

Purposes of Tribal Governments

Fast Facts

Curriculum Area: Social Studies

Grade Level: Grades 7-8

Suggested Duration: Three class periods (two days for research and one day for writing/reporting)

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

Social Studies Standard 2, Benchmark 2 Understand the structure of Montana tribal governments.

Understandings

- There are similarities and differences in the structure of Montana tribal governments. Each of the 12 tribal nations in Montana display unique aspects in their governance structure. [EU 1]

Essential Questions

- What elements do Montana tribal governments have in common?
- What are the basic elements of contemporary tribal governments near your school?

Students will be able to...

- apply criteria to compare and contrast Montana tribal governments.

Students will know...

- the basic structures of tribal governments in Montana.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Each student will demonstrate adequate knowledge about tribal governments through research, presentation, and discussion.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities

Divide the class into eight groups. Assign each group one of the eight Montana tribal constitutions.

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Students will analyze each tribal constitution using the attached handout. Have hard copies of each tribal constitution printed out beforehand and distribute to each of the eight groups.

Students will be required to fill out the tribal government worksheet (ask them to use complete sentences). Tell them they will also be doing a five-minute oral presentation of their findings to the rest of the class. (Assigning cooperative learning roles is suggested in order to maximize student participation).

Materials/Resources Needed

[Montana Tribal Constitutions](#)



Tribal Government Structure

Analyze a tribal constitution by answering the questions below. Incorporate the question or prompt in your answer and write on a separate sheet of paper, using complete sentences.

The Preamble

A preamble reflects the hopes and aspirations of the group. Summarize the preamble in two or three sentences.

Articles

The framework and powers of tribal governments are outlined in several articles or sections. There are separate articles for each branch, or governing body. Articles spell out the structure of each branch and the qualifications, method of selection, length of term, and duties of officials in each branch.

The Executive Article

How is the executive power structured?

What are the qualifications for the office of the executive (i.e., the president or chairperson)?

What is the method of selection?

What is the length of the term of office? What are the duties of the official(s)?

The Legislative Article

How is the legislative power structured?

What are the qualifications for office in the legislature (i.e., the tribal council)?

What is the method of selection?

What is the length of the term of office? What are the duties of the officials?

The Judicial Article

How is the judicial power structured?

What are the qualifications for office in the judiciary (i.e., tribal judge)?

What is the method of selection?

What is the length of term in office? What are the duties of the official(s)?

Bill of Rights

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A bill of rights lists the fundamental rights and liberties of a citizen of the tribe. Is there a bill of rights in the tribal constitution you are researching? If so, list those rights afforded to the tribe as stated in the constitution.

Membership

Tribes can determine the qualifications for membership in the tribe. Does the constitution include a section on the qualifications of a tribal member? If so, complete the following questions.

What are the qualifications for membership in the tribe?

Who can vote in tribal elections?

Additional Issues

Many tribes address other issues in their constitution and bylaws, such as elections, education, or economic development. Does the constitution you are researching have additional articles? Briefly summarize them.

When was the constitution adopted?

Do you think the tribal nation you are studying has an equal balance of powers?

Adapted from the Close-up American Indian Citizenship in Balance Curriculum.

