

Overview

This lesson springs from a series of American Indian symposiums held in 2005 that discussed diplomatic relations between the U.S. government and American Indians from 1804 to 2005. Noted American Indian historian Robert Miller spoke about the history of government policy toward American Indians, specifically assimilation versus nation status. Using transcripts from Miller's presentations and documents he mentioned, students will determine which would have been better for the American Indians, assimilation or nation status, and defend their decision. This lesson will take two to three class periods. Time is contingent upon how much of the final writing project is done in the classroom.

Standards

History:

Benchmark 5, Indicator 2: The student develops historical questions on a specific topic in Kansas history and analyzes the evidence in primary source documents to speculate on the answers.

Common Core Reading:

RH 11-12.2: The students will determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

Objectives

Content:

- The student will be able to identify two major ways the U.S. government addressed the issues of American Indian land rights and civil rights over the last 200 years.

Skills:

- The student will be able to analyze primary source documents using document-based questions.
- The student will be able to develop didactic skills to support or defend a contemporary issue.

Essential Questions

- Why did government policy toward American Indians change over the years?
- What happens to a culture when its people are not allowed to practice their traditions?
- What is the role of the federal government to its citizens?

Activities

This activity uses the following *Read Kansas!* cards:

- **Document 1: Transcript of the Northwest Land Ordinance 1787 and Document 2: Indian Citizenship Act of 1924**
- **Document 3: United States Constitution: Article I, Section 8**
- **Document 4: An Act to Regulate Trade and Intercourse with the Indian Tribes of 1790**
- **Document 5: Transcript of Robert Miller’s speech at the 2005 American Indian Symposium in Omaha, Nebraska**
- **Photograph 1: Packs His Drum et al, Fort Laramie, Wyoming Territory 1867. Photograph by Alexander Gardner and Photograph 2: US Army Peace Commissioners in Council with Arapahoes and Cheyenne, 1867. Photograph by Alexander Gardner**
- **Photograph 3: Chiefs Owen Heavy Breast and Mountain Chief (Blackfeet) et al, Fort Union, 18 July 1925 and Photograph 4: Peter Richard et al, Fort Laramie, Wyoming Territory 1867. Photograph by Alexander Gardner**
- **Photograph 5: Sioux Delegation on Visit to President Johnson at White House, Feb 1867 and Photograph 6: Commissioner L. V. Bogy in Council with Sacs & Fox-Reading Treaty; Keokuk and Charles E. Mix Present.**

Day 1

1. Introduce the topic of the lesson. Students will be exploring the effect of government policy on American Indian land rights and civil rights from 1787 to 2005. Students should be familiar with the terms in the definitions provided in the For the Teacher section. Have students brainstorm five questions about what they want to know about the topic before they begin reading the documents. Keep the questions posted for discussion on Day 3.
2. Working in pairs have students read **Documents 1 – 5** and answer the questions on the **Document Based Questions** worksheets. Students should read the question before reading the document. Each student is responsible for completing a worksheet.
3. Students will then select three of the six photographs and complete a **Document Based Questions for Photographs** worksheet for each of the three photographs.

Day 2:

1. Have students continue reading and analyzing documents and photographs.

Day 3:

1. Review the questions raised on Day 1. Were the documents and photographs able to provide answers to these questions? Lead a discussion.
2. Individually students will answer the following question in a five-paragraph essay.
Explain how the United States government failed the American Indians through assimilation or nation status or both.
3. Teachers will grade the essay using the Six Trait Writing Model provided by the Kansas Department of Education.

Assessment

- Evaluate the student's ability to answer the question on how the government failed American Indians using the Six Trait Writing Model.

For the Teacher

Definitions:

Assimilation: People of different backgrounds come to see themselves as part of a larger national society.

Intercourse: Communication or dealings between or among people, countries.

Non-citizen Indians: Indians were uniformly granted U.S. citizenship in 1924. Before that time they were only citizens of their tribal nations.

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Resources for this lesson are from:

- Kansas Historical Society collections

Document-Based Questions Worksheet Answer Key

Document 1: Northwest Land Ordinance 1787

Question: More than 390 treaties were signed and negotiated between the United States and the various Indian nations over the past 400 years. What safeguards were provided by the Northwest Ordinance to protect American Indians rights to their lands?

The land and property shall never be taken from them without their consent. The Indians will never be invaded or disturbed unless Congress justifies the action.

Document 2: Indian Citizenship Act of 1924

How does this document fit with American Indian assimilation?

It makes all American Indians citizens of the United States, but allows them to still remain members of their respective tribes. It is another step in making American Indians part of mainstream American society.

Document 3: U.S. Constitution; Article I, Section 8

Question: Congress is given the power to regulate trade in Article I, Section 8, with foreign nations, states, and American Indian tribes. Speculate on what kind of trade would be conducted with each of these political entities?

Foreign nations: ***For example, clothing, manufactured goods***

States: ***For example, interstate trade of grain, livestock, lumber***

Indian tribes: ***For example, metal tools, wool blankets, beaver pelts***

Document 4: An Act to Regulate Trade . . . 1790

Question A: Speculate on conflicts between the Indians and settlers that caused Congress to need to write this law one year after the Constitution was ratified.

Congress needed to write this law because unlicensed traders were selling goods to the Indians. They were probably selling goods that the government did not want the Indians to have like guns and alcohol. Indians were selling their lands that were given to them through treaties. This would cause the tribe to suffer from white encroachment on Indian land. Also, crimes being committed on Indian land may not have been going to trial. This law required that crimes committed on Indian land were to be tried in the same way as crimes committed on non-Indian land.

Question B: Indians are well protected by this legislation. Give an example of a political, economic, and social protection for Indians listed in this document.

Document 5: 2005 Robert Miller Native American Symposium Transcript

Robert Miller states that the Lewis and Clark expedition was a diplomatic, political, and economic expedition. Find examples of each in this transcript.

Diplomatic: ***Jefferson told Meriwether Lewis to be as friendly and as conciliatory toward all tribes as possible so that the U.S. government can develop commercial agreements with them and expand American interests in their land.***

Political: ***Meriwether Lewis was to treat each tribe as a sovereign governmental entity for the purpose of negotiation and treaty making.***

Economic: ***Opening an overland route to the Pacific Ocean was crucial for American business interests, specifically regarding the fur trade. For that right, the government would provide merchandise the Indians desired such as metal pots, sewing needles, etc.***

Name _____

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Document 2: Indian Citizenship Act of 1924

How does this document fit with American Indian assimilation?

Document 3: U.S. Constitution; Article I, Section 8

Question: Congress is given the power to regulate trade in Article I, Section 8, with foreign nations, states, and American Indian tribes. Speculate on what kind of trade would be conducted with each of these political entities.

Foreign nations _____

States _____

Indian tribes _____

Document 4: An Act to Regulate Trade...1790

Question A: Speculate on conflicts between the Indians and settlers that caused Congress to need to write this law one year after the Constitution was ratified.

Question B: Indians are well protected by this legislation. Give an example of a political, economic, and social protection for Indians listed in this document. _____

Document 5: 2005 Robert Miller Native American Symposium Transcript

Robert Miller states that the Lewis and Clark expedition was a diplomatic, political, and economic expedition. Find examples of each in this transcript.

Diplomatic: _____

Political: _____

Economic: _____

Name _____

Document-Based Questions for Photographs Worksheet

Title: _____

Date: _____

Creator: _____

What can you infer from this image about American Indian and U.S. government relations?

List two questions left unanswered about American Indian and U.S. government relations from this image.

1. _____

2. _____
