

9th grade English
Canyon Park Junior High
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Guiding question...How did the Europeans and new government view the Native Americans during expansion. How did this perspective affect the natives of this land.

Artifacts included in this study: A primary source speech made by a military official at the time, three pieces of the Picturing America collection and three early photographs of Native American children will be used to gather a sense of the answer to this guiding question.

The students will use art to start a conversation about the Native American experience. Activities will include: 1) conversations assessing prior knowledge, 2) viewing the art and describing, interpreting and evaluating what they see 3) reading a primary source document that expands on one avenue of American government response during colonization 4) participating in a Socratic seminar using higher level thinking skills connecting history, images and text, while preparing to read a new selection of literature.

The goal of the two day lesson is to prepare for the reading of a contemporary piece of literature written by a Native American; The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian by Sherman Alexie. Their openness to the struggle of the Native American historically and today enhances their understanding of the text.

In the pre-reading activity for this novel, students are invited to share what they already know about Native American history in America. To prepare for the ideas and struggles for our protagonist, Junior in "True Diary", it helps for them to think about the way in which Native Americans have been treated by American culture and how the lives of the children might have been affected. Prejudices and restrictions experienced by the Native Americans are explored by students sharing what they know of reservation life, the missionary work of Christians, the battles of Wounded Knee, and other important elements of America's colonization of this continent. The Northwest is rich with Native American people, and the students have had many years of exploring the cultures in and around this area.

The three pieces of Art used in this lesson are:

1) N. C. Wyeth cover illustration for *The Last of the Mohicans* 1919
"Wyeth's romanticized cover illustration for James Fenimore Cooper's novel did much to create an enduring image of the American Indian as a "noble savage" contributed to the country's fascination with its Native American heritage." <http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/>

2) George Catlin (1792-1872)

Painting the Portrait of Mah-to-toh-pa-Mantan 1861-69

"Catlin's manuscript and some 500 paintings provide testimony not only to the country's fascination with American Indians, but also to the artist's ambition to document disappearing frontier cultures.... He set out on a 2,000-mile journey along the Missouri river (in what is now North Dakota) to create the most thorough visual record of the indigenous cultures of the frontier. "

<http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/>

3) Black Hawk 1832-1890

Sans Arc Lakota Ledger Book 1880-81

"This piece becomes an invaluable visual testimony to the nation's Native American heritage. In doing so he captured a way of life fast disappearing as settlers moved west in increasing numbers and tribes were moved to reservations. "

<http://picturingamerica.neh.gov/>

These pieces give a glimpse of what the Native American was in costume and environment. The reading done after the art viewing will expose some of the "thinking" of the nation and its leaders at the time.

When the discussion is finished, the art is displayed and the students are invited to visually study the images. Open discussion is then encouraged using art critique steps: observing, describing, interpreting and evaluating the artwork. Clothing, demeanor, environment, along with maybe discussing how today's Native Americans dress and what kind of environment in which they reside today. Students share their perceptions and analysis of what they are seeing.

A guided conversation is then started asking for descriptions and definitions of the following words: Dictionaries may be necessary to keep this conversation going.

Savage , civilization, segregation, assimilate, colonizing, citizenship, "citizenizing" (Pratt's words) and "Inalienable right"

Introduce the Pratt document....

Overnight, the students are to read the Pratt piece, looking for assumptions being made by the speaker and the government. The worksheet is used for students to collect their observations. Students have been trained in "close-reading" skills that involve annotating the selection: asking questions, prioritizing main points, finding definitions for new words, making connections to self, other texts and to the world.

Day Two....Socratic Seminar format for a student led discussion on the assumptions made in the Pratt article. This again is something we do throughout the year, and gets more and more rich as the year progresses. The Socratic method of questioning and building analysis skills is a central part of our humanities department.

Assessment includes participation, making comments that refer to the text (or the art)...dialoguing not debating. I am always prepared with extra prompts in case the discussion stalls. ie: Who decides what is civilized and who is not? How does Pratt generalize that Native Americans are savages? What are consequences of a population being categorized or disenfranchised?

The less involved the teacher, the better. The students know that they are responsible for the success of the seminar.