

Lesson Title: Cultural Understanding of Braids/Long Hair to American Indians

Grade Level 6th

Objective/ "I can" statement

- I can identify the significance of braids/long hair in American Indian culture.
- I can use technology and other resources to express myself both personally and artistically.
- I can evaluate claims and support these claims by verifying them using evidence.
- I can select appropriate resources to conduct research by evaluating these resources to answer research questions.

Montana Content Standards

LM.DD.6-8 Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to inclusiveness and respect for diversity in the learning community, including the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians

LM.MM.6-8.1 Experiment with various types of technology tools for artistic and personal expression

RI.6.8 Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not. Include texts by and about American Indians.

W.6.1.b Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources, including oral sources, and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.

W.6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate and including sources and/or topics by and about American Indians.

Essential Understandings

There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined, and redefined by many entities, organizations, and people. A continuum of Indian identity, unique to each individual, ranges from assimilated to traditional. There is no generic American Indian.

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.

Teacher Directions:

This lesson is the 6th grade component of the American Indian library unit. The students will progress through different lessons every year that will be taught in collaboration with the classroom teachers. In 6th grade, the students will do the braid lesson. In 7th grade, the students will do the tipi lesson. Finally, in

8th grade, the students will do the indigenous panel in which various American Indian community members will discuss topics of importance to the class.

Background: Previous IEFA lessons taught in elementary and books that were read.

Lesson: Braids

Create three stations

Teachers provide a pre-assessment for students asking about the following topics of understanding:

- Do all American Indians have braids
- Ways in which the Native American culture values long hair
- What are some of the understandings you should have in regards to braids and long hair traditions for Native Americans
- What tools are appropriate for research
- Ways to verify a claim

Here is an example of a [pre-assessment](#).

The teacher will provide 10 minutes of background knowledge and directions. The directions include a short video all of the students watch in which long hair is explained. Here is an example of a [video](#) where the significance of braids is explained.

The class will be split up into three groups and assigned a station. Students will spend approximately 10-15 minutes at each station based on the length of the class period.

Station 1: Video of the Runsabove Family.

Students will view [this](#) video that was created by Walter and Danna Runsabove. Danna Runsabove is Walter's mother. She belongs to the Hudesana Nakoda tribe. The video covers the significance of long hair and braids to the Native American youth. The students will view the video and have an opportunity to reflect on the video while answering questions on a Google Form that is uploaded to Google Classroom. It is important that the facilitator prefaces the video by explaining the significance of smudging and burning cedar or sweetgrass to the culture as Walter is practicing this while getting his hair braided by his mother in the video.

Station 2: Image Analysis

The students will be given these two primary source [images](#). One of the images reflects traditional Crow girls by a tipi in regalia and long hair. The other image reflects Crow Indian girls at a boarding school wearing clothes issued to them by the government and their hair is short. The students will spend time analyzing the photos. They will complete the following [chart](#) during their analysis. This chart can be printed or attached to Google Classroom. The students will be comparing and contrasting the photos and making a claim as to what they believe is happening in the photos. This station will not investigate boarding schools any closer.

Station 3: Book Tour

Students will be provided with the following short stories:

- Cheyenne Again by Eve Bunting
- When I Was Eight by Christy Jordan-Fenton
- Not My Girl by Christy Jordan-Fenton
- Thunder Fox's Long Hair by S. William Lonewolf
- Stolen Words by Meanie Florence

- When We Were Alone by David A. Robertson
- Fatty Legs by Christy Jordan-Fenton
- The Strength of His Hair by Charlene Bearhead
- My Name is Seepeetza by Shirley Sterling
- Thunder's Hair by Jessie Taken Alive-Rencountre
- Bear's Braid by Joelle Bearstail
- I am Not a Number by Jenny Kay Dupuis

The students will preview the literature. They will be instructed to read passages and reflect on the material. After they finish reading they will be asked to fill out a survey in which they indicate which story they liked the most or found the most interesting. They will have to support their choice by providing evidence from the text.

The post-assessment will be administered in which the same topics were asked as in the pre-assessment. In addition, the students were asked about how well their teacher prepared them for the lesson, how well the library was organized for the lesson, and how well the material helped them learn about tipis. Here is an example of the [post-assessment](#).

Extension: Tipi Lesson

Resources:

[Video Links](#)

Library of Congress - Boarding School for schools package -
<https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/native-american-boarding-schools/>

A quick [reading](#) that could be infused into this lesson

Optional Extension:

If the classroom teacher wishes to extend the lesson, the librarian will work with them to develop specific material that fits their needs. For example, if there is a student in the classroom who is struggling with others not understanding the significance of their braids, a video in which that student shares what their hair means to them will be developed and shared with all of the classes. Furthermore, additional videos that are included in the resources section of this lesson can be viewed and discussed.