



## SOCIAL SCIENCES

# Tribal Flags Show Who We Are

### ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- **Sovereignty**
- **Identity**

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand that Oregon's Tribes are sovereign nations.
- Recognize that Tribes use flags to show who they are
- Understand why there are symbols on Tribal flags

### STANDARDS

- 1.12: Identify songs and symbols commonly associated with the United States of America.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What is sovereignty?
- What do flags mean for Oregon's Tribes?

### REQUIRED TIME

- 30 minutes

## Overview

Students explore Oregon's Native Tribes flags. They are introduced to ways flags represent tribes and to the concept of sovereignty. Students find and discuss symbols on tribal flags and understand that they represent what is important to tribes.

## Background for Teachers

This lesson focuses on the Essential Understandings, Identity and Sovereignty, as expressed through tribal flags. Sovereignty is the natural condition and right of Oregon's Native Tribes to determine how they live and to be self-governed. One way tribes express their sovereignty is through official flags that use symbols representing their culture, history, and identity. Many Oregon Tribes have flags with meaningful symbols that tell their stories.



Key ideas that students will learn in this lesson include

- Oregon Tribes make their own decisions about how to live as a part of their sovereignty.
- Tribes have flags just like counties and states.
- Flags use pictures and colors to tell stories and express identity.

## Considerations for Teachers

### Practices

While teaching this lesson, the following principles can help guide your decision-making and engagement with students.

- Focus on teaching the Essential Understandings of Identity and Sovereignty through an exploration of tribal flags.
- When sharing content with students, address the "why" not just the "what."
- Highlight the strengths of Oregon's Indigenous peoples today while also acknowledging their history and tradition.
- Ensure your teaching practices are accessible and appropriate for Native and non-Native students.

### Assessment

During this lesson, observe and listen to students during discussions and as they work independently and collaboratively to determine how their learning is progressing. Write down what you notice about what students say and do in relation to the success criteria. Use this formative information to provide feedback to students and plan next steps.

At the end of the lesson, provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their learning through a self-assessment. Students can indicate their level of learning (just starting,

### KEY WORDS and IDEAS

- **Flag:** A piece of cloth with special colors and pictures that represents a group of people.
- **Symbol:** A picture that stands for something important.
- **Tribe:** A group of Native American people who share culture and history.
- **Sovereignty:** The power to make your own rules and take care of your own people.

### MATERIALS

**What materials are needed for students to engage in this activity?**

- Slide deck
- Drawing paper and crayons



making progress, nailed it) in relation to specific success criteria. They can also write out an explanation of why they feel they are at that learning stage.

## Success Criteria

- I can say why tribes have flags.
- I can name one symbol I see on tribal flag.
- I can explain why tribes make their own decisions.

## Opening

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**Time: 5 minutes**

### Step 1:

Show students a map of Oregon that includes the locations of the nine federally recognized Tribes. Ask students to find the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Students can search for the Tribe's seal on the map.

Let students know that today they will be learning about the Tribe's flag.

### Step 2:

Share the essential questions, learning outcomes, success criteria and key words and ideas with students.

## Main Activity

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**Time: 20 minutes**

### Step 1:

Show students the flag of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Ask: "What do you see? Where have you seen flags before?"

### Step 2:

Say to students, "This is a special flag that belongs to a tribe in Oregon. Just like our country and state have flags, tribes have flags too. Today we'll learn about tribal flags and what they mean."

**Step 3:**

Point to different parts of the Umatilla flag. Say: "Each picture on this flag is called a symbol. Symbols are pictures that tell us something important."

**Step 4:**

Show a clip from the video, "[What's In A Flag: The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation](#)". Play the video from 4:24 min through 5:16 min to hear an explanation of the flag's symbols.

- Ask questions, such as, What symbols do you see on the flag? What do the symbols mean? Why do you think the Umatilla people use those symbols?

Explain to students that, "Tribes have flags because they are nations that make their own decisions. This is part of a big word called 'sovereignty' (write the word on the board, have students say it a few times). Having a flag is part of how all nations show they have sovereignty."

**Step 5:**

Show students a map of Oregon again that includes the locations of the nine federally recognized Tribes. Ask students to find the Coquille Indian Tribe. Students can search for the Tribe's seal on the map.

Let students know that next they will be learning about the Tribe's flag.

**Step 6:**

Show the Coquille Indian Tribe flag. Ask students to take a look at the flag of the Coquille Indian Tribe. Ask students

- What symbols do you see on the flag?
- What do the symbols mean?
- Why do you think the Coquille people use those symbols?

Explain to students what some of the symbols mean.

- The house (a traditional home called a plankhouse)
- The tree (used to build homes)



- The spear (used for fishing)

Explain to students that Nations put symbols on their flags to show what's important to them and express their identity.

### **Step 7:**

Have students draw their own flag with symbols that show what is important to them and their family. Ask them to explain what their symbols mean.

## **Closing**

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**Time: 5 minutes**

### **Step 1:**

Ask students to complete these sentences:

- "Tribes have flags because..."
- "One symbol I saw was..."

### **Step 2:**

Provide an overview of the day's learning. Say to students, "Today we learned that Oregon Tribes have their own flags with special symbols. These flags show that tribes make their own decisions and are proud of who they are."

### **Step 3:**

Ask students to self-assess based on the success criteria.

## **Additional Resources**



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- Kindergarten social sciences lesson by [The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Who Am I? - Exploring Culture](#)

## Student Self-Assessment

**Name:**

**Directions:** Read aloud the lesson Success Criteria in the first column to students. Have them indicate if they were able to meet the criteria by marking it in the handout, with hand gestures, or by sharing aloud. Ask students to explain why they chose “not yet” or “yes” to a peer.

Can I ...	Not Yet	Yes
		
say why tribes have flags?		
name one symbol I see on tribal flag?		
explain why tribes make their own decisions?		