

Middle/High School Standards-Based Lesson Plan

Teacher: Mr. Thomas Date: _____

Period: _____ Class: Social Studies/English

Standards addressed:

Culturally-knowledgeable students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.

Purpose/Objectives/Outcomes: The purpose of this lesson is for students to gain an understanding of how vast the network of indigenous tribes existed prior to *contact* while studying the physical geography of Alaska. The students will begin to think of the complexity of the technology, communication skills, as well as value systems of the indigenous people of Alaska by answering the essential questions: How does the trade network reflect the culture of the People? How does geography shape how Alaskans traded and established themselves? How do you see local resources in the global spectrum? How does all this begin to tell a story?

The Student will be able to (The Big Picture):

From this activity, the students can step back and see how Alaska and the regions within Alaska are pieces to a larger puzzle of the indigenous world prior to contact. It is a step towards understanding and dispelling the myth that this “new world” was empty. I remember having a mind blowing moment when I learned of the mounds in the mid-west of continental America that contained artifacts from Alaska and other far reaching places. If this lesson expands a student’s perspective in any way, it will be a success. They will have an opportunity to explore various regions of Alaska by taking a close look at the resources available and how they were utilized.

What will engagement look like during this lesson?

To waken their minds, they will have a writing prompt: “what would be your preferred method of travel if you did not have a motorized vehicle of any sort or an established road system? How far have you traveled or believe you can travel without a motorized vehicle? Explain.

Students will work in small groups with roles assigned to encourage everyone’s participation and Together they will design a Yup’ik trade route from the West Coast of Alaska to another region of Alaska in the form of a game of chance and strategy. Each group will be asked to search for resources and will be given a different starting point from the west coast. Ideally, they will collect all the unique resources found across the board such as abalone, copper, and obsidian.

They will roll dice to determine how successful their seal, walrus, etc. hunt went.

To add an element of traditional values namely to respect your elders and community, a player will have to share 2/3 of their winnings with their tribe. I have also included a page with instructions outlining the rules of the game.

Once they have built enough items seemed fit to trade, they may start to explore the map/board. As they move across the board, a MyMaps page will act as a “game-master” and guide offering choices and insight to their current location.

After visiting all the regions on the game board and had a chance to trade for the major items they will return to their groups starting point to share their goods with their community.

For this version, I have focused on the west coast main groups: Iñupiaq (to the north), St. Lawrence Yupik, Yup’ik and Cup’ik. Given a groups’ location they will focus on their most common food source for instance the St. Lawrence Yupik have closer whaling grounds and the Yup’ik to the south better salmon fishing. Anyone can move around the map with their turn and try their luck somewhere else. I will encourage a free form or role playing aspect to the game to let the groups explore and learn more along the way.

Presentations will be followed with a discussion and thoughts of improving the experience. What was missing? What other regions could be visited? I see this game as a work in progress given the vastness of Alaska/Yukon and the possibility to extend the exercise into other areas of the globe.

Assessment of student outcomes: (How will you assess student learning?)

Each team will have a chance to share how their experience went. They should sketch maps highlighting points of interest. They should reference the individual cultural groups they encountered along the way.

Students will design their own MyMaps adding their highlights during the game and anywhere else on their route that seemed interesting they learned along the way. The more the group can compile as places of interest through their research the better.

Finally, students would also have a writing assignment to follow up their understanding of activity and to pontificate the commonly held notion that the Americas had been an “empty land” prior to contact devoid of civilized activity answering the question, “How does trade reflect the culture of a given group of people?” and “How does geography shape how Alaskans traded?”

Write from the point of view as a member of your trading party recounting your tales to your family adding insights you pick up along the way in your own personal historic fiction based on the route your team took. Add character and depth within the context of the time and place.

Their earlier fast write will only be included as an aspect of their participation as will observing their small group participation.

Materials/Resources:

A variety of maps: physical maps of rivers, coast line and mountain ranges as well as cultural and language groups, poster board/construction board, markers, note pads, and MyMaps.

Technology:

Using MyMaps as reference points and a means to delve deeper, we can follow the games progress in greater detail and see the places and people along the way.

They will also create their own MyMap showing their groups route, where they traded, who they traded with, and anything else of interest.

Instructional Strategies, Accommodations, and Student activities:

The bulk of the work will be in small groups. We will also have discussions as an entire class. The final paper wrapping up the lesson will be due roughly a week from the original lesson to give students without a computer time to write up their 1-2 pages of reflection and answering the question: "How does trade reflect the culture of a people?", and/or "how does geography shape how Alaskans traded?"

The lesson could take anywhere from 2-3 days