Lesson Plan 1: Cree Communities

Generalization
Canada is a country comprised of many distinct communities.

Rationale
Students at this age may have had little exposure to communities outside of their own. Therefore, it is essential that they be introduced to a number of Aboriginal communities. Students should also understand that not all Aboriginal communities are alike.

Objectives
Knowledge
- Understand that Aboriginal People live in communities distributed across Canada
- Gain awareness of the existence of many distinct Canadian Aboriginal cultures

Skills
- Learn to read, understand and use a basic map
- Practice using the Internet to locate information, facts and images
- Identify differences amongst various communities in Canada

Attitude
- Develop appreciation for the variety of Aboriginal communities across Canada

Teacher Information

Introductory Activity
Begin by placing an overhead map of Canada on the wall. This activity could also be done using a large wall map of Canada. Make sure that the map you use clearly labels the provinces and territories. Review the names of provinces and territories with the students. Next, distribute a blank map of Canada. Have them label their maps and colour in the provinces and territories. Distribute the following worksheet

Canada
1. List the three prairie provinces
2. List the Atlantic provinces
3. Where is central Canada?
4. What is the capital of Canada?
5. What is the capital of Nunuvut?
6. How many territories are there?
7. How many provinces are there?
8. What province do we live in?
9. What city do we live in?
10. What area do you live in?
11. What is your address?
12. What province or territory is the smallest in Canada?

Main Lesson

Aboriginal People across Canada share the belief that they have been inhabitants of this country since time immemorial. Aboriginal cultures and communities can be found across Canada from coast to coast. Download the Aboriginal Language Groups Map from this site and make a transparency that can be displayed on the overhead projector. Have students assist you in labeling the provinces and territories on the map using an overhead marker.

This will allow students to visually interpret how many different Aboriginal language groups and communities exist in Canada. Ask students the following questions
  1. Did you know that not all Aboriginal People are the same?
  2. Did you know that they speak different languages?
  3. Did you know that there are many Aboriginal communities?

Pay special attention to the Aboriginal groups in Alberta. Follow-up this exercise with another map, also downloadable, that features the different Aboriginal cultures in Alberta: Cree, Blackfoot, Piegan, Blood, Dene, Beaver, etc. Explain to students that they will be learning about one Aboriginal group in particular—the Cree.

Supplementary Lesson

Introduce students to a traditional Cree activity. Many Cree communities have a special sports or game day in which adults and children play traditional games. Some have been altered from their traditional format to reflect changes in Aboriginal lifestyle. The following game, the ‘Stick Guessing Game’, was initially known by the Cree as the ‘the game of counting sticks’. It can be played in teams of varying sizes. This game is adapted from Nehiyaw Ma Tow We Na: Games of the Plains Cree.

Stick Guessing Game

Materials
  • 39 wooden rods about 18 inches in length

How to Play
  • You can use two teams or many teams (however, more wooden rods would then be required). Opponents sit opposite each other.
  • One play begins by rolling the bundle of wooden rods with their hands. They are then divided into two bundles holding one in each hand. The player crosses their arms and extends the bundles towards their opponent.
The opponent must try and guess which bundle has an EVEN number of rods. If they guess incorrectly, then the dividers team wins the right to guess and to role out the next bundle of rods. If the player guesses correctly then the team gets one point and person next in line become the guesser. The team can keep guessing for up to three correct guesses and then they are up for game point. A correct guess wins.