



A Leschi: Justice in our Time Lesson Plan

Listening for Leschi: Voices from the Past

by Gwen Perkins

This may be used as a Dig Deep Classroom-Based Assessment for elementary school students.

Summary:

The name “Leschi” peppers our landscape – from streets to parks and schools. Who was this famous Nisqually man and leader? This lesson plan will encourage students to “dig deep” into primary historical materials to learn about Leschi’s time – mid 19th century western Washington. By exploring both written and oral histories, students will come to understand the significance of this period of time in Washington state history, a time of making treaties and, tragically, a time of making war.

During this lesson, students will learn firsthand the value of oral history by conducting an interview to learn about a family other than their own. Building upon these understandings they will have the opportunity to imagine that they are a reporter who can travel back in time and interview Leschi to create a newspaper article that features him. What would Leschi say about the events of his time?

Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs):

This lesson plan satisfies the following EALRs: History 1.2.1, 1.1.1a, Social Studies Skills 1.1.1f, Reading 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, Communication 1.1, 1.2 and Writing 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 3.1, and 3.2.

[Click here](#) to print out the material for your reference.

CBA Scoring Rubric and Notes:








The Office of State Public Instruction has created a scoring rubric for the Dig Deep Classroom-Based Assessment. [Click here](#) to download and print this rubric for your information.



This picture shows a group of men standing at the site near Fort Steilacoom where Leschi was hung. This photograph was taken 47 years after his death in 1905. Washington State Historical Society Collections.

DOWNLOAD AREA

Download the PDFs required for this lesson plan:

-  [The Lesson Plan](#)
-  [Primary Source Documents](#)
-  [Secondary Source Documents](#)
-  [Student Worksheets](#)
-  [Other Teacher Materials](#)
-  [Maps](#)
-  [Rubrics](#)

Essential Questions for Students:

- Who was Leschi? How was he viewed by the people with whom he lived and interacted?
- What were the conflicts that led to his death in 1858? Who were the key figures and events in his struggle?
- How can we use artifacts and documents to help us interpret and tell the story of what happened in the past?

Essential Understandings:

- Students will recognize that historical interpretation requires the use of (often conflicting) multiple types of evidence about the past.
- Students will recognize that not all historical evidence is written down. Oral histories have value and can be used to get a sense of the past from the people who lived it.
- Students will learn to examine primary sources and establish a series of facts to create their own interpretation of the events surrounding Leschi's life and death.

Primary Sources for Student Understanding:

1. [Interview of Mary Leschi](#)
2. [Letter from Isaac Stevens](#)
3. [The Truth Teller](#)
4. [Map of Indian War Battlefields 1855-1856](#)
5. [Oral history excerpts from Billy Frank, Jr.](#) (optional)
6. Pictures of artifacts from the Washington State Historical Society

Primary Sources: A piece of evidence created during the time period under investigation by someone who participated in, witnessed, or commented upon the events that you are studying. It is the surviving record of past events such as photographs, diaries, or artifacts.

Secondary Sources for Student Understanding:

1. [Before the White Man Came to Nisqually Country](#)
2. [Treaty Time at Nisqually](#)
3. [Tribal Homelands & Treaty ceded areas map](#)
4. [Biography of Leschi](#)
5. [What is a Treaty?](#)

Secondary Sources: Books, articles, essays, and lectures created, often using primary sources, that describe and interpret a time period after events have taken place.

Materials Needed:

1. Dictionaries and thesauruses (optional)

Instructions for Teachers:

PREPARATION

Part I.

Please note: You may wish to do this unit as a follow-up to another lesson plan on Nisqually culture, such as [Before the White Man Came](#) or [Understanding Treaties I](#) or this can be done as a stand-alone unit. If your class does not have time to begin with one of these lesson plans, consider asking students to read the following materials aloud or in groups during class to give them a sense of what Nisqually life was like prior to the events illustrated in this unit.

Before the White Man Came
to Nisqually Country

To help prepare yourself for teaching this unit, read the following sources about Leschi and the Nisqually people:

Biography of
Leschi

Treaty Time at
Nisqually

Mary Leschi
interview

Part II. (Student Preparation)

Ask students to bring with them to class an item that they feel tells a story about themselves or their family. This can be a printed article (such as a letter or newspaper clipping), an object that reminds them of an event or special time (perhaps a toy or favorite book) or a photograph. Explain to them beforehand that they will be discussing this object with a partner so that students select an item that they feel they can talk about with others.

SESSION ONE

Part I.

Pair students up in groups of two (an odd group may be formed if necessary).

Tell students that:

- *Today, each one of you has brought with you something that tells a story. Each one of you has a partner and you will be interviewing each other about the objects that you are holding.*
- *Your job is to find the story behind your partner's object. You can use the questions on the sheet provided or make up your own. At the end of this project, you will be asked to share some of the things that you have discovered.*

Pass out the Interviewing with an Artifact worksheet to your students. Explain that they will begin by "trading" objects with their partners. Without speaking to their partners, students should spend 10-15 minutes answering the "Observe" and "Consider" sections on the first part of the worksheet.

After this time has passed, ask students to stop writing and return the object they were given.

Part II.

Students will now be asked to interview one another about the objects that they have just examined. Explain to them that:

- *You will each take turns asking questions about the objects- or artifacts- that your partner has brought.*
- *Using the questions on the worksheet as a guide, try to find out as much as possible about the story of your partner's artifact.*

Part III.

After students have had the opportunity to interview- and be interviewed by- their partners, bring the group back together to share some of the stories that they discovered about these objects.

After students have finished sharing, engage them in the following discussion:

- *Do you think that the stories you learned today were history? Why or why not?*
- *What are some of the things you learned from this artifact that you could not have learned from a book?*
- *Look back at what you wrote about the item before you did the interview. Do you think that your feelings about the object changed how you did your interview? Do you think that if you hated the item your partner was holding that you would ask different questions?*
- *When you talked about your object, how did your feelings change the way you talked about it? Did you tell a different story than you might have if you didn't feel that way?*

Share with students that they will be exploring more artifacts, including letters, photographs and interviews to help tell another story- that of Leschi, the Nisqually leader after whom many places and landmarks are named in Washington state.

SESSION TWO

Part I.

Explain the following to students, projecting the provided maps or photos where appropriate:

- *You are going to explore a period of time more than 100 years ago in western Washington state. We are going to focus on a tribe of Native American people who called themselves Squally-absch, or Nisqually.*
- *We are going to focus on the life of a famous Nisqually man—named Chief Leschi -- who became a leader to his people.*
- *By looking at very old documents and photos, we are going to explore how different people felt about him.*

Ask them to remember the interviews they did before and how their feelings about their partner's artifact affected the types of things they wanted to know about these objects. They should also be reminded of how the stories they told about their own items changed based on their own experiences.

Part II.

Pair the students up and ask them to read the following article in class. Make sure that dictionaries or other reference material is available.

Treaty Time
at Nisqually

Vocabulary
Organizer

Have them underline words that they didn't understand and discuss what they think those words mean. Students will add these words to their vocabulary organizer as they go along.

When you bring them back together, project digital images of, or show transparencies of, maps that show the shift of the Nisqually people from their original tribal homelands to the establishment of their tribal reservation after Medicine Creek.

Tribal Reservations &
Treaty Ceded Areas Map

The Medicine Creek Treaty

- The treaty got its name from She-Nah-Num Medicine Creek where the treaty negotiations were held.
- 600 Indians were present with representatives from the Nisqually, Puyallup, Steilacoom, Squawksin, S'Homamish, Steh'chass, T'Peek-sin, Squiaitl and Sa-heh-wamish tribes.
- When it was announced that the reservation for the Nisquallies was located on the high forested land west of the Nisqually delta, Leschi refused to sign the treaty. One of the reasons was because the tribe's request for a portion of the Nisqually River was denied.
- The Puyallup tribe was also disappointed with the reservation land proposed. The Squaxin Island reserve appears to be the only land ceded without question.
- The Medicine Creek Treaty was the only treaty to be ratified in 1855 by the U.S. government.

With your students, examine the effects of the Medicine Creek treaty on the Nisqually people. Provide them with a brief overview about what happened and discuss what treaties were.

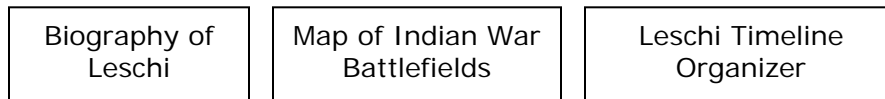
After students have had a chance to read through the article provided, engage them in discussion about treaties and their effects on the Nisqually people.

Ask them to consider the following:

- *What is a treaty?*
- *Why didn't Leschi want to sign the Medicine Creek treaty?*
- *What was at stake for the tribes? What was at stake for the U.S. government?*
- *What were the effects of the treaty on the Nisqually people?*

Part III. (Homework)

Pass out to students the biography on Leschi for reading as homework. Review with them what a timeline is and make sure that they are comfortable with the timeline organizer provided. Explain that as they read the biography, they should add events that they feel are important to the timeline. Suggest that they use this timeline as a guide to their readings so that they can follow important events.



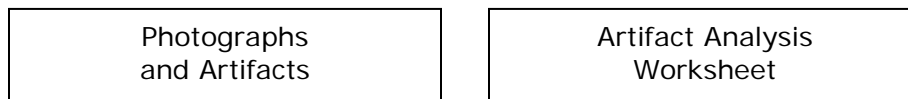
Request that they bring their timeline to class as it will be of use to them in outlining their papers.

SESSION THREE

Part I.

Have students post their timelines around the room. What were some of the things that students noted as important? What questions did they generate?

Explain to students that now that they have read about Leschi and who he was, explain to them that they will be investigating his life further. Now they are going to look at primary documents. Explain for them the difference between primary and secondary materials. The first thing that they will be asked to do is look at a series of pictures. Pass out the photograph assignment sheet.



Ask students the following:

- *Do you recognize any of the names underneath the pictures?*
- *Who do you know? What do you know about them from the reading?*
- *How do these people fit into the story of Leschi?*

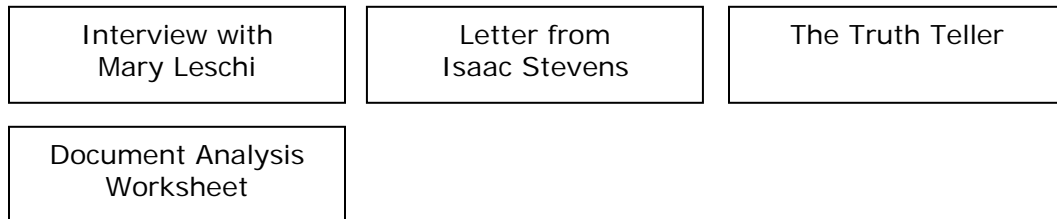
Part II.

After discussing what students know about these people, ask them to break into small groups. Each group should be assigned 1-2 photographs to write about in their assignment sheets. They should use the readings that they have already been assigned in order to complete this activity. Remind them to use their timelines as

needed to record valuable information that they may find during the course of this activity.

Part III.

Divide the class into 2 parts. Give one half of the class one reading (the Mary Leschi interview) and the other half of the class the other reading (the letter from Isaac Stevens) as homework. Alternately, the Truth Teller (believed to be written by August Kautz and William Tolmie) can be used to divide the class into a third group or as a supplement, using the same worksheet.



Ask them to consider the following points as they read for discussion in class the next day:

- *Who was the person that told the story?*
- *Do you think that this person liked Leschi? Why or why not?*
- *Based on this reading, what kind of person do you think Leschi was? Do you agree or disagree with what the writer or person interviewed had to say?*

SESSION FOUR

Part I.

Gather the class together and ask them: *what does your document say about Leschi?* You may wish to have the group that read the Stevens letter sit on one side of the room and the group that read the Mary Leschi interview sit on the other. Take turns calling on students to answer in the discussion.

Some possible discussion points are:

- *Who were the people telling the story? How did they feel about Leschi?*
- *How did what you read match up with some of the things that have already been discussed about Leschi?*
- *Do you think they gave a realistic interpretation of what kind of man Leschi was? Why or why not do you believe what they had to say?*
- *After listening to your classmates, how do these stories differ in what they say about Leschi and what happened? What things do they agree upon?*

Ask students to revisit the exercise that they did at the beginning of the lesson- that of interviewing someone else about their artifact. How did their personal feelings about the items that they saw affect how they portrayed those objects? Do they feel that either person in the materials they read let their own feelings affect how they described people or events?

Part II.

Review with students some of the things that they have discovered in their readings and lectures. Ask them to look over some of the tools that they have used throughout this lesson: the timeline, the artifact analysis and the interview analysis worksheets.

Explain to students that they will be using the information that they have gathered about these people when they imagine that they are a reporter who can travel back in time to speak to the Nisqually leader, Leschi. They will have to imagine that he is answering the questions provided and *support their reasons* for why they believe he would have answered that way. It is suggested that the questions be reviewed or that students select questions provided on the interview prompt sheet. Students will need to dig into the past to ask Leschi questions about some of the events they have studied.

Interviewing Leschi worksheet

During this process, students will discover their own interpretations of this historical figure as well as describe what this period of history was like. Please refer back to the scoring goals listed in the [CBA Rubric](#) to determine grading for this assignment.

Students may complete the assignment in class or do as homework. It is recommended that you provide them with dictionaries and thesauruses in order to finish the assignment. You may wish to have them complete a first draft and peer review each other's work before turning in the final paper.