, who would that be? Why?
- Tell about some things you are doing or have done that you are proud of.
- Any pointers for Indian youth?
- What kinds of hopes do you have for Indian people?
- What hopes/dreams do you have for your own future?
- Why do you think someone suggested you as a role model for Native American students?

Day 4

Objective: Groups will perfect their interview questions.

Have students think about their role model and what they would like to learn more about them.

Groups should have their interview questions completed. They must share these questions with one or two other groups and add any ideas they picked up while sharing.

Day 5

Objective: Groups will interview their role model in person, over the phone, or by Zoom or another on-line format. You may want to take a break from this unit until all group's interviews are completed.

If the role model is someone from a historical era have students conduct research to see how many of their questions can be answered via research. Have students record answers and ask them to use complete sentences to summarize the interview responses.

Week 2

Putting it all together. The final presentations may take place over several days.

Make sure each group understands the steps they need to complete between now and their final presentation.

Ask students to think about how they would tell a friend about a new, cool movie they saw. Would they tell every piece and take two hours to retell it? Choose a few students to share how they would tell it. Let them know this is a synopsis or a short version of what happened. This is what your final presentation will be. A synopsis of your role models life.

Discuss with the students steps the groups will have to go through to produce a final presentation. Have them utilize the responses to their interview questions to frame key ideas about their role model they would like to share with the class. Students will learn to work in a cooperative group to produce a written and/or oral presentation using visual aids to support their work.

Allow ample class time for each group to prepare their final presentations. Ask each group to report every day on their progress. The groups will explain where they are at with their project and what they plan on doing to finish.

Best case scenario – student role models come into class share their story with the students.

Final project assessment to be determined by the teacher.

Resources for Identifying and Learning about Role Models

- [Contemporary Indigenous Artists of Montana](#)
- [Crow Chief Plenty Coup lesson plan](#)*
- [Montana Stories: Kevin Red Star](#)*
- [Native American Hall of Fame Curriculum for grades 8-12](#)*
- [Native Trailblazer Series](#)
- [OPI Poster Series](#)*
- [Representative Marvin Weatherwax - Advice for American Indian Youth](#)
- [Resilience: Stories of Twenty Indian Women](#)

* Mentioned in lesson plan