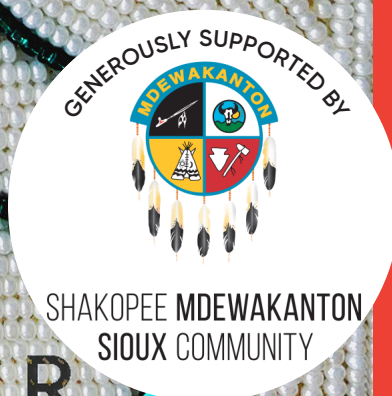


EVERYTHING
YOU WANTED
TO KNOW
ABOUT INDIANS
BUT WERE
AFRAID TO ASK

ANTON TREUER

YOUNG READERS EDITION



Using Appropriate American Indian Terminology

In this lesson plan, students will learn about using appropriate terminology when speaking to and about American Indians. Through interactive activities and discussions, students will explore the historical and cultural significance of terms such as “Native American,” “American Indian,” “Indigenous Peoples,” “Indian,” “First Nations,” “Aboriginal,” “Dakota,” “Ojibwe,” “Anishinaabe,” “Chippewa,” “Ho-Chunk,” “Winnebago,” “Oceti Sakowin,” “Tribe,” “reservation,” “Tribal nation,” and “powwow.” They will also learn about the diversity of American Indian cultures and how respectful language can promote positive relationships and understanding. By the end of the lesson, students will have a better understanding of how to use language respectfully and appropriately when communicating with and about American Indians.

RELEVANT TEXT

Treuer, A. (2024). *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask: Young Readers Edition*, pp. 11-26.

OBJECTIVES

- Students consider the impact of racist and dehumanizing terms, before exploring how and why some groups have sought to reclaim such terms (analyze)
- Students reflect on how racist and dehumanizing terms will be approached in the classroom (analyze)
- Recall the correct terms to use when referring to American Indians (remember)
- Comprehend the historical and cultural significance of terms like “Native American,” “American Indian,” “Indigenous Peoples,” “Indian,” “First Nations,” “Aboriginal,” “Dakota,” “Ojibwe,” “Anishinaabe,” “Chippewa,” “Ho-Chunk,” “Winnebago,” “Oceti Sakowin,” “Tribe,” “reservation,” “Tribal nation,” and “powwow” (understand)
- Apply learned terminologies in respectful communication with or about American Indians (apply)
- Analyze the implications of using inappropriate or dehumanizing language when speaking about or with American Indians (analyze)
- Evaluate the influence and impact of respectful terminology use in promoting positive relationships and understanding (evaluate)
- Compose a code of language conduct for speaking respectfully about and with American Indians (create)

ACCOMMODATIONS TO CONSIDER MEETING STUDENT NEEDS

Visual Aids, Graphic Organizer, Preview Vocabulary, Oral Directions, Repeat/Clarify Directions, Reader, Text to Speech, Note Taker, Large Print, Audiobooks, Memory Aids, Visual Cues, Oral Response, Typed Response, Non-verbal Response, Speech to Text, Increased Wait Time, Verbal Prompts, Manipulatives, Graph Paper, Write in Book, Scribe, and others appropriate for the learner(s).

RELEVANT STANDARDS

MN Tribal Nation Essential Understandings	MN State Standards Social Studies	MN State Standards ELA
1.2.1	9.3.17.1	9.1.6.1
1.2.2	9.3.17.2	9.3.1.1
1.2.3	9.3.17.3	10.1.6.1
1.2.4	9.3.17.4	10.3.1.1
1.2.5		11.1.6.1
1.2.		11.3.1.

ACTIVITY 1

Introduction—Exploring Conflicting Terms

READINESS LEVEL: Awareness

- A. Begin the lesson with a discussion on the variety of terminologies used to refer to American Indians. Ask students to think about the terms they may have heard before and discuss how each term makes them feel and how the term may make an Indigenous person feel. Explain the historical context and broad use of terms such as “Native American,” “American Indian,” “Indigenous Peoples,” “Indian,” “First Nations,” “Aboriginal,” “Dakota,” “Ojibwe,” “Anishinaabe,” “Chippewa,” “Ho-Chunk,” “Winnebago,” “Oceti Sakowin,” “Tribe,” “reservation,” “Tribal nation,” and “powwow.” This activity aims to get students thinking critically about the importance of language and terminologies.
- B. Initiate a discussion by asking students about the various terms they have heard to refer to American Indians. Note down all the terms mentioned by students on the board or in a shared document.
- C. Throughout this activity, encourage communication, respect for global citizenship, and cultural competence. Remind students that everyone has the right to dignity and respect, regardless of their race or ethnicity.
- D. Engage students in a discussion about how each term makes them feel. Ask them if they feel that any of these terms have negative connotations or are derogatory.
- E. Next, provide brief information about the historical context and broad use of terms like “Native American,” “American Indian,” “Indigenous Peoples,” “Indian,” “First Nations,” “Aboriginal,” “Dakota,” “Ojibwe,” “Anishinaabe,” “Chippewa,” “Ho-Chunk,” “Winnebago,” “Oceti Sakowin,” “Tribe,” “reservation,” “Tribal nation,” and “powwow.” Ask students to reflect on these terminologies and discuss their impressions and thoughts by turning to their elbow partner or another turn-and-talk method.
- F. Direct the discussion towards the consideration of the impact of racist and dehumanizing terms. Encourage students to think about why some groups might decide to reclaim such terms. Check for understanding by asking students to share aloud with the large group.
- G. Ask students to reflect and decide how racist and dehumanizing terms should be approached in a classroom setting. Facilitate a conversation that encourages students to consider and respect the feelings of others when using certain terms.

NOTE: This activity is not about finding definitive answers but rather about encouraging students to think critically. The aim is to create awareness about the significance of language and terms and how they can affect others.

SKILLS

- Analysis
- Communication
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence
- Critical Thinking
- Reflective Practice

EXTENSION ACTIVITY 1

Demonstrate and Explain History and Usage of Terms—Expert Speak

READINESS LEVEL: Knowledge

- A. Invite a local Indigenous community leader or university professor specializing in Indigenous Studies via video call. Allow them to share their perspective on appropriate terminology and language. This provides students with firsthand knowledge and understanding.
- B. Prior to the session, thoroughly research the speaker, their background, the Indigenous community they hail from or specialize in, and key terminologies that they frequently use.
- C. Prepare an open-ended question list that can help guide the conversation towards achieving Outcomes 1, 2, and 3. Be ready to communicate (Skill 2) these questions verbally, keeping negotiation skills (Skill 3) handy. Assign this activity ahead of time for the teacher to review and assist students in revisions needed to ensure respect and appropriateness of questions.
- D. As the speaker presents their perspective, note down key points and aim to understand the historical and cultural significance of terms like “Native American,” “American Indian,” “Indigenous Peoples,” “Indian,” “First Nations,” “Aboriginal,” “Dakota,” “Ojibwe,” “Anishinaabe,” “Chippewa,” “Ho-Chunk,” “Winnebago,” “Oceti Sakowin,” “Tribe,” “reservation,” “Tribal nation,” and “powwow.” (Outcome 1).
- E. Actively listen and analyze how the speaker uses language and terminology. Reflect on the influence and impact of this language in promoting positive relationships and understanding (Outcome 2).
- F. Evaluate and make mental notes about instances where inappropriate or dehumanizing language might have been used in the past and understand the implications of these (Outcome 3).
- G. Engage in the conversation politely and with empathy (Skill 4). Proactively ask for clarifications or examples whenever confused. Remember to communicate (Skill 2) effectively.
- H. Inject kindness and show respect throughout the conversation (Skill 4). This is essential in maintaining a positive learning environment.
- I. After the session, reflect on the new understanding gained. Interpret and apply this knowledge in live scenarios, thus demonstrating global citizenship and cultural competence (Skill 5). This will deepen understanding of the respectful use of terminology.
- J. Share learnings with other classmates to enhance collective understanding. Be ready to negotiate (Skill 3) diverse viewpoints and understandings.
- K. Reflect and discuss the digital skills and programming (Skill 1) used during this session, such as accessing the video call, recording the session for later review, etc. This can help reinforce their digital literacy skills.

SKILLS

- Digital Skills and Programming
- Communication
- Negotiation
- Empathy and Kindness
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence

EXTENSION ACTIVITY 2**Student Task—Code of Language Conduct****READINESS LEVEL: Knowledge**

Overview: Instruct students to develop a “code of language conduct” for speaking respectfully about American Indians. This task encourages responsibility and respect for others, fostering skills in understanding, empathy, and equality.

- A. Begin with a discussion on the importance of respectful language and dialogue when talking about different cultures or people, focusing on American Indians. Explore examples of commonly used language or phrases that may unintentionally be disrespectful or offensive.
- B. Engage in open dialogue about the misconceptions and stereotypes about American Indian culture.
- C. Encourage students to consider how language can impact mutual respect and communication between different cultural groups.
- D. Task the students with creating a “code of language conduct” to guide conversations and discussions about American Indians.
- E. This code should include specific guidelines on what language and phrases are respectful and which ones are not.
- F. The students should also consider how to react if they hear disrespectful language being used, and how to address this in a respectful and educational manner. Reinforce that each Tribe, region, and group of Indigenous people use different terms to identify themselves.
- G. Students are to work in groups to facilitate negotiation, communication, and critical thinking—these skills will also be used in forming the code.
- H. Foster a sense of global citizenship and cultural competency by encouraging students to think deeply about the importance of language and culture and the integral parts they play in respectful social interaction. Focus on how they can contribute positively to the lives of others and treat them with kindness and empathy in all settings.
- I. Emphasize the concept of civic responsibility and remind them of the importance of endorsing respectful language and promoting equality.
- J. Once the students have completed their code of language conduct, they should present it to the class and explain why they chose their specific guidelines and how they believe it promotes respect, empathy, and understanding for American Indians.

SKILLS

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Negotiation
- Civic Responsibility
- Empathy and Kindness
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence

EXTENSION ACTIVITY 3

Reflection—Language Habit Change

READINESS LEVEL: Performance

Overview: Ask students to reflect on one habit they will change about their use of language after this lesson. They should share their responses with the class. This activity encourages a behavior shift towards more respectful language use.

- A. Begin the activity by explaining the goal: to promote a behavior shift to more respectful language use, particularly when speaking about or with American Indians.
- B. Encourage students to keep in mind their critical thinking and global citizenship skills. Remind them that language has the power to shape behavior, perceptions, and relationships.
- C. Instruct them to reflect on their current language habits, particularly in terms of how they speak about others or groups of people. They should consider any inappropriate or dehumanizing terms they may unconsciously use and contemplate why they use them.
- D. Ask students to think about the implications of these language habits. How do they influence their own thinking? How do they influence others' perceptions? How do they impact their relationships?
- E. With empathy, kindness, and cultural competence in mind, ask students to identify one habit they would like to change. They should consider how this change could promote positive relationships and understanding.
- F. They should then apply learned terminologies in their future conversations and reflect on the influence and impact of using respectful terminology.
- G. Encourage students to show grit and perseverance as changing ingrained language habits will be challenging. Remind them that it's part of their growth mindset journey.
- H. Finally, ask them to share their reflections and commitments with the rest of the class. They should explain the habit they identified, why they've chosen to change it, and how they plan on doing so. This exercise promotes open dialogue and mutual learning among classmates.

NOTE: Remember, the aim of this activity is not to shame or blame, but to foster awareness, sensitivity, and growth in the way students use language.

SKILLS

- Critical Thinking
- Grit and Perseverance
- Growth Mindset
- Empathy and Kindness
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence

Resources

Terminology Style Guide— Native Governance Center

<https://nativegov.org/resources/terminology-style-guide/>

You can access a list of federally recognized Native nations here. Other terminology related to Native nations and lands: Capitalize the words Tribe and Tribal, regardless of whether they appear as part of a proper noun. Example: “The United States is home to 574 federally recognized Tribes.”

Resources for Teaching American Indian History and Culture

<https://atlasabe.org/resource/resources-for-teaching-american-indian-history-and-culture/>

Affiliated with the University of Minnesota-Duluth, the Ruth A. Meyers Center for Indigenous Education maintains a repository of website resources for lesson plans specific to Minnesota’s Indigenous people, resources for lesson plans about American Indians, tips when considering the use of texts and literature about Indigenous people, terminology guides, and links to further research.

Cultural Highlight Section 3—Explore Native American Cultures

https://mlpp.pressbooks.pub/interculturalcommunicationcompetence/chapter/native_american_cultures/

What term is most appropriate for teaching about Native Americans? photo credit: pexel.com. In his teaching resource, Why Treaties Matter: Terminology Primer (n.d.), Dr. Anton Treuer addresses the confusion surrounding which term to use—“Native American,” “Native,” “Indigenous,” or “American Indian.”

Tips to Consider before Teaching Lessons about American Indians

<https://knowledgequest.aasl.org/tips-to-consider-before-teaching-lessons-about-american-indians/>

Before teaching your next lesson about American Indians, read “Tips for Teachers: Developing Instructional Materials about American Indians”

by Dr. Debbie Reese (Nambé Pueblo) and Dr. Jean Mendoza (White). This one-page guide shares ten examples to help facilitate culturally sensitive content. The lesson ideas below originated from Reese’s and Mendoza’s document.

Resources for Teaching About Indigenous Peoples | NEA

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/resources-teaching-about-indigenous-peoples>

Educators should be mindful of cultural appropriation when teaching about other cultures and understand that Native American students in class may experience lessons differently than non-Native students. Indigenous People’s Day Resources from the Zinn Education Project have lessons, books, and films to examine for teaching the truth about Columbus, “Indian Removal” policies, and Indigenous people.

Resources for Teaching American Indian History and Culture

<https://cehsp.d.umn.edu/resources-teaching-aihc>

Teaching American Indian History and Culture, Minnesota Historical Society; Why Treaties Matter, Joint effort of Minnesota Humanities Center Resources for lesson plans about American Indians. Alaska Native Knowledge Network, University of Alaska Fairbanks; Culturally Responsive Instructional Resources, Center on Standards and Assessment.

The Impact of Words and Tips for Using Appropriate Terminology | Am I Using the Right Word?

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/resources/Impact-of-Words-and-Tips-for-Using-Appropriate-Terminology-Am-I-Using-the-Right-Word>

NK360° Helpful Handouts: Guidance on Common Questions provide a brief introduction to teachers about important topics regarding Native American life, cultures, and communities.

NK360—Education Initiative—National Museum of the American Indian

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pdf/Impact-of-Words-Tips-for-Using-Appropriate-Terminology.pdf>

Tribe or Nation, and Why So Many Names?
American Indian people describe their own cultures and the places they come from in many ways. The words “Tribe” and “nation” are used interchangeably but hold very different meanings for many Native people.

The Impact of Words and Tips for Using Appropriate Terminology

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/impact-words-tips>

American Indian, Indian, Native American, or Native are acceptable and often used interchangeably in the United States; however, Native Peoples often have individual preferences on how they would like to be addressed. To find out which term is best, ask the person or group which term they prefer.

Glossary

NATIVE AMERICAN: A member of any of the Indigenous Peoples of North, Central, and South America, especially those of North America; People who lived in America before Europeans arrived

AMERICAN INDIAN: A member of any of the Native Peoples of North, Central, and South America, especially those of North America; People who were originally from America

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: Original inhabitants of a place; groups and their descendants, who have a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies; People who first lived in a region before other people came

FIRST NATIONS: Term used to describe Aboriginal peoples or first inhabitants of Canada who are not Métis or Inuit

ABORIGINAL: Inhabiting or existing in a land from the earliest times and so thought of as the original inhabitants; People who lived in an area from the earliest times

DAKOTA: A member of an American Indian people of the northern Mississippi River valley area

OJIBWE: A Native American group or person of the region around Lake Superior and westward

ANISHINAABE: A group of culturally related Indigenous people in Canada and the United States

CHIPPEWA: Another term for Ojibwe; a member of an American Indian people living chiefly in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota

HO-CHUNK: A Native American group or person residing mostly in Wisconsin and Nebraska

WINNEBAGO: Another term for Ho-Chunk; a member of a North American Indian people of northeast Wisconsin and east Nebraska

OCETI SAKOWIN: The proper name for the people commonly known as Sioux; Another name for Sioux people

TRIBE: A social group consisting of numerous families, clans, or generations with a common or shared culture

RESERVATION: A piece of land set aside for occupation by North American Indians

TRIBAL NATION: A Tribe recognized by federal law or governing itself under Tribal sovereignty

POWWOW: A North American Indian ceremony involving feasting, singing, and dancing

Glossary Activity Suggestions

Exploring Conflicting Terms

Begin the lesson with a discussion on the variety of terminologies used to refer to American Indians. Ask students to think about the terms they may have heard before and discuss how each one makes them feel. Explain the historical context and broad use of terms such as “Native American,” “American Indian,” and “Indigenous Peoples.” This activity aims to get students thinking critically about the importance of language and terminologies.

Terminology Crossword

Prepare a crossword puzzle using key terminologies and their definitions related to the topic. For instance, the clue may be a definition of a term (e.g., “People indigenous to North and South America”), and the answer would be “Native American.” This activity promotes recall of terminology and introduces the terms in an engaging, interactive way.

Term Mapping

In groups, ask students to create a mind map of terms related to American Indians. They can use terms such as “Native American,” “Indian,” “Indigenous,” etc. Explain that these terms should be mapped according to their geographic location, cultural significance, and historical context. This exercise encourages curiosity and understanding of diverse cultural identities.

Role Play Scenario

Set up various scenarios where students converse using respectful terms for American Indians. For example, one scenario could be a telephone conversation between a student and a university professor specializing in Indigenous Studies. This activity demonstrates the practical application of learned terminologies.

History and Usage of Terms

Explain the historical and cultural context behind commonly used terms for American Indians, such as “Native American” and “Indigenous Peoples.” Use examples of how these terms have been used in the past and present-day to demonstrate their implications.

Expert Speak

Invite a local Indigenous community leader or university professor specializing in Indigenous Studies via video call. Allow them to share their perspective on appropriate terminology and language. This provides students with first-hand knowledge and understanding.

Interactive Quiz

Create an interactive online quiz that requires students to identify appropriate terminology when referring to American Indians. This task affirms knowledge retention and comprehension.

Term Comparison Essay

Ask students to write a short comparative essay on the difference between the terms “Native American,” “American Indian,” and “Indigenous Peoples.” This task illustrates students’ understanding of diverse cultural identities and terminologies.

Code of Language Conduct

Instruct students to develop a code of language conduct” for speaking respectfully about American Indians. This task encourages responsibility and respect for others, fostering skills in understanding, empathy, and equality.

Reflection Journal

Prompt students to write a journal entry reflecting their own use of language, how they have previously referred to American Indians, and how this lesson has changed their perspective. This activity encourages self-reflection and promotes a growth mindset.

Reflective Group Discussion

Facilitate a reflective group discussion where students share their key takeaways from the activities and their thoughts on applying these learnings in real life. Encourage students to listen and respond to others with empathy and respect.

Language Habit Change

Ask students to reflect on one habit they will change about their use of language after this lesson. They should share their responses with the class. This activity encourages a behavior shift towards more respectful language use.

PRAISE FOR

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT INDIANS BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK (YOUNG READERS EDITION)

GOLDEN KITE AWARD WINNER • CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY'S BEST OF THE BEST
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COVERS OF THE YEAR • ILLUMINATIVE CHILDREN'S BOOK GIFT GUIDE • AICL'S BEST
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• CYBILS AWARDS FINALIST • CCBC CHOICES



Anton Treuer, Photo credit: Greene Photography

ANTON TREUER (pronounced troy-er) is Professor of Ojibwe at Bemidji State University and author of many books. His equity, education, and cultural work has put him on a path of service around the nation and the world.

Visit levinequerido.com to buy a copy of
Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask:
Young Readers Edition.

Available in hardcover and paperback.

Also by Anton Treuer
[*Where Wolves Don't Die*](#)

Educator guide developed by Anjanette Parisien.

Designed by Suet Chong.