



SOCIAL SCIENCE

All About Ancestors

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- **Since Time Immemorial**
- **Lifeways**
- **History**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Student will understand that

- ancestors are family members from long ago,
- Native American ancestors lived in Oregon since time immemorial, and
- Native American ancestors in Oregon passed down cultures and traditions that are still thriving today.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- What is an ancestor and why are they important for Oregon Tribes?

REQUIRED TIME

- 30 minutes

Overview

Students explore the concept of ancestors and understand that Native American ancestors have lived in Oregon since time immemorial. Over time, Oregon Tribes' cultural traditions, customs and ways of life have adapted. Students engage in an activity identifying their own ancestors, which reinforces the idea that Native American cultures in Oregon are living and evolving today.

Background for Teachers

This lesson introduces the students to the idea that ancestors are an important part of our families and that Native American communities continue to honor and adapt their traditions. Native American tribes in Oregon have deep historical roots in the region, with traditions that have been passed down for generations. These include storytelling, fishing, hunting, root digging and ceremonies that honor the land and their people. While modern life has brought



changes, many of these cultural traditions remain a vital part of Oregon's Native communities today.

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 through the lens of ancestors, tradition and storytelling.
- When sharing content with students, address the why, not just the what.
- Highlight the strengths and struggles 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.
- Avoid generalizing across all Native American groups.

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

STANDARDS

Oregon Social Science Standards

- **K.3:** Describe roles of self and family members.
- **K.17:** Make connections (similarities and differences) between self and others. (History)

KEY WORDS and IDEAS

- **Ancestor:** A family member from long ago.
- **Tradition:** A special way of doing something that is passed down from parents, grandparents and great grandparents.



learning through a self-assessment. Students can indicate their level of learning relative 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 explain what an ancestor is.
- I can share one tradition I know.
- I can describe why Coyote is an ancestor.
- I can identify ancestors in my own family.

MATERIALS

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

- Slide deck
- Technology to stream video
- Paper and crayons for drawing activity
- Student self-assessment

For the following activities, use the slide deck to support your implementation.

Opening

Time: 5 minutes

Step 1:

Read the Essential Question and discuss what it might mean. Give students an opportunity to answer, question and wonder.

Step 2:

- Ask students what they think when they hear the word “ancestors”.
- Tell them to turn and talk to their elbow partner about the word “ancestors”.
- Ask a few students to share their thoughts with the whole group.

Step 3:

Share with students that, “An ancestor is a person in our family who lived a long time ago, like your great-grandparents or even people from even further back in time. Everyone has ancestors.”



Tell students that for many Native Americans, animals and plants are also relatives and ancestors. Ancestors can also be living creatures from a long time ago. We don't always know them, but they are a part of our history and help shape who we are today.

Ask students to share any thoughts or experiences they have about ancestors.

Step 4:

Share with students that some ancestors came to this country from other countries, while others, like Native American ancestors in Oregon, have lived here since time immemorial, meaning they have been here a very long time. Some ways of life are the same as they were back then, while others have changed over time.

Main Activity: Part 1

Time: Approximately 10 minutes

Step 1:

Share with students that our ancestors teach us about our family traditions and how to keep them going. A tradition is a special way our family does something or a story we tell.

Ask students the following question:

- Do you have any family traditions, like weekly dinners, celebrating birthdays or holidays or times for storytelling?

Ask students to share with a friend before the whole group.

Step 2:

Review the Learning Outcomes and Success Criteria with students so they understand what the intended learning is and what it looks like when they've achieved it.

Step 3:

Explain to students that Native American stories are important ways to understand how the world was created and how nature came to be.

Tell students that you will watch a video of a traditional story about how Crater Lake was formed. It is a story that has been passed down through generations of ancestors.

Display the Storytime: Coyote and Crater Lake slide.

Video: [Traditional Stories – Virtual Junior Ranger Activity](https://youtu.be/fH4AkVyHHP4) (start at 1:46 and end at 4:34, approximately 3 minutes) (<https://youtu.be/fH4AkVyHHP4>)

After the video, have students pair-share what they learned, then invite a few students to share with the class.

Main Activity: Part 2

Time: Approximately 10 minutes

Step 1:

Display the My Ancestors slide with the handprint outline.

Show students how to add names and pictures from your own or another family.

Ask students to trace their hands on a piece of paper.

In the palm, they write or draw themselves (e.g., "Me!" with a self-portrait or name).

In each finger, they write or draw someone important to them—this could be a parent, friend, grandparent, teacher, pet or anyone they feel close to. You can ask them to include their non-human relatives and ancestors (dogs, cats, fish) and have them add them to their ancestors.

They can decorate it with stickers, drawings or color it in.

Emphasize that although our ancestors lived long ago, they are still important to us today.

Support options:

- Project a traced hand model on the whiteboard.
- Use the provided handout with a pre-traced outline.



Closing

Time: Approximately 5 minutes

Step 1:

Recap the key concepts. Share with students that we learned that ancestors are family members from long ago who passed down traditions. Native American ancestors in Oregon have lived here for thousands of years, and their cultures are still alive today. Their stories and ancestors can still be seen in Oregon's landscapes, like Crater Lake.

Ask students to reflect on the following questions:

- What is something new you learned today about Native American ancestors?
- What are some traditions or stories your family has passed down to you?"

Ask students to share their answer with a peer and then with the whole group.



Step 2:

Ask students to self-assess based on the Success Criteria. This can also be done collectively by the whole group. They can pick their level of learning (sort of or yes) and share with a peer, or you can print out the self-assessment and ask students to fill it out and turn it in.

Student Self-Assessment

Name:

Directions: Read the lesson Success Criteria aloud 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. Then ask students to explain why they chose “not yet” or “yes” to a peer.

Success Criteria “Can I...”	Not Yet	Yes
		
explain what an ancestor is?		
share about one tradition I know?		
describe why coyote is an ancestor?		



Handout: My Ancestors

Name:

