

Shifting Power on the Plains

Middle School American History
Lesson plan by Daniel Clapero

Objective: This unit is designed to cover the idea of Shifting Power on the Plains over the last several hundred years. Different groups of people gained and lost power on the Great Plains throughout history. The ideas behind each lesson helps students to gain a basic understanding of the people, history, and power that shaped life on the Great Plains. Each lesson plan can be taught individually or can be connected together with other teaching materials to address the topic of Shifting Power on the Plains

The focus of this lesson plan will be on the following key topics in American History:

Who are/were the Sioux (Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota)?
Winter Counts
Buffalo Soldiers
Perspectives on Crazy Horse and Red Cloud
Standing Bear vs. Crook
A reading on Wounded Knee
A reading on Ranchers and Farmers in Nebraska in the late 1800s
Perspectives on White Clay

Teachers are welcomed to use this entire unit or pick and choose lessons as needed to fit their classroom needs.

Activity One: Sioux (Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota) Webquest

Objective: Students will gain basic knowledge about the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people by completing a webquest.

Introduction: Ask students questions about tools and technology they use in their everyday life. You might want to have students form groups and answer the following questions.

Essential questions:

What types of buildings do you use for shelter?
What are these building made of? Why?
What types of tools do you use daily? How were these tools created?
What do you use for transportation? Why?
What types of foods do you eat? Why?
Do women and men have different roles in society? Why?
How does religion influence your society? Why?

Materials needed: (Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota) Webquest (See Below) and computers

Input and Activities: Give students at least one class period to complete the webquest.

Closure: Using student's answers from the essential questions at the start of class, compare modern lifestyle to the Sioux (Lakota, Dakota, Nakota) people in early American History.

Name: _____ Hour: ____

Use complete sentences if needed.

Sioux (Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota) Webquest

Type in the following web address

<http://nativeamericans.mrdonn.org/plains/sioux.html>

Click on [Who were the Sioux?](#)

1. How many tribes made up the Sioux nation? List them
2. What animals were the Sioux dependent on?
3. Why were horses important to the Sioux?
4. What is a travois? How was it made?
5. What were the main animals that the Sioux hunted?
6. What were the “Three Sisters”?
7. What did a boy have to try to do at age ten?
8. What is jerky? Why did the Sioux like to make jerky?
9. What were women’s dresses usually made from?
10. What type of clothing did men rarely wear?
11. What was jewelry made out of?
12. What did an act of bravery allow men to wear?
13. Explain the government and selection of a Sioux chief?

- 14. Did women have any say in early Sioux government?**
- 15. What did the Seven Fire Council decide?**
- 16. Explain what Sioux warriors were like?**
- 17. What were some of different jobs Sioux men had?**
- 18. What were the Sioux women in charge of?**
- 19. Were the Sioux allowed to have more than one wife?**
- 20. What did the groom have to give to each of the bride's families?**
- 21. How did Sioux children gain names or nicknames?**
- 22. What was the worst form of punishment a Sioux child could receive?**
- 23. Describe the education of children in Sioux society.**
- 24. What does a star quilt represent?**
- 25. Describe the Sioux religion.**
- 26. What were thunderbirds?**
- 27. What was the most powerful spirit**
- 28. Why were visions important to the Sioux?**

Activity 2: Lakota Winter Counts

Objective: Students will gain basic knowledge about the Lakota Winter Counts and apply the information to their own personal or family history

Introduction: Ask students questions about how people record history today. Using a projector as a class or with individual computers have students explore the following website.

<http://wintercounts.si.edu/index.html>

Essential questions:

How did the Lakota record history?

What types of events were important to the Lakota?

What types of symbols did the Lakota use to record history?

Is each Lakota Winter Count unique to its creator?

Materials needed: Computers or a projector

Input and Activities: After having students explore the website have them create a simple winter count of their life. Students will use one symbol or picture for each year of their life. Students are welcomed to use personal, family, or world events to help them complete their winter count.

Closure: If students feel comfortable they could share their winter count and personal story with their classmates. How are our modern winter counts different from the Lakota winter counts of the 1700s and 1800s?

Activity 3: Buffalo Soldiers

Objective: Students will gain basic knowledge about how Buffalo Soldiers changed the West and America.

Introduction: Review the Emancipation Proclamation, 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. Explain how in 1866 Buffalo Soldiers were the first African Americans soldiers to be employed in “peacetime” by the Federal government.

Materials needed: Buffalo Soldier Webquest (See Below) and computers

Input and Activities: Give students at least one class period to complete the webquest and have a classroom discussion on Buffalo Soldiers.

Closure: Have students explain the problems Buffalo Soldiers faced while in army and the successes they had as well. More information on Buffalo Soldiers can be found through Ball State at

http://www.bsu.edu/efit/buffalo/p/teachers/classroom_L02.html

Name: _____ Hour: _____

Use complete sentences if needed.

Buffalo Soldier Webquest

Type in the following web address

http://www.nps.gov/archive/foda/Fort_Davis_WEB_PAGE/HOME.htm

Click on [African Americans in the Frontier Army](#)

1. Out of the 30 new regiments to be created in 1866, how many regiments would be composed of African Americans?
2. Why were these new African American Regiments unique?
3. What types of jobs did the Ninth Cavalry carryout while it was stationed in Texas and New Mexico?
4. What new form of transportation did the Tenth Cavalry protect while stationed in Kansas in 1867?
5. What types of jobs did the Twenty-Fourth Infantry Regiment have while it was stationed in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Arizona?
6. What important communication device did the Twenty-Fifth Infantry Regiment build in Texas during 1879?
7. What types of duties did the Twenty-Fifth Regiment perform in the 1890s?
8. How many Medals of Honor did Seminole-Negro Indian Scouts earn in combat by 1914?
9. What problems and obstacles did African American soldiers face while stationed in the West?

10. During what time period were the last all African-American units desegregated?

Click on the [back button](#) and then click on [Chaplains for Black Regiments](#)

11. What was the primary duty of chaplains assigned to black regiments?

12. What was taught at most post schools?

13. Why do you think education was so important to African-American soldiers in the 1860s and 1870s?

14. After reading about the Buffalo soldiers, did Army units in the West spend more time building or fighting?

Feel free to explore other sites on the webpage.

Activity 4: Crazy Horse and Red Cloud

Objective: Students will create a Venn diagram comparing the similarities and differences Crazy Horse and Red Cloud had in how they tried to protect Native American people and their land on the Great Plains.

Introduction: What is a disagreement? Have students talk about major political, social, or school disagreements. Ask students for solutions to these problems, if students have different ideas, have them break up into groups and explain to the class why their solution is the best one for society.

Materials needed: Venn diagram sheets, or students can create their own Venn diagram; and computers

Input and Activities: Students will be divided up into groups of four. Two students will research Crazy Horse, and the other two students will research Red Cloud. After about 30 minutes or longer, the four students will meet up and create a Venn diagram explaining the similarities and differences between Crazy Horse and Red Cloud.

Venn diagram:

Key Question: Compare the similarities and differences that Crazy Horse and Red Cloud had in how they tried to protect Native American people and their land on the Great Plains.

Crazy Horse

Similarities

Red Cloud

Closure: Have students explain the similarities and differences they see between Crazy Horse and Red Cloud. If possible, have students choose a side between Crazy Horse and Red Cloud and debate the issues.

Activity 5: The Trial of Standing Bear

Objective: Students will study the Trial of Standing Bear.

Introduction: Debate the following: What is a person? What is a citizen? What rights do we have? Do we take our rights for granted?

Materials needed: Have students go to the following Nebraska Studies website and learn about the Trial of Standing Bear:

http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0600/frameset_reset.html?http://www.nebraskastudies.org/0600/stories/0601_0110.html

Input and Activities: Have students read about the Trial of Standing Bear and take notes on the verdict. The Nebraska Studies website <http://www.nebraskastudies.org/> has lesson plans you can download related to the Trial of Standing Bear if you wish to further explore the trial.

Closure: Have students explain what they thought about the Trial of Standing Bear and the verdict.

Activity 6:

Objective: Students will examine a primary source related to Wounded Knee.

Introduction: Examine Bias, Perspective, 1st hand accounts

Materials needed: Wounded Knee worksheet (below), print out of the reading, or have students examine the document online at

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/knee.htm>

Input and Activities: Have students read the document and answer the questions.

Closure: Continue to examine the ideas of bias, perspective, and 1st hand accounts. If possible, have students examine other primary documents related to Wounded Knee and have students write down any differences that they see between the documents.

Name: _____

Hour: ____

Use Complete Sentences

Massacre at Wounded Knee, 1890

- 1. What was the objective of U.S. troops at Wounded Knee?**
- 2. What was the Ghost Dance? What did some Sioux and other Native American believe would happen?**
- 3. What did the Pine Ridge Indian Agent want in the fall of 1890?**
- 4. What happened to Sitting Bull during his arrest?**
- 5. Describe what happened at Wounded Knee immediately after the first shot was fired.**
- 6. What Army weapon killed most of the Sioux people at Wounded Knee?**
- 7. How many Sioux died at Wounded Knee? How many soldiers? What covered up most of the bodies after the battle?**
- 8. Who was Philip Wells? What was his job?**
- 9. What was Colonel Forsyth looking for in the Sioux camp? What difficulties was he having?**
- 10. What happened to Philip Wells during the fighting at Wounded Knee?**
- 11. Does Philip Wells' story about Wounded Knee seem completely believable? Why or why not?**
- 12. Who does Wells blame for the massacre at Wounded Knee?**

Activity 7:

Objective: Students will examine a primary source related to a dispute between ranchers and farmers in Nebraska.

Introduction: How do we best decide land use?

Materials needed: Ranchers and Farmers Collide in Nebraska worksheet (below), print out the reading or have students examine the document online at

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/butcher.htm>

Input and Activities: Have students read the document and answer the questions.

Closure: Examine how land disputes are settled today.

Name: _____

Hour: _____

Use Complete Sentences

Ranchers and Farmers Collide in Nebraska, 1884

1. What did the government promise people if they could farm on their western land for five years.
2. What did people build their homes out of on the Nebraska plains?
3. What was living in “soddies” like?
4. Why did ranchers and farmers have conflicts over the government land?
5. What did the settlers use the ranchers’ fence poles for?
6. What did local sheriff do to the homesteaders?
7. What did the ranchers decide to do to the farmers’ houses?
8. How did Mrs. King drive off the ranchers?
9. Why did the ranchers go and hide on top of a hill?
10. Who was guilty of a crime: the ranchers or the homesteaders? What happened?

Activity 8:

Objective: Students will examine the ethical, political, and economic issues related to Whiteclay, Nebraska.

Introduction: Have students discuss threats and worries that they have about their community or city.

Materials needed: computers; you may want to order the video, “The Battle for Whiteclay,” and download the teacher handout.

Input and Activities: Have students read about problems the Pine Ridge Reservation faces because of the location of Whiteclay and issues related to alcohol.

http://battleforwhiteclay.org/?page_id=140

Closure: Have students create small groups and discuss the problems of Whiteclay and possible solutions.