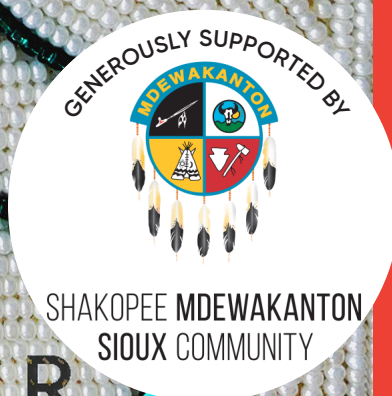


EVERYTHING
YOU WANTED
TO KNOW
ABOUT INDIANS
BUT WERE
AFRAID TO ASK

ANTON TREUER

YOUNG READERS EDITION



Genocide of Indigenous People

This lesson plan on the Genocide of Indigenous People will explore the historical context and impact of the deliberate eradication of Native American populations by European settlers in the 19th century. Indigenous genocide was caused by various complex and controversial reasons. When Europeans first came to the Americas, they wanted to take over the land, use its resources, and treat the Native people as less than human. They did this through colonization and interacting with the people who were already living there. Technological advances, like guns and diseases, also played a big role in nearly wiping out the Native populations. The Europeans used violent actions, such as war and forcing people to leave, often leading to the death and destruction of the Native communities and their way of life. Europeans tried to justify these actions by saying that the Indigenous people should be moved to reservations or taken away from their ancestral lands.

RELEVANT TEXT

Treuer, A. (2024). *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians but Were Afraid to Ask: Young Readers Edition*, pp. 57-81.

OBJECTIVES

- Understanding the concept of genocide as it relates to the treatment of Indigenous peoples in the U.S. (understand)
- Analyzing the role the Doctrine of Discovery played in justifying the eradication of Indigenous peoples (analyze)
- Remembering key historical events linked to the treatment of Indigenous peoples in the U.S. (remember)

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		
1.3	3.7	9.1.6.1	9.1.6.4	9.3.14.1	9.1.2.1	10.1.2.1	11.1.2.1
1.5	5.1	9.3.15.1	9.3.15.3	9.3.15.6	9.1.2.2	10.1.2.2	11.1.2.2
2.1	5.2	9.3.15.7	9.3.15.8	9.3.17.1	9.1.2.3	10.1.2.3	11.1.2.3
2.2	5.3	9.3.17.2	9.3.17.3	9.3.17.4	9.1.3.1	10.1.3.1	11.1.3.1
2.3	7.1	9.4.18.1	9.4.18.2	9.4.18.3	9.1.6.1	10.1.6.1	11.1.6.1
3.1	7.2	9.4.18.4	9.4.18.5	9.4.18.6	9.1.6.2	10.1.6.2	11.1.6.2
3.3	7.3	9.4.18.8	9.4.18.9	9.4.18.11	9.1.6.3	10.1.6.3	11.2.1.1
		9.4.18.12	9.4.18.13	9.4.18.14	9.1.9.1	10.1.9.1	11.2.1.2
		9.4.18.15	9.4.19.1	9.4.19.2	9.1.9.2	10.1.9.2	11.2.3.1
		9.4.19.5	9.4.19.7	9.4.19.8	9.2.1.1	10.2.1.1	11.2.3.2
		9.4.19.10	9.4.19.12	9.4.20.1	9.2.1.2	10.2.1.2	11.2.4.1
		9.4.20.2	9.4.20.4	9.4.20.5	9.2.1.3	10.2.1.3	11.2.4.2
		9.4.20.6	9.4.20.7	9.4.20.8	9.2.3.2	10.2.3.2	11.1.5.1
		9.4.20.10	9.4.20.12	9.4.20.14	9.2.4.1	10.2.4.1	11.2.5.2
		9.4.21.3	9.4.21.4	9.4.21.6	9.2.4.2	10.2.4.2	11.3.1.1
		9.4.21.7	9.4.21.8	9.4.21.9	9.2.5.1	10.2.5.1	
		9.4.21.11	9.4.21.12	9.4.21.13	9.2.5.2	10.2.5.2	
		9.4.22.1	9.4.22.3	9.4.22.7	9.2.7.1	10.2.7.1	
		9.4.22.8	9.4.22.10	9.4.22.14	9.2.7.2	10.2.7.2	
		9.4.23.1	9.4.23.3	9.4.23.4	9.3.1.1	10.3.1.1	
		9.4.23.6	9.4.24.2	9.4.24.3	9.3.1.2	10.3.1.2	
		9.4.24.4	9.4.24.5		9.3.1.3	10.3.1.3	

ACTIVITY 1

Introduction— Understanding the Indigenous Genocide

READINESS LEVEL: Awareness

Overview: Begin the lesson by presenting an overview of the concept of genocide, focusing on the Indigenous peoples in the U.S. Showcase a brief timeline of key historical events linked to the treatment of Native Americans.

- A. In groups, have students brainstorm what they think “genocide” means and share their thoughts with the class. Following the discussion, present the official United Nations definition and encourage them to compare it with their initial understanding. This activity introduces the concept of genocide and helps students recognize the complexity of its definition.
- B. Divide the students into groups and ask them to brainstorm about their understanding of the word “genocide.”
- C. Each group should discuss and agree on a common definition of genocide. Encourage the use of critical thinking skills while they articulate their understanding.
- D. After the groups have finalized their definitions, conduct a round of sharing where each group presents their thoughts and understanding.
- E. Following the presentations, provide students with the official United Nations definition of genocide.
- F. Encourage them to critically analyze and compare their initial understanding with the official definition through elbow partner turn-and-talks.
- G. Instigate an open discussion based on their observations and thoughts regarding the complexities behind the definition of genocide. Encourage communication and interaction between groups during this discussion.
- H. Conclude the activity with a summary of key insights and learnings about the definition and characteristics of genocide, gathered from the group discussions and comparisons. Organize this discussion using a smart board, whiteboard, or chalkboard.

SKILLS

- Critical Thinking
- Communication

ACTIVITY 2

Demonstrate and Explain— Interpreting the Doctrine of Discovery

READINESS LEVEL: Understand

Overview: Show how the Doctrine of Discovery was used to legitimize the displacement and murder of Indigenous peoples. Use specific historical instances and primary source documents where the doctrine was invoked.

- A. Begin the activity by introducing the concept of the Doctrine of Discovery, explaining its historical context, origins, and intent during colonial expansion.
- B. Encourage the learners to understand the concept critically. Prompt them to question the moral, political, and ethical foundations of the doctrine. Encourage them to think about the justification it provided for the harmful actions towards Indigenous peoples.
- C. Assign each learner with a specific historical instance where the Doctrine of Discovery was enacted. Provide them with primary source documents related to their assigned instance.
- D. Instruct them to examine their assigned instance through the lens of the Doctrine of Discovery. Ask them to analyze how the doctrine was used to legitimize the displacement and murder of Indigenous peoples in that historical context.
- E. Ask the learners to critically evaluate the lasting impact and legacy the Doctrine of Discovery had on Indigenous peoples. They should consider the current socio-economic, political, and cultural effects of the doctrine.
- F. Using their digital skills and programming, students are to present their findings in a digital format. This could be a webpage, blog post, podcast, or digital poster.
- G. Students should approach this activity with curiosity. Encourage them to dig deeper with their research, exploring any avenues that they find intriguing or influential.
- H. The final step in the process is problem-solving. Have the learners debate and discuss potential solutions or alternatives that could have been pursued to prevent the negative effects of the Doctrine of Discovery. Summarize debatable points identified by students using an organizer or other teacher-preferred methods.
- I. Remember, the overall aim is to help learners develop a nuanced understanding of the Doctrine of Discovery and its implications. The hope is that by examining specific instances in detail, learners will be able to better comprehend the broad and lasting impact this doctrine had on Indigenous peoples.

SKILLS

- Critical Thinking
- Curiosity
- Digital Skills and Programming
- Problem-Solving

ACTIVITY 3**Student Task—Reflecting on Legacy****READINESS LEVEL: Understand**

Overview: Students are to create a digital presentation (e.g., slides, video) evaluating the lasting impact and legacy the Doctrine of Discovery had on Indigenous peoples. They should strongly represent their arguments with historical facts.

- A. Start by conducting extensive research around the Doctrine of Discovery and its impact and legacy on Native Americans. Ensure the research highlights the key historical events linked to the treatment of Indigenous Peoples in the U.S.
- B. Using the digital tools of your choice (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, or video editing software), create a digital presentation. Apply creativity and media elements to make the presentation engaging and interactive.
- C. Structure your presentation by starting with a detailed introduction about the Doctrine of Discovery. Follow with key historical events linked to the doctrine, including the impact felt by Indigenous Peoples.
- D. Dedicate a section for discussing the lasting impacts and legacy of the doctrine on Indigenous Peoples. Supported by relevant data, pictures, and interviews (if available), share your interpretations and evaluations.
- E. The presentation needs to incorporate the use of digital programming to display visuals, oscillating facts and figures, or other interactive elements. This could be in the form of interactive graphs, slideshows, embedded videos, animations, or other digital resources.
- F. Conclude the presentation with personal reflections and insights about the impacts, based on the information gathered and presented.
- G. Encourage students to focus on clear, articulate communication for both the visual and verbal elements of the presentation. Complementary design elements and talking points should create a cohesive, compelling narrative.
- H. Once the presentations are complete, students should be ready to discuss their findings with the class. This will strengthen their skills in communicating research in a clear, organized manner.

SKILLS

- Creativity and Innovation
- Digital Skills and Programming
- Communication

ACTIVITY 4

Reflection— Responsibility and Awareness Session

READINESS LEVEL: Application

Overview: Facilitate a discussion focusing on global citizenship, our roles, and responsibilities towards Indigenous communities. This could be a class-wide discussion or smaller breakout sessions where each group presents their thoughts.

- A. Begin the activity with a brief historical overview of the role Christian missionaries played in the expansion of the Western world. Highlight key impacts and transformations brought about by this spread and how it influenced the overall cultural landscape.
- B. Next, transition into evaluating the Doctrine of Discovery’s lasting impact and legacy on Indigenous peoples. Record key points on the board as a visual reminder as students examine changes in societal frameworks, impacts on cultural identity, and the ramifications of these interactions on future generations.
- C. Based on this analysis, each learner should generate an argument—supported with historical evidence—on the significance of treaties in upholding sovereignty. They should be encouraged to question and evaluate the efficacy of these treaties; their intentions and actual outcomes; and whether they have truly served as a tool of upholding sovereignty over the years.
- D. In the context of current times, highlight the significance of global citizenship and civic responsibility. Encourage learners to relate the historical examination conducted earlier with their present role as civic individuals and global citizens, especially concerning the existing Indigenous communities.
- E. Facilitate a discourse on civic responsibility and global citizenship towards Indigenous communities, helping learners articulate their understanding, thoughts, and ideas. This could be a class-wide discussion or organized in smaller breakout sessions where each group presents their reflections in a written summary.
- F. Each learner should be encouraged to actively participate in the discussions, contemplating their roles as responsible citizens. Have them consider how they can contribute positively towards reconciliation and mutual respect among distinct cultures and communities.
- G. Conclude the session by summarizing, on the board, the insights derived from the activity, thus reinforcing the application of learned historical contexts to present scenarios and the implications of their roles as global citizens.

SKILLS

- Civic Responsibility
- Communication
- Global Citizenship and Cultural Competence

Resources

Echoes & Reflections

<https://echoesandreflections.org/2021/11/17/lessons-from-holocaust-education-for-teaching-about-the-genocide-of-indigenous-peoples/>

Classroom Lessons from Holocaust Education for Teaching About the Genocide of Indigenous Peoples, George Dalbo, Nov 17, 2021.

Set among the bucolic farm fields and rural communities of southern Wisconsin, Clinton, where George Dalbo lives and teaches, is the quintessential American small town.

Resources for Teaching About Indigenous Peoples | NEA

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

“Resources for Teaching About Indigenous Peoples.” National Education Association Published: October 3, 2022. Last Updated: September 7, 2023.

Here are resources to help you educate students honestly and accurately about Native history and the people whose land we occupy.

Unsettling Narratives: Teaching About the Genocide of Indigenous Peoples

<https://www.socialstudies.org/professional-learning/unsettling-narratives-teaching-about-genocide-indigenous-peoples>

Participants will examine the 1862 U.S.-Dakota War and its aftermath through various primary source documents (newspapers), learning how such newspaper accounts can be used to foster reading comprehension, document analysis, and media literacy skills in middle school social studies classrooms.

Genocide Archives | Education for Justice

<https://educationforjustice.org/topics/social-justice-topics/genocide/>

“Genocide Resource List on the Relations of Indigenous Peoples and Catholics Fact Sheet & Handout.” Education for Justice, June 7, 2022.

This resource list provides suggested books, articles, and videos that teach about the legacy of colonization and the genocide of Indigenous Peoples in the United States and Canada.

Genocide, Holocaust and Teaching Traumatic Topics: Resources

<https://cha-shc.ca/teachers-learning-bl/genocide-holocaust-and-teaching-traumatic-topics-resources-for-teaching-and-learning/>

The History of Violence Against Indigenous Peoples Fully Warrants the Use of the Word “Genocide” Media Coverage/Reaction to the Canadian Historical Association’s Canada Day Statement Recognizing the Genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada; Precarity. Engaged | Engagés—A CHA Webinar Series on Precarity.

The Charge of Genocide | Facing History & Ourselves

<https://www.facinghistory.org/en-ca/resource-library/charge-genocide>

The Charge of Genocide. In the 1990s, residential schools, scholars, and many Indigenous leaders began to argue that the efforts of the Canadian government to assimilate Indigenous Peoples in the residential schools embodied the principle of cultural genocide: assimilation was intended to destroy the Indigenous Peoples as culturally distinct.

Unsettling Narratives: Teaching About the Genocide of Indigenous Peoples

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/333022232_Unsettling_Narratives_Teaching_About_the_Genocide_of_Indigenous_Peoples_in_North_America

Additionally, this study sought to understand how a white social studies teacher navigated teaching about settler colonialism and the genocide of Indigenous peoples in a settler space.

Glossary for Genocide of Indigenous People

GENOCIDE: The systemic, planned, and deliberate destruction of a racial, ethnic, religious, or national group, usually by a dominant party

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: The original inhabitants of a given region, in contrast to any colonial or migratory groups that may have arrived or invaded later

DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY: An international law principle used during the colonial period by European monarchies to legitimize the colonizing and taking of lands from non-Christian rulers

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES: Christian individuals who dedicate themselves to propagate Christianity, often in foreign places where it is less known or non-existent

WESTWARD EXPANSION: The process or policy of increasing a nation's territory, dominion, or influence, namely the geographic growth of the U.S. from the East to West Coast

SOVEREIGNTY: The absolute authority and power of a governing body over itself without any interference from outside sources

HISTORICAL EVIDENCE: Records, documents, or artifacts used by historians and social scientists to understand and interpret the past

ERADICATION: The action or process of eliminating or getting rid of something entirely

RAMIFICATIONS: The consequences of an action, decision, or event, especially when complex or unwelcome

TREATY: A formally concluded and ratified agreement between two or more countries, groups, or other sovereign entities

DIGITAL PRESENTATION: The use of digital tools and software to show information in an engaging and visual format

DIGITAL SKILLS AND PROGRAMMING: The ability to use computer-based technology, tools, and applications to create and manipulate digital content

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: A sense of belonging to a broader community and a common humanity, promoting a “worldview” that transcends local and national boundaries

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY: The roles and duties inherent of citizenship, including participation in the democratic process to help society function better

RECONCILIATION: The process of making one view or belief compatible with another or of restoring friendly relations after a disagreement

MUTUAL RESPECT: The sense of basic human rights and treating everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of their background or characteristics

Suggestions for Lesson Extension

Understanding the Indigenous Genocide

Begin the lesson by presenting an overview of the concept of genocide, focusing on the Indigenous peoples in the U.S. Showcase a brief timeline of key historical events linked to the treatment of Indigenous peoples in the U.S.

Scrutinizing the Doctrine of Discovery

Present an introduction to the role the doctrine of discovery played in justifying the attempted eradication of Indigenous peoples. Discuss the various interpretations of this doctrine and how it has been used as a tool of colonialism.

Role of Christian Missionaries

Overview of the role of Christian missionaries in expanding the Western world. Highlight both the intended and unintended consequences of their involvement in Indigenous communities, emphasizing the cultural and societal shifts they precipitated.

Exemplification of Genocide Events

Provide students with examples of key historical events, such as the Trail of Tears or the Pine Ridge Massacre, to illustrate the severe impact of these policies on Indigenous communities. Consider presenting more contemporary incidents to demonstrate the enduring effects of these historical events.

Interpreting the Doctrine of Discovery

Show how the Doctrine of Discovery was used to legitimize the displacement and murder of Indigenous peoples. Use specific historical instances and primary source documents where the doctrine was invoked.

Tracking Christian Missionary Influence

Using maps, demonstrate how Christian missionaries altered the landscape of the U.S., imprinting their influence in terms of language, education, and other societal norms. This could involve analyzing specific locations, as well as the shift in demographics and institutions over time.

Creating an Argument on Treaties

Students should create an argument backed by historical evidence on the significance of treaties in upholding sovereignty. Through debates or essays, they should showcase their understanding of how these treaties impacted Indigenous communities and the ongoing implications.

Understanding Impact Through Role-Play

Set up a role-playing activity where students take various roles involved in the treatment of Indigenous peoples in the U.S. This could be government officials creating policies, missionaries attempting to convert people, or Indigenous leaders defending their communities.

Reflecting on Legacy

Students are to create a digital presentation (e.g, slides, video) evaluating the lasting impact and legacy the doctrine of discovery had on Indigenous peoples. They should represent their arguments with historical facts.

Personal Connection to Genocide of Indigenous People

Students should reflect on how their lives and identities might be different if they were part of an Indigenous community affected by these historical events. This could be written as an essay or expressed through a creative medium such as art, music, or poetry.

Responsibility and Awareness Session

Facilitate a discussion focusing on global citizenship, specifically our roles and responsibilities towards Indigenous communities. This could be a class-wide discussion or smaller breakout sessions where each group presents their thoughts.

Evaluate the Presented Argument

Students individually evaluate their argument stated during the task phase. They should review the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments, what could have been done differently, and what they learned from this process.

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
• KIRKUS' BEST OF THE YEAR • ABC GROUP BEST BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS •
TLA'S 2022 TEXAS TOPAZ READING LIST • CHICAGO PUBLIC LIBRARY'S BEST TEEN BOOK
COVERS OF THE YEAR • ILLUMINATIVE CHILDREN'S BOOK GIFT GUIDE • AICL'S BEST
BOOKS OF 2021 • A JUNIOR LIBRARY GUILD SELECTION • 2022 TEXAS TOPAZ SELECTION
• 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.

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

Educator guide developed by Anjanette Parisien.

Designed by Suet Chong.