

Lesson Plan: Native Americans in World Wars: Their Role and Impact

Grade Level: High School

Lesson Overview:

This lesson aims to delve into the often overlooked contributions of Native American soldiers during World War I and World War II. Through an examination of primary sources, discussions, and critical analysis, high school students will explore the motivations, experiences, and impact of Native American participation in these global conflicts, as well as the broader implications for Native American communities and the struggle for civil rights.

Inquiry Questions:

1. What motivated Native Americans to enlist and serve in the military during World War I and World War II?
2. How did Native American soldiers contribute to the war effort, and what were their experiences on the battlefield?
3. What were the consequences of military service for Native American veterans, and how did it influence their communities and the broader fight for civil rights?

Colorado Academic Standards:

- Social Studies: HS.1 Students analyze the causes and consequences of major events in world history.
- History: HS.2 Students understand the role of diverse groups in shaping U.S. history and government.

Materials:

- Primary source documents (letters, diaries, photographs, military records) related to Native American military service
- Maps illustrating Native American tribal territories and participation in World War I and World War II
- Artifacts or replicas representing military uniforms, equipment, and decorations used by Native American soldiers
- Writing materials for note-taking and reflection

- Optional: multimedia resources (videos, documentaries) for additional exploration

Background Knowledge for the Teacher:

Teachers should possess a comprehensive understanding of the history of Native American military service during World War I and World War II, as well as the broader context of Native American history and the fight for civil rights. Familiarity with key events, figures, and primary sources related to Native American veterans' experiences will enable the teacher to provide context and facilitate meaningful discussions.

Background Knowledge for the Students:

Students should have prior knowledge of World War I and World War II, as well as an understanding of the motivations and experiences of soldiers during these conflicts. While they may be familiar with the overall contributions of Native American soldiers, they may not be aware of the specific challenges and experiences faced by Native American veterans.

Instructional Strategies and Procedures:

1. Introduction (15 minutes):

- Begin with a brief discussion about the role of Native American soldiers in World War I and World War II, prompting students to share any prior knowledge or perceptions.
- Introduce the inquiry questions and explain the focus of the lesson on Native American military service and its broader implications.

2. Primary Source Analysis (30 minutes):

- Distribute primary source documents related to Native American military service, such as letters, diaries, photographs, and military records.
- Guide students through a close reading and analysis of the documents, encouraging them to consider the motivations, experiences, and perspectives of Native American soldiers.
- Facilitate a class discussion on the challenges and contributions of Native American soldiers and the ways in which their experiences differed from those of non-Native soldiers.

3. Mapping Activity (20 minutes):

- Provide maps illustrating Native American tribal territories and their participation in World War I and World War II.

- Instruct students to identify key tribal alliances and interactions with colonial forces, marking them on the maps.
 - Encourage students to consider how geographic factors influenced Native American military service and their post-war experiences.
4. Artifact Exploration (25 minutes):
- Show artifacts or replicas representing military uniforms, equipment, and decorations used by Native American soldiers during World War I and World War II.
 - Facilitate a discussion on the significance of these artifacts and their connection to the experiences of Native American veterans.
 - Encourage students to consider the cultural significance of military service for Native American communities and the ways in which it influenced their identity and activism.
5. Reflection and Discussion (15 minutes):
- Conclude the lesson with a reflective discussion, prompting students to share their insights and observations about Native American military service during World War I and World War II.
 - Facilitate a class discussion on the ongoing impact of military service on Native American veterans and their communities, as well as the broader implications for the fight for civil rights and recognition.
 - Encourage students to reflect on the importance of honoring the contributions of Native American veterans and recognizing their sacrifices in the pursuit of freedom and equality.

Formative Assessments:

- Observation of student participation and engagement in discussions, primary source analysis, and artifact exploration.
- Evaluation of students' understanding and critical thinking skills demonstrated through their contributions to class discussions and written reflections.

Resources and Texts for Independent Reading:

- "American Indians in World War I: At War and At Home" by Thomas A. Britten
- "Native Americans in the Twentieth Century" by James S. Olson and Raymond Wilson

Through this inquiry-based lesson, high school students will gain a deeper understanding of the contributions and experiences of Native American soldiers during World War I and World War II, fostering empathy and respect for their sacrifices and highlighting their significant role in shaping American history.