

We Can Order Events in Time

Fast Facts

Curriculum Area: Social Studies

Grade Level: Grade 1

Suggested Duration: 2 days

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

Social Studies

(4) The history content standards for first grade are that each student will:

- (a) distinguish between past, present, and future time; and
- (b) understand how events might be described differently depending on historical contexts and perspectives, including those of tribes in Montana.

English Language Arts

Retell stories, including stories by and about American Indians that include key details and demonstrate understanding of the central message or theme. (RL.1.2)

Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories, including American Indian stories. (RL.1.9)

Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practices by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. . . . (EU3)

There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have affected Indian people and continue to shape who they are today. . . . (EU5)

Understandings

- American Indian traditions are still taught to children.
- Historically, many American Indian children had to leave their homes and families to attend school.

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to have a tradition?
- What is your routine for getting ready for school?
- How did the girl in the story get ready for her school experience? Who helped her out?
- How would you feel if you had to leave home to attend school and what would you take with you?



Indian Education for All Unit

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Students will be able to...

- retell the events in order of time during the four days before Shi-shi-etko left for school, naming the person and places they went.
- identify three things you would miss from home if you had to live away from home and why you would miss them.
- tell how your parents might feel if a law said their child had to go to a school far away from home.
- create a bag of memories. What is in it and why is each thing in it special to you?

Students will know...

- some American Indian students had to leave their homes to attend school.
- some American Indian families give children a traditional name, like Shi-shi-etko, to honor their child, and all names are special and respected.
- to respect traditions practiced by others.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Students and teacher will “write” a letter to Shi-shi-etko to tell her how they feel about the way she spent her four days before leaving home and how she may have felt the day she left.
2. Students will order events in time during the four days before Shi-shi-etko left home, naming the person(s) she spent the day with, the places they went, and some sights and sounds they experienced.

Other Evidence

Design and create a student-made classroom quilt for Shi-shi-etko to “send” to her with the letter they “write” (colored paper or fabric, possibly with family, plant, and animal pictures, using any geometric shape and pattern).

Learn about the five senses and relate them to things in nature, such as familiar plant and animal life, that were important to Shi-shi-etko. Nature walks, study and collection of plant species, animal track identification, etc. can support this.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Learning Activities

Teacher tip: This lesson would be best taught in the spring as students have developed a strong bond of trust with their teacher, and the teacher (who has gained foundational support through non-fiction literature about this era) carefully guides the students into an understanding of empathy by reflective teacher pedagogy.

This lesson is about putting events in order and the context is a striking era of history for American Indians who were required to leave home to attend residential (government boarding) schools. During the four days before Shi-shi-etko (the story character) leaves home, she gathers the honor and beauty of her family and home, both in her heart and memory, as she prepares a small pouch (memory bag)

which she takes with her. Sharing this moving story with young children and drawing on how they might feel to have to leave their home and family to go to a far-away school, will create a poignant sense of empathy, both for students and staff, for American Indian children who had (and continue currently) to endure this loss. *The teaching focus is on empathy for the character and the joy she found each day – even with the challenge of having to leave her home and family. This lesson is part of one of the major federal policy periods – The Boarding School Period, from 1879 to present* (the historical information provided is support for the teacher). **This lesson is not intended to teach all the details regarding the boarding school era; it is about the story of one girl and her experience getting ready to leave home to attend boarding school.**

The teacher and students will discuss what they know about laws and rules. After discussing laws in general, the teacher will tell students they are going to talk about a law that was written to make American Indian children have to leave their homes and families to attend a school far away from them – so far away they could not go home at night. They sleep alone in a bed in a building with other Indian children who have also had to leave their homes and families.

Read aloud *Shi-shi-etko*, a narrative about a young girl the law says must leave her home and family in four days. The teacher will emphasize the order of events during the four days and nights. This book is set in Canada and the law in Canada required mandatory attendance at boarding schools from 1894 – 1947.

Who is she with each day? What special things does she gather to take with her (why is a memory bag special)? What are some things her family teaches her? What are some words that show Shi-shi-etko comes from a traditional family? (What does it mean to have a tradition – what is a traditional food, celebration, language, etc. as related to individual student's self-knowledge?) What things represent the five senses?

Provide some information about the author of the book, Nicola I. Campbell, whose family is of the Interior Salish and Métis Tribes of Canada (review a map or use a globe to locate Canada).

Students may (when appropriate) learn the meaning of their individual names from family or a baby name book to support the understanding and self-awareness of respect for individual names.

The teacher will discuss with the students an understanding of how Shi-shi-etko is the character of the story, not a real girl, who helps us understand how many American Indian children's lives have had to change because of a law. What are emotions children may feel when they knew they would have to leave home to go to an unfamiliar school where they would live and spend nights without their families? What are the emotions of the families (fear, anger, sadness, worry)? How does Shi-shi-etko's face look each day – does it change with how she feels? The teaching focus is on empathy for the character and students' understanding of the courage Shi-shi-etko showed.

- What would it be like if you had to leave your family and home and go to a school far away?
- Who would you miss? What objects would you want to take? How would you communicate if you could not call and were too young to write letters?
- How would your family feel every night when you were not sitting at the table and getting ready for bed, and could not hear your laughter?

Assessment 1 will follow after several discussions. The teacher guides the students to provide thoughts and feelings, which are relative and sensitive to the story's character in creating a classroom letter for Shi-shi-etko. This letter will be "reread" with teacher support throughout the lesson.

Each student will create an individual bag of memories (adding something special such as a rock, feather, picture, or coin) to help understand the reason why Shi-shi-etko made one from memories of each of the four days.

Provide time for students to retell and order the events in the four days before Shi-shi-etko left for home. Review in ongoing discussions throughout the lesson.

Assessment 2 is given after students have a clear understanding of the events.

Allow students to evaluate their work and its implications.

Students can practice "reading" the letter they write as a class/student and tell why they think writing a letter is important, even though Shi-shi-etko is a character. What do the students think Shi-shi-etko's name means? (Her name means "she loves to play in water.") What does she do in the story that shows her name is just for her? Find examples of other traditional things in the story (grandma's name; songs from her mother, father, and grandfather).

Provide support for students who are learning to order events during the writing process. Review or teach simple letter format, punctuation, and grammar.

Prerecord the story for individual listening.

If possible, respectfully (follow tribal customs and protocol when asking members for information) access a tribal member who may be willing to help support the understanding of boarding schools; this remains a contemporary issue for many American Indians and being sensitive to this is very important.

If your library does not have *Shi-shi-etko*, request it through an interlibrary loan.

Gather some plant (nature walk) and animal pictures to support the story and allow students to become familiar with an association between the words and pictures in context.

Provide a small bag for each student (to create a bag of memories).

The teacher may shorten the read aloud by explaining some of the sentences and/or reading it in parts over a week, with attention to discussion time.

If you are teaching in a school with a high percentage of American Indian students, you might consider asking students to share information regarding their traditional name(s) if this is appropriate with the customs of the tribal membership of the classroom students. Please consult with the school's Native American language teacher, where possible, as the meaning of names may be private among certain Montana Indian tribes and this needs to be respected as such.

As the classroom teacher, please read *A History and Foundation of American Indian Education Policy*, pages 17 – 25 to provide an historical context before sharing this lesson with young students. The author's statement at the beginning of the book also provides some good background. In addition, Essential Understanding 5 has background information regarding boarding schools and assimilation.

Resources

[Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians](#)

[History and Foundation of American Indian Education](#) by Stan Juneau, revised and updated by Walter Fleming and Lance Foster

Shi-shi-etko. By Nicola I. Campbell, Illustrated by Kim LaFave