

Title

The Oceti Sakowin: According to Who?

Grade Level

Native American Connections, 8th Grade

Theme

Historical Accuracy and Perspective

Duration

1-2 weeks

Goal

Students will understand the Lewis and Clark party accounts and how they have been misrepresented while critically analyzing more accurate information about these various events and interactions.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

1. Identify which Oceti Sakowin groups had interaction with the Lewis and Clark party.
2. Explain what transpired between the Nakotas and the expedition party.
3. Explain what transpired between the Sicangus (Lakota) and the expedition party.
4. Compare and contrast two different pieces of literature.

South Dakota Standards

Reading R.8.5 Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.

Writing W.8.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

W.8.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Cultural Concept

Respect, generosity, and hospitality toward guests are essential to the culture of the Oceti Sakowin.

Cultural Background

Lewis and Clark, along with a party of other men, traveled across the western part of what is today the United States. The Lewis and Clark party kept notes on their journey and the interactions they had with various Native groups. Two of these groups in particular were the Nakotas and the Sicangu, an *Oyate* (people) of the Lakotas. While their perspective offers insight into the time and place, it is just that – a perspective, from one side. There were two sides to the interactions between the Oceti Sakowin and the Lewis and Clark party, but we are only offered one. When we look at these accounts we can gain some information about how the Oceti Sakowin kindly treated the guests. This supports the idea that hospitality and generosity are central to the Oceti Sakowin.

Even with the information we have, historians have chosen to, in many cases, omit certain words, phrases, or entire sentences as well as make inferences on things that they simply assume to be true. In doing this, they have portrayed a very negative view of the Lakotas, when the

primary documents of the men's accounts suggests otherwise. There is no evidence proving that the Lakota would have been hostile toward the Lewis and Clark party, but possibly just the opposite.

Taking some time to compare/contrast the journals of Clark, Ordway, Gass, and Whitehouse would be very beneficial to understanding the skewed perspective so many historians have presented.

Student Activities

1. As a class, students will discuss what they know or have heard about Lewis and Clark's journey.
2. At the end of class throughout the week, students will journal about the class period, each recording their perspective on class that day. (or one might choose one event they all witness and have them report on that situation)
3. Students will read and take notes on the accounts of the Nakota council and the Titonwan's interactions with Lewis and Clark's party.
4. In small groups, students will discuss the readings, pointing out the feelings of each party toward the other, how their interaction went, and predicting what some of the writing might mean or imply. Bring these ideas to the class as a whole.
5. Teacher will introduce the idea that historians write through one lens, and we will refer to our journals for this portion. Hopefully students will have different accounts of the days, and can relate this to the different journal entries by the men, as well as the accounts we have today.
6. Students will then search the internet for a site that tells the story of Lewis and Clark. They will read through the information, and compare/contrast the primary journal entries with that of the websites.
7. As a class, discuss what the students found, and what this means. Students will then write a short essay about the role of a historian and how important it is to do quality, accurate work when presenting history as well as what misrepresentations have happened.

Resources

Primary/Secondary Resources, Computers

Assessment

Self-assessment, checks for understanding, student notes, student compare/contrast research, and short essay

References

Burns, Ken. (1997). *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery*. U.S.: Turner Home Entertainment, Inc.

University of Nebraska Press / University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries-Electronic Text Center.

(2005). August 27-September 1, 1804. In *The Journal of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*.

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Additional Information

This lesson plan can be adjusted to any grade level.