**Native American Summary and Lesson**

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**Summary**

Our unit readings on Native Americans have been enlightening, as well as saddening.   I came into this topic with a reasonably realistic understanding of the atrocities associated history of the indigenous people of North and South America.  Even so, to re-read the histories, to analyze the data, the poetry and art does not get easier, no matter how much you think you know.  This made me realize that it important to keep talking about it, to keep learning, to continue to try to break away apathetic acceptance and to foster new ways of thinking in our future generation.  Simply knowing the horrors, the unjust actions is not enough, it is still too easy to remain disconnected.  In *Why I’m Not Thankful For Thanksgiving*, Michael Dorris states, “No one gains by allowing an inequitable and discriminatory status quo to persist.”  We cannot deny that this still exists, we have not overcome racism, classism, or religious self-righteousness.  This is not a land of equal opportunities for all.  As teachers we need to recognize these facts and not live in a dream world, the rose-colored glasses need to come off.  To best help our students, those who are marginalized and those who have the privilege of power, we must be aware of the challenges each group faces and develop strategies best suited to meeting and overcoming them in hopes of closing those gaps, however slowly.  This starts with us questioning the “excuse of progress in the annihilation of races, and the telling of history from the standpoint of the conquerors and leaders” (Zinn, 1995).  Anton Tueur's book made me feel better about asking questions about things I don't understand, even if doing so exemplifies my ignorance or misunderstandings.  It is alright to ask hard or seemingly inappropriate questions, so long as it is done in a genuine way, I won't be afraid to do this any longer.  In my time as an educator I hope to teach my students the importance of questioning, the value of forming well researched opinions and conclusions based on data, and instill a sense of holistic inquiry and genuine curiosity and interest in regards to the world and the people around them.  We must do all we can to stop the expression of Victoria Lena Manyarrows’ poem from being that of our future generations.

**Lesson**

Grade Level: Middle Grades 5-7

Subject: Social Studies, Economics

Objectives:

Students will **know** the existence of the poor living conditions and poverty that exists on many Indian Reservations **by** viewing images, hearing stories, and conducting research. This knowledge will be demonstrated by answering questions and reflecting in their social studies notebooks.

Students will **understand** the struggle of living in poverty **by** creating a budget for an individual or family living at or below poverty or extreme poverty level.

Students will **identify** with youth roughly their own age who are living in poverty **by** hearing their stories and reflecting on their situations through creative writing.

Materials:

* Computers, one per group
* Social Studies Notebook
* Pencil
* Handouts: Introduction & Budget Sheet, Living Condition Cards, Twist Cards

Introduction:

Watch first segment (8:45) of Hidden America, Children of the Plains, and ABC special report of Lakota Sioux youth living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Students will answer the following questions throughout the video in their social studies notebooks:

1. Name 3 challenges Robert is facing.
2. Name 3 strengths Robert possesses.
3. Reflect of the visual images of poverty and living conditions you witnessed in the video footage.

Allow time for sharing and discussion

Activity:

Break students into heterogeneous and intentional learning teams of 3-4 members.

Assign each group as members of one of the poorest major Indian Reservations in the US:

* Group 1: San Carlos Indian Reservation of Arizona
* Group 2: Pine Ridge Indian Reservation of South Dakota
* Group 3: Tohono O’odham Indian Reservation of Arizona
* Group 4: Standing Rock Indian Reservation of South and North Dakota

Hand out *Living Conditions Cards*

* Card 1: Family of 4 living in extreme poverty (Income $11,000/yr.)
* Card 2: Family of 4 living at poverty level (Income $22,000/yr.)
* Card 3: Individual living in extreme poverty (Income $3,000/yr.)
* Card 4: Family of 6 living below poverty level (Income $26,000/yr.)

Hand out *Introduction and Budget Sheets*

(Beginning of Worksheet)

Our names are:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We are members of the\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Tribe.

We live on the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Indian Reservation in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Here is a little information about the reservation where we live:

* Poverty Rate:
* Extreme Poverty Rate:
* Unemployment Rate:
* Percentage of homes with telephone service:
* Percentage of homes without electricity:

Below is our yearly budget we live on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ per year.

There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people in our family.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Expense** | **Amount** |
| Housing |  |
| Personal Items |  |
| Food |  |
| Energy (heat/electricity) |  |
| Clothing |  |
| Health Care |  |
| Transportation (car, repairs/bus) |  |
| Communication (phone/internet) |  |
| Entertainment |  |
| Other: |  |
| **Total:** |  |

List of Resources and Social Service Organizations in our area:

(examples: food shelves, energy assistance, soup kitchens, medical assistance, clothing donation, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(End of Worksheet)

Discuss and provide examples of expense categories.

Check for understanding of reasonable amounts for expenses, provide examples.

Midway through activity hand out *Twist Cards*

* Extremely cold winter, increase heating costs by $400
* Emergency medical treatment needed, uninsured, increase health care by $350
* You/Your family has qualified for financial assistance increase your yearly budget by $2,000
* You/Your family has qualified for food stamps, all of your food is paid for, budget 0 in this category

Student groups will turn in completed Introduction and Budget Sheets for grading on completeness and quality of work.

Students will return to their regular seats and individually answer the following reflection questions in their social studies notebook.

* Was the amount of money you earned or received per year enough for you and your family to live comfortably on?
* Did you have to give anything up in order to meet your basic needs (food, shelter, clothing)? If so, what were the first things that you decided to go without?
* Describe your emotions when you were presented with your Twist Card.
* Was it easy to find information on organizations or services to help people in need in your area?

Students will turn social studies notebooks in, with completed video and reflection questions, for grading on quality and clarity of answers.

Ongoing Study:

Students will be provided with the link for the video, Hidden America: Children of the Plains that they can access from home or from their study hall class.

They will be instructed to view the remaining 30 minutes of the program, choose one featured youth from the report, and choose one of the following activities to complete:

* Write a one page journal entry from the perspective of the child you identified most with. Submit neatly handwritten journal entry.
* Continue their story. From the perspective of the TV Reporter write a one page article on the child that takes place five years after the airing of the program. Submit typed article, don’t forget your title!
* Create a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Pine Ridge reservation, connect this history to current living conditions and opportunities. PowerPoint must contain a minimum of 10 slides.

Activities will be graded on meeting length criteria, thoroughness and quality of work. Students will have 4 days from the date assigned to complete this assignment.

Grading and Assessment:

* Social Studies Notebook Video Questions/Reflection 1 point per question for thoroughness of answer

1 point per question for originality of though

1 point per question for clarity and readability

Total possible 3 points per question, **9 points total**

* Introduction and Budgeting Activity 5 points for completeness

5 points for quality of work

5 points for accuracy of factual information

**15 possible points**, cooperatively graded project

* Social Studies Notebook Activity Reflection 1 point per question for thoroughness of answer

1 point per question for originality of though

1 point per question for clarity and readability

Total possible 3 points per question, **9 points total**

* Video Take Home Activity **20 points possible** based on quality and thoroughness of work.

**References**

Dorris, Michael *Why I'm Not Thankful for Thanksgiving*

Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development (2008). *The State of Native Nations: Conditions Under U.S. Policies of Self-Determination*. New York: Oxford University Press. Web.

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US Census Bureau (2010). *American Community Survey Housing Summary File*. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau.

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