Revitalizing Native American Languages

Fast Facts

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

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

(1) The civics and government content standards for ninth through twelfth grade are that each student will:
(e) evaluate how citizens and institutions address social and political problems at the local, state, tribal, national, and/or international levels.

(4) The history content standards for ninth through twelfth grade are that each student will:
(c) identify ways in which people and groups exercise agency in difficult historical, contemporary, and tribal contexts;
(e) explain events in relation to both their intended and unintended consequences, including governmental policies impacting American Indians;
(j) analyze perspectives of American Indians in US history.
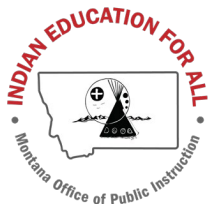
Understandings

- 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. (EU 3)
- Develop an understanding of the historical and contemporary context regarding Native American language issues.
- The consequences of assimilation practices have significantly impacted the lives of Native peoples.
- Develop an awareness of Native American language revitalization efforts in Montana.

Essential Questions

- Why is it important for American Indians to maintain/revitalize their languages?
- How does the loss of Native language impact Native peoples in America?
- What historical events and policies contributed to the endangerment of Native Languages?

Students will be able to…

- Analyze and evaluate various types of primary and secondary resources, including oral accounts, regarding the loss and revitalization of Native languages.

Students will know…

- American Indian tribes shared a similar history with regard to loss of languages and many tribes are taking deliberate actions to reverse this trend and produce more fluent speakers.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Students will research and analyze issues regarding Native languages. Students will write up a brief essay and actively participate in class discussion.
2. Students will examine Native American language apps and report out their findings.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities:

Hook Strategy

Ask students who has seen the film "Finding Nemo." Then show this clip from the Navajo version of the film and facilitate a class discussion about what they saw.

Introduce students to the topic of Native American languages by posing the following questions:

1. In just North America, how many Native American languages do you think were spoken prior to 1491?
2. How many Native American languages do you think will be spoken in 2091?
3. Do you think it is important for American Indians to continue speaking their languages?

Share the background information below. Ask students to think about what this means to contemporary American Indians.

- Prior to European contact Native Americans in North America (excluding Mexico) spoke over 300 distinct languages.
- In Central and South America, there were over 500 distinct languages.
- European conquest, colonization, and deliberate cultural genocide led to the disappearance of hundreds of Indigenous languages, and Native communities are still dealing with the impacts of culture and language loss.
- Linguists estimate that over 50% of the remaining Native American languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers.
- If language patterns do not change in many Native American communities, only a dozen or so will still be spoken by the year 2050.
- Many tribal nations are working hard to revitalize their cultures and languages.
- Montana tribal nations and the state of Montana have been working to maintain tribal languages via legislation and through private and public education systems.

Facilitate a class discussion regarding these key concepts and check for student understanding.

Show students the film Full Circle, which is about Blackfeet language revitalization. The film was a Blackfeet Community College student production in collaboration with Montana State University produced in 2015. Facilitate a class discussion regarding key ideas and themes from the film.

Next, assign students two readings for homework. They will be required to complete the readings before the next class and write a brief reaction paper (1-2 pages) summarizing what they learned. The readings are about Crow language revitalization efforts and language revitalization on the Fort Peck Reservation.

- Crow Language Consortium Interview with Dr. Janine Pease
- University of Montana Native News Project (2018) - *From Our Ancestors On Fort Peck a Small Group of Language Students Revive Tradition*

Have students turn in their reaction papers at the beginning of the next class period. Conduct a follow-up discussion over the major points/issues put forth in each article. Ask all students to orally summarize their reaction papers so the rest of the class can hear about their perspectives.

Pose the following question from the previous day.

◊ How many Native American languages do you think will be spoken in 2091?
◊ Ask students if they have changed their opinions as a result of the readings and discussion.

Assignment: Utilizing On-line language resources – Native American Language App/On-line Language Resource Activity, students will research a Native American app or a Native American language website and share their reactions with fellow students through a brief in-class presentations or some other type of demonstrative project. Suggested time for presentations is five-ten minutes depending on class size. Links to Montana tribal specific resources are included in this lesson.

Background Materials and Supplemental Teaching Resources

Language & Culture Resource Repository from the National Indian Education Association

Native American Languages Act

American Indian languages , Britannica

Native North American Languages Spoken at Home in the United States and Puerto Rico: 2006–2010
US Census Bureau

Montana Stories: Darrell Kipp

Why Save a Language – 2006 video

Revitalization of Indigenous Languages: Designing and Facilitating Immersion Programs

Navajo-dubbed 'Finding Nemo' and 'Star Wars: A New Hope' now on the Disney+

We are One – Video features Native Languages and Perspectives

Greetings from Montana American Indian students (2009 Video) – Video shows youth speaking their language.

Crow Language Consortium Interview with Dr. Janine Pease

University of Montana Native News Project (2018) - *From Our Ancestors On Fort Peck a Small Group of Language Students Revive Tradition*

Montana Tribal Language Resources

Blackfeet Reservation
Blackfeet Community College Adult Language Class

Crow Reservation
[Crow On-Line Dictionary](#)
[Crow Language Consortium Facebook Page](#)

Fort Belknap Reservation
[Fort Belknap Language Preservation Program](#)
[Fort Belknap Language Preservation Program Facebook Page](#)

Fort Peck Reservation
[Fort Peck Languages and Cultures Department Facebook Page](#)

Flathead Reservation
[Séliš-Qͪlispé Culture Committee](#)
[Kootenai Culture Committee](#)

Language Apps (Note: descriptions are from the tribes)

Blackfeet

The Android [Piikani app](#) contains over 500 audio files recorded by fluent Native speakers and featuring photos of community members. There are 3 types of games, 3 types of quizzes, culture notes section with beautiful images, Piikani songs, creation story and a searchable database. We hope you will enjoy using this app to learn the Piikani language and culture.

[Blackfeet Language app for iPhone](#)

Learn the Blackfeet language with this easy and fun language learning app. The Blackfeet Tribe is traditionally known in the native language as the Pikuni, or Beings of abundance. The Creator gifted us generously and the Pikuni were rich in the necessities of life. Respect for life in all forms has traditionally been a foundation of the Blackfeet culture.

Crow
Apsaalooke Language App
[Apple App](#)
[Android App](#)

The Crow Nation presents the Apsaalooké Language App. This app consists of 17 categories, over 600 entries of phrases/words, 3 levels of games, 3 types of quizzes, culture notes and a searchable database. All audio recorded by fluent Native speakers.

Crow Mobile App [Android](#)

The Crow Mobile Dictionary (CMD) is the best way to look up Crow words and hear pronunciation while on the go. It's the ultimate electronic Crow learning and reference tool.

• More than 10,000 Crow entries
• More than 20,000 Linked Crow Morphemes
• More than 30,000 English Reversal Entries
• Male and female voices for audio

Crow Vocab Builder [Android](#)

Build your Crow vocabulary with the Crow Language Project's FREE vocabulary game for your Android phone or tablet. Quiz yourself every day to learn different categories – wild animals, food, drinks, and more! The app includes 30 culturally-relevant categories designed by Crow speakers, more than 350 words, audio pronunciation and visual aid for each word

in the category, quiz yourself by matching English words to Crow words, and vice versa, progress through levels to unlock new words and track your progress and review words you've learned by category or activity.

Northern Cheyenne
Cheyenne Vocab Builder [App](#)

Build your Cheyenne vocabulary with this FREE vocabulary game for your iPhone or iPad. Quiz yourself every day to learn different categories – wild animals, food, drinks, and more!

25 culturally relevant categories designed by Cheyenne speakers
More than 300 words and phrases!
Audio pronunciation and visual aid for each word in the category

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Salish Qlispe Language App
[Android](#)
[Apple](#)

Séliš & Ql̓ispé Language Learning App 1, an exciting way to learn Language, Culture, and History (with photos). Works beautifully as a stand-alone app but is enhanced when combined with Book 1 of the Language Curriculum.

There are over 700 entries with fluent native speakers
3 types of games
3 types of quizzes
Culture Notes with video, audio and historical images
A searchable database and much more ...

Fort Belknap Language App
[Android & Apple](#)

Fort Belknap Language Program resources available on SoundCloud

Fort Peck Language Apps
Yanktonai Dakota Vocab Builder
[Android](#)
[Apple](#)

Build your Yanktonai Dakota vocabulary with the Fort Peck Language and Culture Department's FREE vocabulary game for your Android phone or tablet. Quiz yourself every day to learn different categories – wild animals, food, drinks, and more! The app includes dozens of culturally-relevant categories designed by Yanktonai Dakota, speakers, audio pronunciation and visual aid for each word in the category, quiz yourself by matching English words to Yanktonai Dakota words, and vice versa, progress through levels to unlock new words, keep on making progress to unlock traditional songs recorded with the Fort Peck Singers and review words you've learned by category or activity.

Nakoda Vocab Builder
[Android](#)
[Apple](#)

Build your Nakoda vocabulary with Fort Peck Language and Culture Department's FREE vocabulary game for your Android phone or tablet. Quiz yourself every day to learn different categories – wild animals, food, drinks, and more! This app includes dozens of culturally-relevant categories designed by Nakoda speakers, audio pronunciation and visual aid for each word in the category, quiz yourself by matching English words to Nakoda words, and vice versa, progress through levels to unlock new words, track your progress and review words you've learned by category or activity.

Little Shell Chippewa Language App
[Apple](#)

This is a learning app for the Chippewa Language. Learn how to speak Chippewa today! This is a collaboration of the Chippewa Tribe to preserve the Chippewa Language. Flash cards, videos and much, much more. Download today and start learning the language today!

Chippewa Cree Language App
[Apple](#)

The Chippewa Cree app consists of the following:

- Over 500+ audio files of fluent Native speakers' voice
- 3 Levels of Games
- 3 Types of Quizzes
- Culture Notes section
- Searchable database and much more