

Self-Determination – American Indian Perspectives

Fast Facts

Curriculum Area: Social Studies
Grade Level: High School
Suggested Duration: Two-three 50-minute class periods

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

Social Studies Standard 2, Benchmark 12.4 Students will relate the concept of tribal sovereignty to the unique powers of tribal governments as they interact with local, state, and federal governments.

Understandings

- The U.S. Government has been influencing tribes through various federal policies, and the policy of self-determination has been a positive shift in federal policy. (EU 5, 7)
- Students will gain a basic understanding of the federal Indian policy of self-determination.
- An awareness of how federal laws/policies impact American Indian nations.

Essential Questions

- How do tribal nations exercise true self-determination today?
- To what extent did the policy of self-determination lead to less federal government control over internal American Indian affairs?

Students will be able to...

- research some of the unique issues regarding the history of American Indians and how interactions with the federal government have evolved over time.

Students will know...

- key factual information about the policy of self-determination.
- examples of how tribes interact with local, state and federal systems.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Students will research a particular contemporary issue/event pertaining to self-determination and American Indians.

2. Students will gather evidence and present their findings in the form of a brief oral presentation.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities

Briefly share the following rationale as a way to introduce the topic of self-determination:

Self-determination is the current policy period for Indian America. There are many ways in which tribes and individuals are exercising their right to control their own destiny in an increasingly diverse American society.

It is necessary for teachers and students to familiarize themselves with American Indians today and the contemporary and future issues they face. The study of changing demographics, identity, and the unique tribal cultures are important considerations for understanding American Indian people.

If you have a high speed internet connection and access to a projector have the class watch this interview with Ernie Stensgar, former Coeur d'Alene Tribal Chairman in an on-line video clip regarding tribal sovereignty. "Approaching this Module: Principles of Sovereignty."

Lead a brief class discussion about the main ideas put forth by the speakers. This will provide the class with some general background regarding the concept of sovereignty as they begin their own research.

Students will be assigned small groups and given the following tasks.

Each group will be given a summary of the Self-Determination Act and will be required to write up their interpretation of what this means for tribal nations today. Each group will identify five different ways tribes currently exercise self-determination. Emphasis on Montana nations is encouraged but students could identify broad issues that apply to many tribes. Also, students will identify five ways the federal government exercised control over tribes prior to self-determination. Groups will also be asked to identify five issues where tribes and other governments share/overlap with responsibility.

Have research/reference materials available in the classroom. Check with the school librarian to obtain American Indian reference books that were sent out to all libraries by the Office of Public Instruction. A listing and description of the reference books is provided in the lesson.

Each group will be required to report out their findings to the class. Allow approximately three-five minutes for each group to report their findings. After all groups have reported, lead a class discussion regarding major themes and issues presented and summarize key aspects of self-determination. Use of cooperative learning models is encouraged to ensure all students participate in their small groups.

Materials/Resources Needed

Juneau, Stan (Blackfeet); revised and updated by Walter Fleming and Lance Foster. **“Indian Self-Determination and Beyond.”** [History and Foundation of American Indian Education](#). Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2013. (pages 45-49)

Stensgar, Ernie (Coeur d'Alene). [“Approaching this Module: Principles of Sovereignty.”](#) Lifelong learning Online The Lewis & Clark Rediscovery Project.

D’Errico, Peter. [“Sovereignty, A Brief History in the Context of U.S. ‘Indian law.’”](#) *The Encyclopedia of Minorities in American Politics*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 2000.

The following reference books were sent to Montana public school libraries. They provide an excellent starting point for research and general background information.

Champagne, Duane (Ojibwe) (ed). ***Native North American Almanac: A Reference Work of Native North Americans in the United States and Canada***. Detroit: Gale Publishing, 2001. This huge comprehensive volume provides historical and contemporary information about the Native peoples of North America. A broad range of topics including history and historical landmarks, health, law and legislation, activism, environment, urbanization, education, economy, languages, arts, literatures, media and gender relations makes this highly readable book essential for librarians and teachers.

Davis, Mary B. (ed). ***Native America in the Twentieth Century, An Encyclopedia***. Garland Publishing, Inc., New York, N: 1996.

All classroom teachers who are teaching anything about "Native Americans" should have this single-volume encyclopedia available and use it frequently. The emphasis is on Indian peoples today, and the involvement of a great many knowledgeable Indian people, close to much of what they describe, contributes greatly to accuracy and coverage of usually ignored matters.

Keoke, Emory Dean (Lakota) and Kay Marie Porterfield (eds). ***American Indian Contributions to the World: 15,000 Years of Inventions and Innovations***. New York, NY: Checkmark Books, 2003. With entries ranging from anti-asthmatic medications to zoned biodiversity, this meticulously researched volume is a comprehensive resource to the numerous inventions and innovations made by the indigenous peoples of North, Meso-, and South America. Containing over 450 entries, alphabetically arranged and fully cross-referenced, this indispensable reference book is a must for every classroom and library.

Keoke, Emory Dean (Lakota) and Kay Marie Porterfield (eds). ***American Indian Contributions to the World***. New York, NY: Facts on File, 2005.

This excellent five-volume set of Keoke's and Porterfield's earlier work is accessible to students from fourth grade through high school. The subjects covered are "Buildings, Clothing, and Art," "Food, Farming and Hunting," "Medicine and Health," "Science and Technology," and "Trade, Transportation and Warfare."

Seale, Doris and Beverly Slapin, (eds.) ***A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children***. Berkeley, CA: Oyate Press, 2005.

A Broken Flute deals with the issue of cultural appropriation in books for children, and evaluates hundreds of books for children and teenagers published from the early 1900s through 2004. According to a review in "Multicultural Review," it is "as close to comprehensive as a bibliography on a given subject can get." "Equally valuable," the review continues, "are the reflections of the reviewers and their children about the negative images perpetrated by mainstream society and its educational system as well as their own efforts to make their voices heard."