



INTRODUCING THE GEOGRAPHICAL THEME

LOCATION: Cultural Identity: What Places in Our Community Carry Importance?
The Pueblo Indians of Taos: What Makes Blue Lake So Special?

Level: high school

Course: geography, social studies

Rationale

There is no secret that United States' schools in times past have done a poor job teaching geography. This fact is evident in not only low standardized test scores, but also the lack of practical knowledge exhibited by Americans. In many cases businesses have lost a competitive edge in foreign markets due to employees lack of knowledge in human environmental interaction, global interconnectiveness, and just simple ignorance about other places on the globe. The lack of other fundamental geographic skills, processes, and knowledge contribute to this negative effect as well. But, it is not just business; the same geographic illiteracy that plagues business also affects the general public. This fact contributes to a citizenry that has a false perception of their world because they lack the ability to analyze and critically evaluate their world.

Fortunately the situation has greatly improved in recent years. The National Geographic Society and the American Association of Geographers teamed to develop a framework for teaching geography and a network with which to train teachers to teach geography. What they came up with were the "Five Fundamental Themes of Geography." These themes provide an anchor to geography content and a standardization of "What is geography?" Since the development of the Five Fundamental Themes, the National Geographic Society and the American Association of Geographers have refined the process, and created a whole set of

by
Darren Bassett
bessett@bvsd.k12.co.us
Fairview High School
1515 Greenbriar Blvd.
Boulder, CO 80303
303-499-7600

geography standards for K - 12 education. These standards are delineated through and categorized into “Six Essential Elements.” No matter what the title, each of the documents address the core elements of geography and are excellent tools for the classroom. They provide teaching tools for the instructor and learning tools for the student.

Therefore, as geography teachers, it is important for us to draw upon these themes in our lessons. To do this one can take two approaches. One, teach the themes themselves; or two, create lessons that delve into real life geography issues while at the same time highlighting the theme without actually calling it by name. The following mini-unit, Introducing the Geographic Theme Location, does just that. The unit will introduce the theme, LOCATION, without actually calling it “The Theme of Location.” Instead it highlights two lessons that clearly draw out the importance and concepts of location (*Cultural Identity: What Places in Our Community Carry Importance?* and *The Pueblo Indians of Taos: What Makes Blue Lake So Special?*). This unit is designed to introduce the theme of location, and at the same time personalize the issue through students’ active participation in the community, and real data concerning the Taos Indians at Blue Lake, New Mexico.

Ideally the lessons will be taught in succession; that way the effect described above will be achieved and amplified. However, each lesson stands independently.

The lessons tend to highlight subject matter that runs the potential of being misunderstood. The lessons touch the heart of family life and deep cultural values. When dealing with cultural issues, it is extremely important to treat the subject matter with respect and sensitivity. As teachers, we have a responsibility to maintain a positive learning environment. Cultural issues are an area that can easily beset us, and cause tension among students if not handled correctly. So why even discuss it? When handled properly, cultural issues provide us a wealth of learning as will be demonstrated in the following geography lessons.

Unit Overview

Lesson I: Cultural Identity: What Places in Our Community Carry Importance?

This lesson combines the use of geographic themes, and a text developed by the Smithsonian Institution, Cultural Reporter.

Lesson II: The Pueblo Indians of Taos: What Makes Blue Lake so Important?

This lesson focuses on the Taos Indians and amplifies the importance of their religious locations.

Time Needed

9 weeks to 1 semester

Materials

- * Falk, Lisa (Smithsonian Institution), Cultural Reporter. Watertown, MA: Tom Snyder Productions, 1995
- * Keegan, Marcia, The Taos Indians and their Sacred Blue Lake, NY: Julian Messner (Division of Simon and Schuster Inc.), 1972

- * Handouts
- * Video and audio equipment
- * Maps of New Mexico

Lesson I: Cultural Identity: What Places in Our Community Carry Importance?

Rationale

When students realize they use geography every day, and that it is a critical thinking tool applicable to every area of their lives, they become empowered with an exciting and practical life skill. This lesson challenges students to experience the dynamic aspect of geography, not just knowing where places are located, but being able to explain why things are the way they are, and how did it get to be that way. This lesson attempts to marry two principle concepts: cultural history and the geographic theme, location. By doing so, students realize that culture and geography are not compartmentalized parts of their lives. Doing this lesson also opens a whole new form of research and media to students, broadening their skills and creativity.

Lesson Overview

“Cultural Identity: What Places in Our Community Carry Importance?” is designed to be used in a high school geography course, although it would fit nicely in history, and contemporary issues classes as well. It is also designed to fit a companion lesson, “The Pueblo Indians of Taos: What Makes Blue Lake So Important?,” described in the following pages; but stands alone as a lesson that highlights the geography theme, location. The purpose of the lesson is to get students involved in the community by exploring the community’s cultural history while at the same time highlighting a specific location within the community as integral to its culture. Using geography and research skills, students will utilize the Smithsonian’s Cultural Reporter to produce a final project that reflects geography and its role in the community’s heritage. This is an inquiry lesson, and is ideally administered as an introduction to the theme “location” within a geography course. Some background on cultural geography is helpful.

Time Needed

To successfully complete this activity, and for it to be profitable, the quality and depth of the student projects must be significant. This lesson is designed to be completed over a large period of time. It is recommended that the lesson be administered in small portions of the available time each day throughout a quarter or semester of the school year. There exists a wide range of time with which various students could successfully complete this project - only the teacher can determine what is appropriate for the abilities of their students. Remember that much of the work will be done outside of class.

Materials

- * Absolutely required: Falk, Lisa (Smithsonian Institution), Cultural Reporter. Watertown, MA: Tom Snyder Productions, 1995
- * Handouts: How to Do an Oral History, Introduction
- * Video and audio equipment
- * Reference materials

Objectives

- * Students will relate the connection between cultural history and geographic themes.
- * Students will learn the process and benefits of an interactive research project.
- * Students will understand the complex web of cultural influences in their own community and explain the influence of geographic locations on that culture.

Procedures

1. Divide class into groups of three. Students in these groups read introductory material (Introduction, Oral history, and preview Cultural Reporter). Teams discuss possible topics and locations. Teacher sets due date for research and project proposals. (See Proposal Sheet)
2. Students determine selected areas of Cultural Reporter that will be a resource to them. Using these resources, begin assembling projects. Students must include a written abstract and map with their projects. The map can be projected on video if video is used and is appropriate.

Note: Teacher should set a detailed schedule outlining where students should be on the project continuum by certain dates. Throughout the project, teachers must follow students work progress carefully. Students will be tempted to lose sight of their overall goal. Close monitoring and assistance will alleviate this problem.

3. Closure of project. By the due date, students should be prepared to present their projects to the class and then display their work publicly (pre-arranged). It is extremely important to have a plan to display students' work, ideally in the greater community.

Extending the Lesson

Students

- * display work in a local museum.
- * present work to a middle or elementary classroom or school.
- * invite news media to attend a presentation.

Student Handout

Introducing the Geographic Theme Location

Lesson I - Introduction

The purpose of this lesson is to get you involved in the community by exploring the community's cultural history while at the same time highlighting a specific location within the community as integral to its culture. Using geography and research skills, you will utilize the Smithsonian's Cultural Reporter to produce a final project that reflects geography and its role in the community's heritage.

What is Cultural Reporter?

Cultural Reporter, developed by Lisa Falk of the Smithsonian Institution, is a tool kit for high school students. The tool kit is designed to help students gain a hands-on understanding of what culture is. It focuses on students examining their own communities. Cultural Reporter is an excellent tool for students to document their own communities' culture, history, and geography through various forms of media: oral history, videos, etc. The focus of the project is to take the same skills necessary for quality written research projects and put them to use in some thing creative and unique. The resource books, both teacher and student, are designed in such a way as to provide a framework for research and presentations, with a focus on the students' own community. However, the books are broad enough in scope to allow teachers and students to interject their own topics and themes. We will be using Cultural Reporter to document aspects of our own community with a theme and emphasis on the importance of location.

How will the theme of location manifest itself throughout the project using Cultural Reporter?

As the "Cultural Reporter," your task is to find a specific location within the community (e.g. town square, factory, mine, etc.) that played (plays) a significant role in the culture of the community. Answer the question "How did (does) this location impact the local society?" Your task is twofold. One, when creating your project, give a sense of the community. Two, explain how the location you chose is integral to the community.

Special Note: Do not fall into the trap of ignoring the connection between the location and the culture. The location must have an emphasis.

How will the project be graded? See Grading the Research Project - General Criteria.

Lesson II: The Pueblo Indians of Taos:

What Makes Blue Lake so Important?

Lesson Overview

The purpose of this lesson is to highlight the importance of location, especially as it relates to religious sites. Blue Lake, the most sacred religious site of the Taos Indians is used as an example. This is an inquiry lesson; however, students will need a little guidance as they proceed. This lesson is designed to be used in a high

school geography course, although it would fit nicely in history, and contemporary issues classes as well. It is also designed to fit a companion lesson, "Cultural Identity: What Places in Our Community Carry Importance?," described in the preceding pages; but stands alone as a lesson that highlights the geography theme, location.

Rationale

This lesson challenges students to experience the dynamic aspect of geography, not just knowing where places are located, but being able to explain why things are the way they are, and how they got to be this way. Too often in our modern-day culture we tend to forget the importance of marginalized groups of people, those who are not full participants in the greater society. Moreover we often times do not even consider the things that are important to these cultures. Because of our ignorance we sometimes infringe upon their way of life. This is particularly true when it comes to geographic locations and Native American culture. This lesson highlights this dynamic and attempts to increase our understanding in this area.

Time Needed

Three to five class periods

Materials

- * Keegan, Marcia, The Taos Indians and their Sacred Blue Lake, NY: Julian Messner (Division of Simon and Schuster Inc.), 1972
- * Handouts
- * Maps of New Mexico

Objectives

- * Students will gain a greater understanding of the Taos Indian culture.
- * Students will learn how specific geographic locations are given value, and how that value influences surrounding locations.
- * Students will understand how different cultures place different values on similar plots of land, and how compromise and conflict occur when those values conflict.

Procedures

1. Provide anticipatory set. This is something that sets the tone of the lesson, and gets the students thinking about the topic. A short clip from "Surviving Columbus: The Story of the Pueblo People." PBS Home Video, 1992, would work nicely.
2. Have students read student handout I and address the questions at the bottom of the page. Have them hypothesize answers first before giving them information.

3. Read, Keegan, Marcia. The Taos Indians and their Sacred Blue Lake, or share excerpts as a class. Have students revisit the questions from the first handout. Compare second responses to the initial.

Note: If students missed it, Blue Lake is the Taos Indians' most sacred site.

4. Distribute Hhandout II, and have students complete project described in the handout.
5. When all the activities are complete, explain that Taos Blue Lake was returned by President Nixon in 1971.

Follow-up Activities

- * Have students research location issues related to Native American Indians in their own community.
- * Students write and submit a commentary on the importance of respecting religious locations to a local newspaper.
- * See the conclusion of "Surviving Columbus: The Story of the Pueblo People." PBS Home Video, 1992.
- * Use the activity as a springboard for in-depth class discussion.

Terms

location, Blue Lake, pueblo, executive order

Student Handout I

Lesson II: Taos Indians at Blue Lake: A Summary

High in the Sangra de Cristo mountains in northern New Mexico live a Pueblo tribe called the Taos Indians. Long before the New World was "discovered," these Indians settled this region, which abounded with all things needed for physical survival, including a spiritual motivation for the people. They called their home Blue Lake. New Mexico was claimed for Spain in 1551, and by 1610, northern New Mexico had an established northerly Spanish outpost. Spanish explorers and settlers moved into the region. In 1821, Mexico gained its independence from Spain, taking with it control of the Sangra de Cristo mountains. The United States in turn assumed ownership of the region in 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. All three successive governments, Spain, Mexico, and the United States recognized that Blue Lake "belonged" to the Taos Indians. In 1906, however, the United States government appropriated the Blue Lake sacred area for a national forest.

The United States was in a period of progressivism where new and innovative ideas were explored and implemented. It was common to set aside land for national parks, where wildlife, ecology, and the beauty of the area were preserved. In establishing the park at Blue Lake, however, the United States government inadvertently opened a huge door into the lives and culture of the Taos Indians, who keep many of their religious and cultural practices a secret because of previous intrusions since the 1600s.

In what ways did this national park affect the Indians?

- * Make a list of specific things that directly affected them.
- * Make a list of specific things that may have indirectly affected them.
- * Put a heading on your notes, "Taos Indians"

Student Handout II

Lesson II: Can Be Done About Blue Lake?

Read the attached executive order (a mandate from the governor of a state or the president of the United States) issued by President Clinton.

Assume for the moment that executive orders are subject to congressional approval, and that you are a congressman from your state. Would you approve or disapprove the executive order as it relates to the Taos Indians? On your note sheet entitled "Taos Indians," provide an explanation. Using that same sheet, create an annotated map that depicts the importance of the location, Blue Lake, to the Taos Indians. In the margins of the map make a list of other locations around the world that hold religious importance.

Grading Criteria; Taos Indians (Rubric)

The evaluator should be looking for the following in grading the map activity :

Staying on task:

- _____ Did the student (group of students) address the topic?
- _____ Did the student stay on the topic throughout the task?

Communication:

- _____ Is the project neatly arranged and legible?
- _____ Was the student clear in his or her explanation?

Insight:

- _____ How far did the student stretch intellectually in the task?
- _____ Did the student offer any unique or challenging statements concerning the importance of location?
- _____ Did the student demonstrate an understanding of how religion affects the life of the Taos Indians?

Student Handout II, Executive Order Attachment

Executive Order Providing for Native American Religious Freedom and Sacred Lands Protection In 1894 and 1904

The Regulations of the Indian Office banned Indian religious and ceremonial practices, including dancing and roaming off the reservations onto the public domain, where most religious sites were located. Federal and federally-assisted development desecrated, destroyed or damaged many of these sites. Indian Commissioners' Circulars continued these bans until the 1930's. These prohibitions, and other federal actions that inadvertently impeded Native Americans' free exercise of religion, placed procedural barriers in the way of protecting these sites.

Numerous federal laws from the 1930's onward were intended, in whole or in part, to rectify this situation. Those laws included, for example, the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the National Museum of the American Indian Act of 1989, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 and the Indian Self-Determination Act Amendments of 1994. Various other laws regarding historic preservation, environmental protection and development offer some opportunity for protecting these sites, but regulations implementing those acts have not taken full advantage of the authority provided by those statutes. Over the past 25 years, each branch of government has taken site-specific actions to remove barriers that stand in the way of protecting these sacred sites and Native American religious freedom. Examples of these actions include: Executive Order conveyance in 1972 of the eastern slope of the Mount Adams Wild Area to the Yakama Nation; Acts of 1970 and 1984 conveying Taos blue Lane and Zuni Heaven to the Pueblos of Taos and Zuni; Supreme Court ruling of 1979 protecting access to and use of ceremonial fishing sites by Indians in the Pacific Northwest, and other federal court decisions of the 1980's providing for ceremonial hunting and fishing sites of Indians in Michigan and Wisconsin; and Interior Secretarial conveyance in 1979 of a portion of Bear Butte to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

In 1989, the Supreme Court ruled that the First Amendment and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act did not authorize the courts to protect sacred sites and suggested that Congress create a statutory cause of action. At the same time, the Court stated, "[n]othing in our opinion should be read to encourage governmental insensitivity to the religious needs of any citizen. The Government's rights to the use of its own land, for example, need not and should not discourage it from accommodating religious practices like those engaged in by the Indian respondents." The Court also noted that such accommodations as avoiding disturbance of and adverse audible and visual impact on religious sites "accords with the 'policy of the United States to protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian...including; but not limited to access to the sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites,' [as stated in the] American Indian Religious Freedom Act." *Lyng v. Northwest Indian Cemetery Protective Association*, 485 U.S. 439, 454-455 {1988}.

This Executive Order intends to accommodate Native American religious practices and to protect sacred sites to the fullest extent possible under existing law, and to provide a mechanism for site-specific protections through a process of negotiated agreements between the appropriate tribal and federal entities. Together with

these initiatives, the White House and the Justice Department will continue to work with Congress to achieve additional substantive protections for those few remaining sacred sites and to enact a cause of action for judicial review de novo of federal and federally-assisted activity proposals and decisions that may have an adverse impact on American Indian or Alaska Native sacred sites.

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the United States of America and as President of the United States, in furtherance of federal treaties, statutes and policy proclaimed in the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, 42 U.S.C. 1996, in order to assure that federal agency policies, practices and procedures accommodate Native American religious freedom and protection of sacred sites, it is hereby ordered:

- (a) Upon the request of an appropriate tribal entity or traditional religious leaders, negotiate with that entity or leader to enter into a Sacred Lands Protection Agreement for the purpose of protecting religious and ceremonial sites and "areas of sensitivity" designated by a tribal or traditional religious leader that contain within them a specific religious or ceremonial site or sites in a manner consistent with traditional tribal laws and customs.
- (b) Manage federal lands in a manner that accommodates Native American religious practices and protects their sacred sites to the fullest extent allowable under existing federal statutes. This accommodation shall be reflected in agency management, enforcement and permitting regulations policies and procedures with regard to access to and use of federal land areas, gathering and use of natural substances endowed with sacred significance's by Native American traditional religions, provisions for group and individual American Indian or Alaska Native activities on federal lands and any other appropriate subject matter.
- (c) Revise existing regulations, policies and practices to provide for specific consideration of any Native American religious concerns prior to making any decision regarding the use of federal lands or any federal or federally-assisted development.
- (d) Report to the Attorney General any legal barriers it encounters to the accommodation of Native American religious practices and to the protection of sacred sites and make appropriate recommendations for any needed changes in the law.
- (e) Preserve and protect federal areas involving Native American religious sites and facilitate access to those sites for Native American religious purposes in a manner similar to other federal reservations and protections.
- (f) Provide exemptions for Native American religious purposes from limitations on the gathering of plants or animals found on federal lands to the greatest extent possible under existing law and in a manner similar to the exemptions provided for scientific purposes.
- (g) Reserve federal jurisdiction over land and resource use for traditional Native American religious practices whenever any agency cedes jurisdiction of any area for any purpose to any State.
- (h) Notify the appropriate tribal entities and traditional religious leaders of any proposed activity on federal land that may affect a Native American sacred site or affect access to that site and consult with them concerning possible alternatives prior to making any final decision.

SECTION 2.that nothing herein precludes any federal agency from conveying a religious site, or jurisdiction or management of a site, to the appropriate tribal entity.

THE WHITE HOUSE

William Jefferson Clinton, 1995

Student Handout

Lesson 1: Research Proposal

Name _____

Topic

This project is not a book report where one simply transposes data. Your objective is to gather information about a subject and analyze its significance, determine cause and effect relationships, and draw conclusions that provoke further inquiry. Choose a topic that is suitable to this purpose. The topic should be something that can be researched and is of interest, and emphasizes the community.

Location

What will be the focus site? This can be a house, store, park, open space, etc. It must however, carry importance to the community.

Form of Media

Will this project be a video, oral history, etc.? Choose your media carefully. Certain topics lend themselves to certain types of media more readily.

Issue Question

This is the heart of your research paper. Apply the five Ws and an H (who, why, where, what, when, how) to your topic and develop a series of questions. After evaluating your questions pose one profound question concerning your topic. Answering this question will be your task for the Cultural Reporter project. Answering the question is your thesis.

Presentation

After working so diligently on your project - show it off! This is your opportunity to display your work in the community. Develop a plan on how and where this will be done.

Possible Subheadings (themes)

List three to seven categories you might address when completing your project. These categories can be determined by asking "What things do I need to address to effectively answer my issue question?"

Student Handout

Lesson 1: Grading the Research Assignment

General Criteria

General Categories:

Research Methodology

"A" quality work will include:

Proposal - Issue question clearly defined

- * Scholarly topic conducive to research
- * Evidence of working through the proposal process

Bibliography

No errors in using the proper format

- * Evidence of a diligent effort in obtaining quality information

Media

Presentation of main ideas

- * Effective utilization of equipment and techniques

Map Usage

"A" quality work will include:

- * A definite and obvious theme within the map
- * Mastery of clear organization of map (layout)
- * Excellent appearance of map
- * A strong and deliberate relationship between the text and map

Effectiveness

"A" quality work will include:

- * A strong manifestation of geographic or historical themes and processes
- * Strong and evident conclusions, generalizations, and/or findings
- * A thorough understanding of main ideas and their significance with specific support
- * Consistency in precision and originality of thought

Abstract

"A" quality work will include:

- * Thorough understanding and discussion of main ideas with specific support
- * Mastery of clear organization

Bibliography

American Indian Publishers, Inc. Biographical Dictionary of Indians of the Americas. 1991.

Offers a concise, but informative biography of hundreds of notable Indians in North and South America.

Columbus, Christopher. "Discovery of The New World." Annals of America. V.1, 1968.

Reveals Columbus' own account of his first voyage from Europe. It is detailed and reveals that Columbus was good at stretching the truth.

Falk, Lisa (Smithsonian Institution). Cultural Reporter. Watertown, MA: Tom Snyder Productions, 1995.

Two chapters are of special interest. "Interviewing" offers practical and useful ideas on how to develop appropriate questions when creating an oral history. "Responsible Research" gives invaluable information and techniques on respectful and ethical questioning of people from other cultures.

Geography Education Standards Project. Geography for Life: National Geography Standards - 1994. National Geographic Research and Exploration, 1994.

Details the national geography standards, while offering suggestions on how to implement quality geography in the classroom. Is an excellent guide to the geography and history teacher.

Hirsch, E.D., Jr. The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1988.

Comprehensive guide to cultural heritage. Offers insight into indigenous issues relating to modernization.

Keegan, Marcia. The Taos Indians and their Sacred Blue Lake. NY: Julian Messner (Division of Simon and Schuster Inc.), 1972.

The book recounts the life of the Taos Pueblo Indians. For the most part, the Taos Indians have kept their culture and ceremonial practices a secret. This book delves into the simpler ways of life of the Taos Indians. However, it has an excellent discussion on their battle to regain control their most sacred land, Blue Lake. It is very easy reading, and is appropriate for classroom use.

McCutchan, Gordon. The Taos Indians and the Battle for Blue Lake. Red Crane Books, 1991.

This book has greater detail on the life of the Taos Pueblo people. It also goes into greater detail of the battle to regain Blue Lake. This book is much more intimate and informative than that of Marcia Keegan's.

Suina, Joseph H. "Pueblo Secrecy: Result of Intrusions." New Mexico Magazine. Jan. 1992, vol. 70, no. 1.

Good article exploring the reasons for Pueblo secrecy of traditional culture. It highlights the issue of cultural assimilation vrs. cultural preservation.

"Surviving Columbus: The Story of the Pueblo People." PBS Home Video, 1992.

Excellent video that discusses the issues relating to colonization of Central America and the American Southwest. Special attention is given to colonization effects on the Pueblo people in northern New Mexico.

UCLA, Oral History Program. "Planning an Oral History Project." University of California, Los Angeles, 1988.

Paper gives a brief but very informative description of oral histories. It gives basic elements, criteria, and suggested techniques.