



Grade Level: High School
Subject: U.S. History

Impacts of Assimilation

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Time Immemorial
- History
- Identity
- Lifeways

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to explain what assimilation is and how it relates to native people and their assimilation into the dominant culture.
- Students will be able to explain how assimilation affected the native culture and the people of CTGR.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES

- Connecting to the lives of students
- Preserving and honoring cultural history
- Student talk, working together and individually

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on their participation in classroom discussions and their proficient completion of the Impacts of Assimilation worksheet.

Overview

From the very moment non-Native American people entered Native lands, there has been constant pressure placed on Native peoples to assimilate into the “mainstream” culture. In this lesson, students will learn about the impact of assimilation on the culture and people of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

MATERIALS

- [Impacts of Assimilation Presentation](#)
- [Impacts of Assimilation Worksheet](#)

LOGISTICS

- Where does this activity take place?
Classroom
- How are the students organized?

Whole Class Teams: 3-5

Pairs Individually

TIME REQUIRED

50 minutes

STANDARDS

Oregon Social Sciences Academic Content Standards

Historical Knowledge HS.59 Analyze and explain the history of the American Indian/Alaska Natives/Native Hawaiians in Oregon and the United States regarding their culture, tribal sovereignty, and issues of concern, past and present.

Historical Knowledge HS.63 Examine the personal and historical development of identity, including concepts of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and religion.

Historical Knowledge HS.64 Analyze the significance of identity in the distribution and accumulation of social, political, and economic power.

Historical Knowledge HS.65 Identify and explain strategies of survivance, resistance and societal change by individuals and traditionally marginalized groups confronting discrimination, genocide, and other forms of violence, based on race, national origin, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and gender.

Background for Teachers

“During the late 19th century, when most Native Americans were confined to reservations, the federal government engaged in a cultural assimilation campaign by forcing thousands of Native American children to attend boarding schools. In 1879, the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania was founded by Richard Pratt, who believed that Native people would not succeed unless their traditions, habits, and beliefs were eradicated. Based on Pratt’s “kill the Indian in him and save the man” philosophy, the Carlisle school became a national model.

More than 400 day and boarding schools were built near reservations, most run by religious organizations, while at least 25 off-reservation boarding schools were established between 1880 and 1902. Some 100,000 Native Americans were forced to attend these schools, forbidden to speak Native languages, made to renounce Native beliefs, and forced to abandon their Native American identities, including their names. Many children were leased out to white families as indentured servants.”

-<https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-cultural-genocide/>

“Different groups had different motives for promoting boarding schools. The US government saw them as a way to eliminate the “Indian problem,” and thus clear the way for cultural and economic advancement (i.e., mining and agriculture). Ecclesial groups, both Protestant and Catholic, along with some government officials, primarily saw themselves as attempting to aid Native people through a program of moral, religious, and cultural reformation. A common view at the time held that Native groups were dying breeds, doomed to extinction if they could not learn to read, write, and assimilate to the European way of life. Richard Pratt, for instance, the founder of the first federally-run native boarding school, seemed to believe that Native peoples were equal to white Americans. Native peoples simply had to be trained in the ways of “civilization” (i.e., white Americans) while abandoning their old ways. Indeed, some schools were even opened at the behest of Native leaders. In 1877, Chief Red Cloud, a Lakota war chief and a shrewd statesman, petitioned the US government to allow the Jesuits to open a school on the newly-established Pine Ridge Agency for the very practical purpose of teaching Native children how to read and write, skills he believed they needed in order to survive in the white world.”

-Jessica Keating, [The Assimilation, Removal, and Elimination of Native Americans](#)

VOCABULARY

- **Culture-** the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music, and art
- **Assimilation-** the process of a group's language and/or culture coming to resemble those of another group
- **Dominant culture-** a dominant culture is a cultural practice that is dominant within a particular political, social or economic entity, in which multiple cultures are present. In terms of this lesson plan, the dominant culture is white European culture

Opening

Divide students into small groups (3-4 students), allow them to sit with their groups.

Begin the Impacts of Assimilation presentation and ask the initial question:

- *What is culture?*

Have students discuss in their group for a set amount of time and then come back to the whole group. Field and answer from each group about what they discussed.

Whenever a slide says “Brainstorm!”, have students discuss with their group like above.

Activity

1. Move through the slideshow offering students the information and allowing them to discuss when prompted or when questions arise. Students can discuss “Brainstorm!” questions in their small groups and then come together and discuss more in depth among the whole class. Facilitate discussion how you see fit.
2. When you get to the last slide of the slideshow, there are a list of different ways that assimilation affected the tribal culture and people. Talk through the different topics and then let students know that they will be working in groups to complete the lesson worksheet.
3. Have students assign one group member to be the writer for the assignment and let students know they need to work as a team and discuss as they complete the worksheet.

Closure

After groups have worked through the worksheet as a group, have them share out to the class. Check in with each group and allow students to share where they placed each category and why. Help facilitate an organic discussion among the class.

Differentiation

- Teachers may choose to pre-arrange groups ahead of time or let students choose their own groups.
- Teachers may walk around the room and participate in small group conversations.
- Students may prefer to complete the worksheet individually and confer with their small group afterwards.

Extension

Boarding Schools: One of the most invasive and penetrating forms of assimilation was the construction and forced attendance of Native American boarding schools. Many Native families share their stories of trauma surrounding these schools, the implications it had on their ancestors, and the continuing emergence of intergenerational trauma from these events. Using internet resources, have students write an opinion piece on these Native American boarding schools - supporting their claims with research and the information learned in this lesson regarding the medicine wheel.

Notes/Other

Jan Michael Looking Wolf's or Grand Ronde Canoe Family audio tracks can be played as background music while students are working. These audio tracks can be found on Spotify or Apple Music.

Jan Michael Looking Wolf: [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)
Grand Ronde Canoe Family: [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)

Appendix

Impacts of Assimilation Presentation:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1C8n_VZB7qNGrJ7iAxTiAR2mygBOGD4GhdPRhetihPXg/e/dit?usp=sharing

Impacts of Assimilation Worksheet:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qTfNOi3HT404c2pBUGBjX_-81W2V_r9v/view?usp=sharing