

## Lesson Plan – “Indigenous Peoples’ Day”

### LESSON PLAN

History of Indigenous Peoples’ Day

Social Studies, Grades 6-8

Duration: 1-2 hours

#### SUMMARY:

This lesson plan supports chapter 10 in [\*An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States for Young People\*](#) by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, adapted by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese. It examines the power of Indigenous grassroots political and social activism to promote change in legislation that honors the contributions and continued existence of Indigenous peoples.

#### LEARNING TARGETS:

- Students will analyze how recurring patterns of colonialism can inform current events and political movements.
- Students will apply knowledge of political and social systems to participate actively as informed citizens in a democracy.

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

How can grassroots activism impact legislation to raise awareness and help address contemporary and historical injustices?

#### STANDARDS:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1  
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2  
Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3  
Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2  
Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

#### VOCABULARY:

- abolish
- grassroots activism
- indigenous
- proclamation

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### Prior Knowledge:

- Students will gain the most from this lesson if they are familiar with a social justice action framework, e.g. Teaching Tolerance (available at <https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/social-justice-standards-unpacking-action>)
- Students should know the basic legislative structure of their city and state.

### Resources and Materials:

- Projector/computer
- Printed copies of articles
- Internet
- Whiteboard
- Markers
- Copy of a city/state Indigenous Peoples’ Day Proclamation (online search Indigenous+Peoples+Day+proclamation+PDF)
- Blank US map – one copy per student

### Learning Plan:

#### Introduction – History of Indigenous Peoples’ Day (10 minutes)

1. Building background knowledge:
  - a. Project the following timeline from the CNN Library, “Columbus Day-Indigenous Peoples Day Fast Facts” (available at <https://www.cnn.com/2013/06/14/us/columbus-day-fast-facts/index.html>), and invite students to review the facts and dates.
  - b. Project the video “Instead of Columbus Day, Some Celebrate Indigenous People's Day,” showing the Seattle City Council on Indigenous Peoples’ Day (available at <https://www.cnn.com/2015/10/09/living/columbus-day-feat/index.html>).
  - c. Invite students to comment.
2. Ask students to brainstorm how lawmakers might become aware of issues that they must make decisions about.

#### Learning Activities – Connecting Action with Indigenous Peoples’ Day (30 minutes)

1. Ask students to share ideas about how citizens make their lawmakers aware of issues to consider.
  - a. Help focus on common methods of social action, e.g., writing, visiting, calling. Then ask them to think about other ways citizens can continue to bring issues to the attention of lawmakers when they don’t feel heard, e.g., petitions, protests, marches, and other nonviolent campaigns.
  - b. Compare to brainstorm list.
2. Write the following question: “How did the Seattle City Council shown in the video learn about Indigenous Peoples’ Day?”
  - a. Use THINK-PAIR-SHARE.
  - b. After 3-5 minutes, ask pairs to share with the class.
  - c. Help students focus on the methods of social action mentioned earlier.

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3. Invite students to read “The History of Indigenous Peoples’ Day” about Berkeley, California (available at <http://ipdpowwow.org/IPD%20History.html>), and answer these text-dependent questions:
  - a. Describe the series of major events that sparked the idea of Indigenous Peoples’ Day.
  - b. How was the Resistance 500 Task Force formed and what was its purpose?
  - c. In what ways did the “Resistance 500” use the principles of social action, identified in the methods of social action list from Step 1 above, to influence legislation in California and how did their ideas spread?
4. Provide a city or state proclamation of Indigenous Peoples’ Day for students.
  - a. Invite students to comment on the language used.
  - b. Ask students to identify what is being recognized and for what purpose.
  - c. Ask students to share their thoughts on how the proclamation might have been influenced by activists and social justice campaigns.
  - d. EXTENSION: Research further to find out which organizations helped promote the legislation.

### Lesson Summary/Formative Assessment (10 minutes)

1. Invite students to address the essential question based on Berkeley, Seattle, and the location where the proclamation was used:
  - a. What did grassroots activism look like in these examples?
  - b. In what ways did the activism help to raise awareness?
  - c. Describe the contemporary and historical injustices that are highlighted in recognition of Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

### Assessment (15 minutes)

Cite evidence from the text to address the following questions:

1. Individually or with a partner, identify which major cities and states celebrate Indigenous Peoples’ Day on a blank US map. Comment on trends you see.
2. Explain the controversy over recognizing Indigenous Peoples’ Day.
3. Describe the processes by which governments learn about Indigenous Peoples’ Day and decide to change from Columbus Day.
4. Describe how your school, city/town, and state commemorate the second Monday of October – Columbus Day, Indigenous Peoples Day, or something else – and provide details about the activities that take place on that day. Provide a news clipping, photograph, or other item that depicts the types of observances held in your community to share with the class.

### FOR FURTHER STUDY & ACTION

Lesson extensions can be made following the Zinn Education Project “Abolish Columbus Day” social action guide (available at <https://www.zinnedproject.org/campaigns/abolish-columbus-day>).