

Protecting What Is Sacred Lesson Plan— Grades 9-12

BENCHMARKS

This lesson will fulfill the following Oklahoma Academic Standards:

- (1) **Oklahoma History and Government Content Standard 1.1:** Integrate visual information to identify and describe the significant physical and human features including major trails, railway lines, waterways, cities, ecological regions, natural resources, highways and landforms.
- (2) **Oklahoma History and Government Content Standard 1.2:** Summarize the accomplishments of prehistoric cultures including the Spiro Mound Builders.
- (3) **Oklahoma History and Government Content Standard 1.3:** Compare and contrast the goals and significance of early Spanish, French and American expeditions including the impact of disease, interactions with Native Americans and the arrival of the horse and new technology.
- (4) **Oklahoma History and Government Content Standard 1.4:** Compare and contrast cultural perspective of Native Americans and European Americans regarding land ownership and trading practices.
- (5) **U.S. History Content Standard 1.2A:** Summarize the reason for immigration, shifts in settlement patterns and the immigrant experience including the *Chinese Exclusion Act*, the impact of Nativism, Americanization and the immigrant experiences at Ellis Island.
- (6) **U.S. History Content Standard 1.2B:** Examine the rationale behind federal policies toward Native Americans including the establishment of reservations, attempts at assimilation, the end of the Indian Wars at Wounded Knee and the impact of the *Dawes Act* on tribal sovereignty and land ownership.

LESSON SUMMARY

In this lesson, students will learn about the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and Chickasaw sovereignty as it applies to the Chickasaw Nation and the U.S. federal government's relationships, specifically in Mississippi along the Natchez Trace, by viewing and discussing a short video.

LESSON IMPORTANCE

This lesson will provide students comprehensive knowledge about Chickasaw sovereignty and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA).

LESSON TARGET

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to explain the importance for the Chickasaw Nation to foster a government-to-government relationship with the federal government in an effort to preserve, protect and maintain their unique culture.

PROCEDURE OBJECTIVES

1. The students will complete a crossword puzzle worksheet with information from the video.
2. The students will analyze the video by answering discussion questions.
3. The students will compose statements of opinion.

PROCEDURE MATERIALS/ATTACHMENTS

1. Notebook paper
 2. Pens/Pencils
 3. Video: *Protecting What is Sacred* (provided)
 4. Video comprehension crossword puzzle (provided)
 5. Discussion questions (provided)
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SET (5 min.)

Note: The following is a suggested script for you, the teacher, to reference while discussing this lesson plan. Based on a number of factors, such as your students' age or maturity level, you may choose to deviate from the script as you see fit.

“Let’s begin today by asking ourselves a question—Is it okay for people to excavate Native American grave sites in the interest of science? [Take a few minutes to talk about the question.] What if the gravesites belonged to *your* family? Since the early 1800s, archaeologists and others have been excavating, examining and sometimes selling human remains and funerary objects of indigenous people in this country. Even though the Chickasaws and other Native American tribes were opposed to this practice, there was little they could do to protect their ancestors. It wasn’t until 1990, with the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), which an attempt was made by the federal government to return human remains and cultural objects unlawfully obtained. These items were taken from prehistoric, historic, former and current Native American homelands. For the Chickasaws, that would include the state of Mississippi, and specifically, the Natchez Trace Parkway. By the end of the lesson you are going to know how the observance of cultural belief and the implementation of federal law came together to protect the ancestors of the Chickasaw people.”

VIDEO PROCEDURE (20 min.)

- a. The teacher will play the video documentary, *Protecting What Is Sacred*.
- b. While students are watching the video, they will fill out the attached crossword puzzle. The teacher will monitor their activity.

MATERIALS

1. Video: *Protecting What Is Sacred* (provided)
2. Video comprehension crossword puzzle (provided)
3. Pens/Pencils

EVALUATION

The teacher may take up the crossword puzzle later and grade for completion and/or correctness.

DISCUSSION PROCEDURE (10-15 min.)

- a. The teacher will lead the students in a discussion of some or all of the included questions, asking the students follow-ups as appropriate. The students will answer the questions and are encouraged to pose questions of their own.

[The discussion questions may be answered in discussion, as intended, or the teacher may use them to make a free-response worksheet for the students.]

MATERIALS

1. Pen/Pencil
2. Discussion questions (provided)

EVALUATION

The teacher will grade students based on some combination of their participation in discussion, and any comments they make that the teacher considers to be particularly insightful. These grades may be evaluative or for completion, at the teacher's discretion.

ACTIVITY PROCEDURE (15-20 min.)

- a. The teacher will introduce the activity to the students: "All government-to-government relationships begin with a meeting between Nations. Imagine that you are part of a tribal delegation sent to talk with representatives of a federally funded museum. It is your hope that a speedy return of human remains and funerary objects of Chickasaw ancestors exhumed many years ago for scientific study may take place. You will be divided into various groups with the job of writing an opening speech designed to educate museum officials about the importance of returning your ancestors and their associated items. Each group will designate a "tribal NAGPRA representative [leader]" who will make the final presentation."
- b. The teacher will supervise the students as they work in groups to construct arguments and write their presentations.
- c. At the end of the writing period, the teacher will invite the tribal NAGPRA representative to stand in front of the class and make their group's presentation.

[Student groups should be roughly equal in size. Tribal NAGPRA representatives may be selected by the teacher or by the groups, at the teacher's discretion.]

MATERIALS

1. Notebook paper
2. Pen/Pencil

EVALUATION

The teacher will read and/or listen to the speeches, and grade them for content and argumentation. The teacher might also consider offering a small reward to the group that gives the best presentation.

CLOSURE (5 min.)

“Let’s talk about what we learned today. What is NAGPRA? Why do you think NAGPRA is important to Native Americans like the Chickasaws? Why is it important to people living in Mississippi today? [Pause for brief answers to questions.] The Chickasaws consider Mississippi a part of their traditional, tribal homelands. A great deal of their history took place there. Much of their cultural traditions and beliefs have origins in the land and historic sites of Mississippi—especially along the Natchez Trace. If they had a choice, they would have stayed in their homelands rather than remove to Indian Territory in the mid-1800s. But that is a subject for another time.”

REINFORCEMENT

1. The teacher should ask a couple of questions about today’s lesson in the set of the next lesson, to reinforce the content.