

A Treaty Trail Lesson Plan

**Understanding Treaties:
Students Explore the Lives of Yakama People
Before and After Treaties**

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***Can be used to satisfy the Constitutional Issues
Classroom-Based Assessment***

Summary:

What are “Indian treaties” and what does that old stuff have to do with me today? This is not an uncommon response when students are challenged to investigate this complex topic. After completing these curricular units, students should be able to answer this basic question.

These lessons involve active role-play of stakeholders in treaty negotiations. Students analyze the goals of the tribes and the U.S. government, to evaluate bias, and to emotionally connect with what was gained and lost during this pivotal time. Students will realize that the term ‘treaty rights’ refers to the guarantee, by treaty, of pre-existing Indian rights, as opposed to special rights given or granted to them.

The first part, “Pre-Contact”, describes the lives of the Yakama people prior to contact with settlers and the United States government and emphasizes tribal relationships to the land and the daily life that existed prior to Euro-American settlement.

The second part, “Understanding Treaties”, gives high school students the experience of losing places they hold dear and seeks to enrich their understanding of the treaties.

In the third part, in order to satisfy the “Constitutional Issues” CBA, students will be asked to choose a contemporary debate over treaty rights in Washington state, take a position on that controversy, and write a persuasive paper.

Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs)

This lesson plan satisfies the following EALRs: History 1.1.3b, History WH 1.2.3, Civics 1.2.3a, Civics 4.2.3a, Civics 1.1.3b, Civics 4.1.3a and the following Social Studies skills: 1.1.3f. [Click here](#) to print out the material for your reference.



This Clovis point is shown at actual size (15 centimeters long). Unearthed by archaeologists in eastern Washington and dating back 11,000 years, these points are the oldest artifacts in the Washington State History Museum's collection.

CBA Scoring Rubric and Notes: The Office of State Public Instruction has created a scoring rubric for the Constitutional Issues Classroom-Based Assessment. [Click here to download](#) and print this rubric for your information.

Essential Understandings:

- Through an experiential activity, students will understand the significance of Native American loss of land and resources.
- Students will understand that treaties are identified by the U.S. Constitution as “the supreme law of the land.” Treaties were a guarantee of pre-existing Indian rights, as opposed to special rights given or granted to them.

Essential Questions for Students:

1. What sort of meaning and significance does land have for Native American nations?
2. How did the Yakama Nation and other Native American tribes react when their lands and important places were taken from them? Why?
3. Why are U.S.-Indian treaties still significant today?

Primary Sources for Student Examination (provided):







1. Images of primary documents and artifacts at the Washington State Historical Society.

Secondary Sources for Student Examination (provided):

1. [Map of Washington State counties](#)
2. [tribal homelands map](#)
3. [Washington state Indian reservations map](#)
4. [“The Legend of Mt. Adams”](#)
5. [“The Ancient Inhabitants of the Eyakema Valley”](#)
6. [Federally-Recognized Tribes of the Columbia-Snake Basin: Yakama](#)
7. [Map of Treaty Trail](#)
8. [Treaty Timeline](#)
9. [Kamiakin biography](#)

DOWNLOAD AREA

Download the PDFs required for this lesson plan:

-  [The Lesson Plan](#)
-  [Secondary Source Readings](#)
-  [Graphic Organizer](#)
-  [Maps](#)
-  [Treaty Timeline](#)
-  [Student Worksheets](#)

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

Part One – The Life of Yakama People Before Contact

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS:

PART ONE, SESSION ONE

Step I.

To truly understand the impact of the treaties between tribes and the United States government, one must also understand the importance of the land, its resources and the role each played (and continues to play) in the daily practical and spiritual lives of the tribes themselves. Only then can one comprehend what was at stake during the negotiations of

the Walla Walla Councils of 1855 and why treaty rights today are so painstakingly and ferociously guarded by the tribes who entered into them.

Therefore the lessons contained in these units begin with the concept of the sacred circle, the integral connection of tribes to their lands. Once students comprehend this symbiosis of people and land, they can begin to understand the high stakes of treaty negotiations and the legacy of sadness, anger, loss and empowerment that continues today.

Students are then—and only then—prepared to study the negotiations themselves.

Prepare yourself for this discussion by reviewing the following materials: [Breaking the Sacred Circle](#), [What is a Treaty?](#), [Kamiakin biography](#) and the [Federally-Recognized Tribes of the Columbia-Snake Basin: Yakama](#).

Step II.

Drawing from your copy of “Breaking the Sacred Circle”, explain the key elements of the circle.

Explain to the students that the common sacred symbol or object of great significance, for many of the (over 500!) Indian nations in the United States is the circle.

Ask students if they know of any other symbols that are commonly understood among many countries, perhaps even the whole world. Responses might vary from a white flag, symbolizing surrender or peace, to the dove, the United Nations symbol on its flag, to the Red Cross as a symbol for medical assistance. Still others will identify the Christian cross, the Star of David, and other religious symbols.

Point out to the students that to combine all the meanings of the symbols they’ve just identified would just about illustrate the importance of the Sacred Circle to tribal people all over what is now the United States and Canada.

Explain that living outside of this circle, that is, outside of natural harmony, was never considered a possibility for tribal people, as this belief was as fundamental as breathing. You might ask your students to think of beliefs, traditions, and life ways in their own lives that are important and help to define who they are as individuals, families, and communities. To give up all of that (and more) is what Indian people faced after the coming of the white man.

Reveal that this discussion lays the groundwork for the study of U.S.-Indian treaties and how they are important to students today. Explain to your class that in order to understand the impact of these treaties, they will need to explore how life changed for the Yakama as a result of contact with Euro-American settlers and the United States government.

Share that they will be asked at the end of this lesson plan to write a persuasive paper on a contemporary debate over treaty rights in Washington state. You may wish to suggest that students begin thinking about potential topics for discussion.

The Sacred Circle...

- Represents the cyclical power of nature and therefore life itself, as opposed to the linear direction of Western European progress;
- Represents the concept that everything in nature has its own place;
- Includes the mental, spiritual, cultural and physical well being of individuals and groups;
- Is a shape that is repeatedly found in Nature;
- Is a shape that is reflected in traditional Indian activities and artifacts: the base of the tipi and campfire circles, for example.

Hand out to students the [“The Legend of Mt. Adams”](#) and [“The Ancient Inhabitants of the Eyakema Valley”](#). Have them read the articles in class. The focus of this reading should be to understand the life ways of the Yakama people and to connect to the concept of the sacred circle. Ask your students to help you make a list of the ways the Yakama people related to the land.

Step III.

Ask students to complete the following [Sacred Space Assignment](#) as homework:

- *Create a floor plan of a place you consider uniquely yours and sacred. This is typically a bedroom, but could also be a favorite, private place that you like to go to play or think, or it could be a church or a place of prayer.*
- *Be as detailed as possible and list or draw all the items contained in this area.*

This might be an opportunity to introduce or reinforce map skills. You will need to remind them of the bird's eye or overhead view concept so that students can use this to define their floor plans. You may choose to model a floor plan by drawing a bird's eye view of the classroom on the board.

Ask students to complete this drawing before your next lesson on the history and everyday life of the Yakama People. You can explain to them that it will be used to illustrate the treaty negotiation process that the Walla Walla and Yakama tribes entered into in 1855.

PART ONE, SESSION TWO

Step I.

Distribute the copies of the [map of Washington State counties](#). Students should outline Adams, Chelan, Franklin, Kittitas, and Yakima counties and approximately half of adjoining Douglas and Klickitat counties. Stress that this is the area in which the Yakamas (as well as other tribes) roamed freely before the coming of the white man.

Project the [map of tribal homelands](#) in Washington Territory prior to European contact and then juxtapose this with a [map of Native American reservations](#) today. Have them identify the Yakama Reservation and mark its approximate location on their map. Ask them:

Given what you have learned about the Yakama relationship to the land, how would you expect them to react to the loss of this land?

Explain that they will be learning about **treaties**, the primary mechanism that divested the Yakama people of their homeland and placed them, and other tribes, on reservations.

Step II.

Prepare your students for the reading that they are about to do by engaging them in a pre-reading strategy called “Story Impressions.” Hand out the [Story Impression Assignment](#) and walk through instructions with them. Give them a maximum of 15 minutes to complete it. Have them put their name on them and save.

Yakama or Yakima?

The term “Yakama” is the one currently used by the Yakama Nation. The tribal council decided that they would go back to the original spelling in the 1855 Treaty. “Yakama” was how the name was spelled by the non-tribal interpreters. In 1998, the tribal council voted to drop the term “Indian” from the name of the nation.

The Yakama Nation is comprised of tribal members from the 14 tribes and bands.

This exercise is designed to heighten students' reading comprehension by highlighting key words in advance. As a free-write exercise, it also encourages creative written expression.

Now distribute the reading [Federally-Recognized Tribes of the Columbia-Snake Basin: Yakama](#). After giving them time to read, pair them up and have them share their Story Impressions by reading to each other. Have them discuss their favorite “bloopers.” Before moving on, facilitate a discussion of what they were most surprised to discover from this reading.

Step III.

At the end of class, distribute copies of [What is a Treaty?](#) and ask students to read them as homework.

Part Two – Understanding Treaties

Materials Needed:

[Student Handouts 2, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d](#)

PART TWO, SESSION ONE

Step I.

This lesson on the U.S.-Indian treaties of Washington State gives high school students the experience of having to lose places they hold dear (this place has been established by their homework assignment of Part One).

The students will be broken up into four groups, each representing different historic actors or stakeholders and interests. After each group is prepared for their role, the groups will engage in mock treaty negotiations. These negotiations will be used to illustrate the effects of U.S.-Indian treaties on both sides involved.



Arrival of the Nez Perce Walla Walla Treaty, May 1855
by Gustav Sohon.

Step II.

Project, or hand out, the [treaty timeline](#) so that you can point out how tribes experienced treaties first with European colonists, and then later from 1778-1871 with the American Government. Point out:

1. An early treaty between a tribe (e.g., the Iroquois people) and the English colonial government.
2. A later treaty between a tribe (e.g., the Yakama) and the United States government.

Treaty: “...an agreement, binding and legal between two or more sovereign nations. When nations make treaties with each other, they also recognize that each is sovereign; that is, that each has legitimate political power of its own.”

Emphasize that:

Treaties were international agreements between separate sovereigns who remained separate after signing the treaties.

The Continental Congress signed one treaty with the Delaware in 1778 (it is correct to say though that the US was not then “newly independent”)

The Articles of Confederation Congress from 1781-89 signed 8 treaties with tribes starting with the Cherokee in 1785, the Shawnee, Choctaw, and other tribes in 1786, and two

treaties with other tribes in Jan. 1789 all BEFORE Geo Wash was sworn in as President in April 30, 1789. The treaty with the Yakama tribe was much later in 1855.

Step III.

First, make sure each student has her own sacred space floor plan from the previous lesson. Explain to students that today they will role play the potential loss of some of the sacred places they have drawn. Some will take on the role of a younger or older brother or sister in trying to share the sacred place and some will take on the role of parents.

Step IV.

Have the students look at the maps of their sacred places and ask the following questions:

- *“What would it take for you to be forced to give up your sacred places?”*

Possible responses might include parents force them to move (but this could be a good thing, because they might have a promise of a bigger, better sacred place—as in the case of many colonists), a fire or some other disaster destroys it, or there is a family problem (death, divorce, or some other personal safety issue) that forces a move (as in the case of some colonists or immigrants)

- *“What would it take for you to be willing to give up part of your sacred place?”*

Possible responses might include a new family member who needs to share the space, or parents need part of the space for various reasons, etc.

Step V.

Consider asking students some of the following questions after they have completed this activity:

- *Do you think that this word can mean different things to different people? How might it differ and why?*
- *What words did you think related to this word? Why? Out of the things that we have discussed so far, how many of them are connected to this word? How are they connected?*

Step VI.

Break up the students into four equal groups—A, B, C, D – as follows:

Note: Those who do not have floor plans should be placed in either Group A or Group C instead of B or D.

<p>B. “Siblings”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiates with Group B • Are as powerful (or less powerful) than the people they are negotiating with. • Want to get as much of the other person’s sacred space as possible. 	<p>A. “Sons/Daughters”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiates with Group D • Are less powerful than other group. • Less willing to help others because of past treatment. • Trying to protect as much of their space as possible.
<p>C. “Siblings”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiates with Group A • Are as powerful as people they are negotiating with. • Willing to help siblings. • Want to protect as much of their sacred place as possible. 	<p>D. “Parents”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiates with Group C • Are enormously powerful. • Want to get as much of the other person’s sacred space as possible. • See the other side’s surrender as inevitable.

Step VII (optional).

Break the students into their assigned groups and distribute their corresponding handouts (3a – 3d).

Students will negotiate in pairs. You should choose which of the student's "sacred spaces" will serve as the point of negotiation.

All students should feel free to negotiate a treaty based on what is best for them individually and what is unique to their situation (the maps of the sacred places), but ask that they remain within the parameters of the handouts.

You will need to explain to students the roles associated with their group designation by getting them to look at the top of their Treaty Negotiation handouts. Expect that all students will want to be parents (the power structure will not be lost on them!) You, the teacher, will act as the ultimate authority in these negotiations.

Note: You will constantly side with Group D (the parents of Group C) and Group B (siblings of Group A), even if their tactics are unfair.

Give student groups time to work through the questions and concepts in the handouts and develop their strategies.

Distribute [Student Handout 4](#) for students. *Ask them to record their treaty settlements on the handout.*

Let the negotiations begin! Allow at least 15 minutes for the negotiations. Expect that discussions will get heated; try your best not to interfere.

PART TWO, SESSION TWO

Step I.

Bring the class back together. Collect their handouts and organize them into two piles: 1) the A-B negotiations and 2) C-D negotiations. If you have time, read examples from each set aloud.

Ask how sibling-to-sibling negotiations differed from parent to child negotiations.

Project the 1851 map provided of the United States. Use this map to illustrate to students the approximate locations of the groups in the following discussion.



Explain what each group represented (Group A represented English Colonial interests/Group B Northeast tribes and Group C United States interests/Group D Washington Territory tribes).

Explain that:

- *The difference between the relative power relations of Group A-B, compared to Group C-D parallels the realities of treaty tribes from colonial times to the end of*

treaty negotiations in 1870. Generally speaking, the more tribes experienced the impact of non-Native settlement, disease, and economic changes, the less able they were to control the treaty negotiations.

Explain that during the treaty era, the United States government broke almost all of its treaties, including the over 60 treaties it negotiated with Pacific Northwest tribes.

Step II.

Facilitate a discussion by asking students to look at their newly negotiated sacred places, then discuss the following:

- *What personal habits or practices will have to change as a result of the treaties you negotiated?*
- *Did you ever feel threatened or feel like you had no choice in what was happening to your sacred places?*

Now that they see their sacred places carved up (and for some they might be displaced altogether), also ask them to answer the following questions:

- *How do you feel toward the person with whom you negotiated?*
- *What is the level of trust and respect between you and them?*
- *How confident are you that you've seen the last of this type of negotiation?*
- *Do you feel like you were given rights to your sacred places, or did you feel like rights were taken away?*

Distribute the [Vocabulary Graphic Organizer](#) and make dictionaries available. Engage in classroom discussion about:

- *What is the meaning of the following terms: treaty and sovereignty?*

Consider asking students after they have completed this activity:

- *Do you think that this word can mean different things to different people? How?*

Be sure to allow time for the sharing of emotions. Students may either journal or discuss in pairs, groups, or as a class.

Part Three – Writing a Persuasive Paper

Explain to students that their research and writing assignment is the following:

***What are the various perspectives on Native American treaty rights?
How do treaty rights issues relate to our democratic ideals and how do they
involve our rights and responsibilities?***

Allow your students some research time in the library so that they can choose a contemporary treaty rights controversy. Suggest to them that they might consider treaty fishing rights, treaty whaling rights, recovery of tribal land, controversies over casinos and sovereignty, or other issues in the news close to you.

Take the time to review with students the difference between primary and secondary source materials. You may also wish to review some of the different resources available to them to use when writing the paper and the appropriate citations of those sources.

Go to the Office of State Public Instruction's Constitutional Issues CBA on their website at:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Assessment/WASL/SocialStudies/CBAs/HS-ConstitutionalIssuesCBA.pdf>

in order to acquire and hand out to students the *Constitutional Issues* Student Assignment, Student Checklist, Graphic Organizer, and Paper Outline. This is also where you will get detailed instructions and the scoring rubric for your use.