

# American Indian Perspectives – Tribal Reorganization

## Fast Facts

Curriculum Area: Social Studies  
Grade Level: High School  
Suggested Duration:

## Stage 1 Desired Results

### Established Goals

**Social Studies Standard 2, Benchmark 8.3** Students will identify the significance of tribal sovereignty and Montana tribal governments' relationship to local, state, and federal governments.

### Understandings

- Prior to European contact all tribes had structured forms of government to manage their affairs.
- Historically, U.S. Government laws and policies have done much damage to American Indian cultures.
- The U.S. Government has been influencing tribes through various federal policies, and the policy of tribal reorganization in the 1930s helped to establish modern tribal governments. (EU 5, 7)

### Essential Questions

- What factors influenced the passage of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act?
- To what extent did the Meriam Report influence U.S. Government officials?
- To what extent are Montana tribal governments similar and how do they differ in certain aspects?

### Students will be able to...

- demonstrate an understanding of the rationale and results of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act.

### Students will know...

- each Montana tribal nation has a unique form of government that was developed as a direct result of Federal Indian Policy.

## Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

### Performance Tasks

1. Students will use their listening and note taking skills as they will be required to take notes and rephrase major concepts/issues in a brief essay/oral presentation.

## Stage 3 Learning Plan

### Learning Activities

Ask students what they currently know about contemporary tribal governments. Brainstorm a list of ideas they come up with and write on the board/overhead.

Tell students you will be giving a brief lecture about how contemporary tribal governments were formed as a direct result of federal Indian policy. Key point: remind students that prior to European contact each tribe had a traditional form of government (highly structured in most cases) that dealt with internal and external affairs of the tribe. Contemporary tribal governments are recent phenomena, but some do have cultural components that integrate traditional practices.

Students will be required to take notes and write up a brief essay (one page) about what they have learned and present their summary back to the class in the form of a one-minute speech highlighting the main points they got from the lecture. Students could also share their reaction to the information learned. Have them explain why it is important for all Montanans to have a basic understanding of tribal governments.

Student work should be evaluated based upon them demonstrating an understanding of the main points put forth in the lecture.

### Extension Activities

Assign students a particular tribal government to research. Ask them to describe basic features and functions of the tribal government. Students could also conduct interviews with current/former tribal council members asking them questions about the role and functions of tribal councils/governments. Students will then present their findings to the rest of the class as part of a brief oral presentation.

### Teacher Background

Read “Chapter Five: Tribal Reorganization Period (1934-1953) of *History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy* by Stan Juneau, revised and updated by Walter Fleming and Lance Foster. Reading the entire document is suggested. This book is also available in school libraries and on the Office of Public Instruction Web site.

### Materials/Resources Needed

[Indian Reorganization Act](#)

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Juneau, Stan (Blackfeet), revised and updated by Walter Fleming and Lance Foster. [History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy](#). Helena, MT: Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2013.