



SOCIAL STUDIES

The Wonders of Regalia

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- **Sovereignty**
- **Lifeways**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will understand

- why people wear special kinds of dress to celebrate rituals and traditions,
- the meaning of regalia worn by Native Tribes in Oregon, and
- that tribal sovereignty means Native Tribes can wear symbols of importance, such as regalia, to express themselves culturally.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why do people wear special kinds of dress to celebrate traditions?
- Why is it important for Tribes to be able to wear their own regalia for their rituals and ceremonies?

REQUIRED TIME

- 35 minutes

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about the importance and meaning of regalia to Native Tribes in Oregon. Students will learn that ritual dress is a meaningful part of cultural ceremonies, events, and celebrations. It connects people to their ancestors and fosters a sense of belonging.

Background for Teachers

This lesson focuses on the Essential Understandings, Sovereignty and Lifeways. Tribal sovereignty refers to the right of tribes to govern themselves and maintain their customs and traditions, independent of external influence. The Essential Understanding, Lifeways, focuses on the ideas that Native cultures and traditions are shaped by cultural values that guide Indigenous ways of life. This includes the systems and legacies communities have attempts to limit or eradicate them.

This lesson plan explores how regalia is an expression of both lifeways and sovereignty, allowing students to see the continuity between past and present



traditions. Regalia symbolizes heritage, spiritual beliefs, and ceremonial roles. It often includes intricate beadwork, feathers, fringes, headdresses, and bright colors. It is formal attire used in traditional tribal practices vs. academic regalia (cap & gown) or regalia that indicates status (Senate pins) or group membership (Girl Scouts). Regalia serves as a symbol of cultural heritage and pride, allowing tribes to assert their unique identities and traditions. As an expression of sovereignty, tribes often hold cultural events such as powwows and ceremonies where regalia is prominently featured, demonstrating the tribe's rights to self-expression and cultural preservation.

Considerations for Teachers

Practices

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

- Encourage students to make personal connections to the regalia.
- Use open-ended questions to facilitate deeper thinking and discussion.
- Link the lesson content to the broader theme of sovereignty, helping students understand why Native Tribes should be free to practice their cultural traditions in the way they choose.
- When sharing content with students, address the “why” not just the “what”.
- Ensure your teaching practices are accessible and appropriate for Native and non-Native students.

MATERIALS

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

- Printouts of the handouts in the lesson
- Video
- Pronunciation of Regalia (ruh·**gae**·lee·uh)

KEY WORDS and IDEAS

- **Sovereignty** - The power to make your own rules and take care of your own people.
- **Tribal Regalia** – Special, traditional clothing worn during celebrations and ceremonies.
- **Tradition** - A way of doing things that is passed down from generation to generation.
- **Generations:** People born long ago, today and in the future. This includes children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, parents, grandparents, and great grandparents.



Assessment

During this lesson, observe and listen to students during discussions and as they work to determine how their learning is progressing. Note their ability to discuss and describe regalia and its significance. Write down what you notice about what students say and do in relation to the success criteria. Engage students in conversation and review their notetakers. Look for insights into what they learned about regalia and its cultural importance. 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 using the provided self-assessment. Students can indicate their level of learning 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 describe different types of regalia worn by the Siletz.
- I can explain why regalia is important in cultural ceremonies and to tribal sovereignty.
- I can connect their own experiences of special dress and rituals to those of Native tribes.

Lesson Activities

Opening

Time: 5 minutes

Step 1:

Introduce Oregon's Nine federally recognized Tribes (see handout)

Explain: There are nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon today. The Tribes are not the same! Each has its own land, language, and culture. Each Tribe is like a really big group of relatives, with lots of different big families. These families are called bands, and the bands come together to make the Tribe. One Tribe in Oregon has 27 bands, and another has just one! There is a lot of variety across Native Tribes in Oregon.

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Step 2:

- Ask students about times they wear special clothes- for example during a holiday, ceremony, or celebration important to their family. Lead a discussion about when they wear these clothes and why. What is their significance?
- Share the learning outcomes and success criteria with students. Go over any new vocabulary as needed.

Main Activities

Time: 30 minutes**Step 1:**

Explain to students that Oregon's Native Tribes often wear special dress when they are celebrating an important event. The dress is called regalia. Show students images from the handout: Images of Regalia. Ask students what they notice.

Provide students with support to pronounce the word REGALIA Pronunciation of Regalia (ruh·gae·lee·uh)

Explain: Regalia is an English word for ceremonial clothing. One example is that the Siletz Tribe wears regalia during a special tradition called a Nee-dash, which means "the dance" and is sometimes referred to as the feather dance.

Step 2:

Provide the Handout: Regalia at Nee-dash

Facilitate a discussion of the photo in the handout. Ask students- what do you notice? What do you wonder? Remind students that different Native American tribes and bands have different regalia. The regalia seen at Nee-dash is an example from the Siletz Tribes in Oregon.

Provide students with time to read the text in the handout, adapted from ODE 5th grade lesson on Nee-dash (see additional resources for the full Nee-dash information sheet)

Facilitate a discussion on the quote and photo. Some suggestions are:

"The quote talks about regalia helping people connect to the ancestors - what do you think that means? Who are ancestors? Why is it important to connect?"

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"There are lots of ways people show they are thankful to others. The Siletz dance in their regalia as one way. How do you think that shows thankfulness?"

Step 3:

- Move students into small groups (at their desks or on the rug)
- Provide students with a way to record their group's thoughts, e.g., pen and paper, notebook.
- Show the [video](https://youtu.be/KvPHZbZ_cjU?feature=shared) about regalia created by the Grand Ronde Tribe.
https://youtu.be/KvPHZbZ_cjU?feature=shared
- Ask students to write down their group's thoughts to share later. Specifically, ask them to record at least: two new things they learned and two questions they have
- In the whole group, ask each group to share their thinking. Students can respond to one another, offering their own ideas and questions.

Wrap-Up

Time: 5 minutes

- Have students complete the self-assessment.
- Ask students to share out what they learned about Regalia



Additional Resources

- Grande Ronde Tribe [Native American Regalia lesson](#) for 5th Grade
- Article: [Cultural Appropriation, A Perennial Issue On Halloween](#)
- Article: [Nee-Dash Introduction](#)

Student Self-Assessment

Name:

Directions: Read the lesson success criteria in the first column. Then decide, can I do this now or not yet. If you chose Not Yet, share one thing you can do as a next step. If you chose Yes, share what you did well.

Success Criteria	Not Yet	Yes
		
Can I describe different types of regalia worn by the Siletz?		
Can I explain why regalia is important in cultural ceremonies and to tribal sovereignty?		
Can I connect their own experiences of special dress and rituals to those of Native tribes?		

Handout: The 9 Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon

Which Tribe is closest to you?



Map of Oregon with nine federally recognized Tribes.

There are nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon today. The Tribes are not the same! Each has its own land, language, and culture. Each Tribe is like a really big group of relatives, with lots of different big families. These families are called bands, and the bands come together to make the Tribe. One Tribe in Oregon has 27 bands, and another has just one! There is a lot of variety across the Tribes in Oregon.

Handout: Siletz Tribe Nee-dash and Regalia



Photo by Ernes Amoroso, Courtesy National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution

This picture is of Alfred "Bud" Lane III of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in Oregon. He wears regalia as he dances the traditional Feather Dance, or Nee-dash, with his six-year-old granddaughter Halli Chaabayu Lane-Skauge and other members of the Siletz tribe.

Regalia is special clothing made from things found in nature. Native people collect materials from the hills, mountains, and ocean. They use beargrass from the hills and shiny abalone shells from the sea. Making regalia takes many years of hard work.

Native people know that Mother Earth gives many wonderful things. They see how plants, animals, and nature help them live. Nee-dash is a special time to say "thank you" for these gifts. During Nee-dash, people come together in the Dance House. They sing, dance, and pray. This helps them remember their old traditions and teach them to young people. Nee-dash and regalia connect Native people to the past, to the earth, to animals and all the ancestors.

Handout: Images of Regalia



Photos above courtesy of The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian



Photo above courtesy of Timothy Gonzalez, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde



Photos above courtesy of The Burns Paiute Tribe

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