

Who Are the Métis?

Lesson 2

Guiding Question for the Lesson

- In what ways have the Métis contributed to Montana’s history?

Standards

Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

EU 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.

EU 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. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories predate the “discovery” of North America.

EU 6 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.

Social Studies Standards

SS.E.6-8.2 Analyze examples of how groups and individuals have considered profit and personal values in making economic choices in the past and/or present.

SS.G.6-8.2 Identify the location of places and regions in the world and understand their physical, political, and cultural characteristics.

SS.G.6-8.5 Explain the role and impact of spatial patterns of settlement and movement in shaping societies and cultures, including Indigenous cultures.

SS.G.6-8.6 Identify how the historical and contemporary movement of people, goods, and ideas from one area can impact change, conflict, and cooperation in other areas.

Materials

[Chris La Tray, Little Shell member \(video\)](#)

Notes capture form (Appendix A)



Length

One class period

Key Vocabulary

indigenous (little i) Indigenous (big I)

métis (little m) Métis (big M)

Michif post-colonial contact

Notes to Teacher

The video notes capture form is one way to increase engagement among students, helping them take an active role rather than sitting-and-getting while a video plays in front of them. You could decide to make your own form. Some other likely column headings:

- Fact, Question, Inference
- What I heard, What I think it means, What I don't know yet
- What I learned, What I wonder, What I can connect to

For any of these options, modeling the use of the chart for the students is always a good strategy.

Steps

Step One

One of the key lines in this video is, “We didn’t cross the border; the border crossed us.” Before the video starts, you might ask students to guess what this means. If it helps, you could show a map of the United States/Canada and ask students to think about what the map would look like without the lines on it, and what it might have meant to people when lines did “appear.”

Step Two

Front-load instruction of the vocabulary terms for students, as they are all from the first four minutes of the video. You may want to watch to jot down your own definitions, but here are some general definitions:

indigenous (little i) = originally part of a place

Indigenous (big I) = aboriginal; tribal; Indian.

métis (little m) = “mixed”

Métis (big M) = ethnic group of mixed European and Indigenous heritage, recognized officially in Canada but not in the US

Michif = the language associated with Métis people; a mix of French, Gaelic, Cree, and Chippewa/Ojibwe

post-colonial contact = *after* Europeans and Indigenous people made contact for the first time

Step Three

Begin the video. **Stop at 4:11** and encourage discussion from the notes form. Depending on your class, you might have students share their notes in pairs or very small groups, and ask any clarifying questions, or host a brief all-class discussion.

Stop at 6:56 and ask students to think about, or perhaps summarize orally, the effect of the buffalo on the people and the people on the buffalo.

Prepare students for the next segment by telling them they will hear about a leader among the Métis people, Louis Riel.

Stop at 9:11. You are now halfway through the video, so it is a good time to ask students to focus on their forms and jot down some notes in those columns.

Prepare students for the next longer segment by telling them they will names of Métis people and their accomplishments. Ask them to pay attention to what the speaker says about these people and what roles they played in Montana's settlement by newcomers.

Stop at 14:20. What do students have on their sheets? They can share in pairs, small groups, or as a large group. They may have questions for you. Alternatively, you can ask them to directly answer the question of what roles people like Gabriel Prudhomme, Jocko Finley, and Johnny Grant played in the history of the area.

Moving into the future how can we think about perpetuating culture? How can younger people become involved in it? You might ask students about their own culture and/or traditions (even ones in their family unit or some they have heard about) and to think about whether and/or how they might continue those traditions. *(End of video)*

Assessment

Ask students to review their notes and ask you their lingering questions. You can collect these note forms as is or ask students to use their notes to answer the guiding question from the beginning of the lesson: In what ways have the Métis contributed to Montana's history?

Extension Option

Consider assigning a brief research project on one of the Métis names presented in La Tray's video: Louis Riel, Gabriel DuMont, Gabriel Prudhomme, Johnny Grant, Jocko Finley (sometimes spelled Jacko, or Jacques; sometimes Finlay).

Appendix A – Notes Capture Form

Name:

Date:

Details I already knew	Details I learned	Questions I have/Connections I can make