

Lesson: First Foods, Sovereignty & Community Health

Grade: 4

Duration: 2-3 class periods

Standards Met:

4.1. Identify and describe historic Native American Indian groups that lived in Oregon prior to contact with Europeans and at the time of early European exploration, including ways these groups adapted to and interacted with the physical environment.

4.11 Analyze the distinct way of knowing and living amongst the different American Indian tribes in Oregon prior to colonization, such as religion, language, and cultural practices and the subsequent impact of that colonization. (History)

4.12. Explain how people in Oregon have modified their environment and how the environment has influenced people's lives. (Geography)

Health: Standard 2: Students will analyze the influence of family, peers, culture, media, technology, and other factors on health behaviors.

HE.2.4.1 Describe the influence of culture on personal health practices and behaviors.

OR Essential Understanding: The lifeways of native peoples' beliefs and spiritualities continue today. Tribes continue to practice their unique cultures, traditions and languages. Cultural values are inherent within the tribes and guide indigenous ways of life.

CTUIR Essential Understanding: The CTUIR is a sovereign nation with the inherent right to govern their nation, land, air and waters. The tribe continues to protect and exercise their sovereignty as a means to ensure the health of our communities, our plant and animal people, our land and waters.

Materials:

Computers/Internet for research

Student Definitions Page (p.7)

First Foods Table for Students (p.8)

"Science and Restoration." CRITFC, www.critfc.org/fish-and-watersheds/.

"Fisheries." *Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation*, ctuir.org/fisherieshabitat.

"Columbia Intertribal Fish Commission." CRITFC, plan.critfc.org/.

"Hagerman Genetics Lab | Fisheries Research, Salmon Recovery." CRITFC, www.critfc.org/fish-and-watersheds/fishery-science/hagerman-genetics-laboratory/.

"Climate Change." CRITFC, www.critfc.org/fish-and-watersheds/climate/.

"First Foods: Lesson in Legacy." *East Oregonian*, 14 Aug. 2010, www.eastoregonian.com/news/local/first-foods-lessons-in-legacy/article_c6188d56-9f3d-55cd-9aed-eb8bb9583eb7.html.

"First Foods & Life Cycles" from the CTUIR website:

<https://ctuir.org/history-culture/first-foods>

Lesson Summary:

Students will be introduced to the concept of “First Foods” and learn about how access to traditional foods is important to the health of the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Cayuse people who have stewarded this land and its gifts of foods and medicines for over 12,000 years. They will research the contemporary efforts to restore First Foods such as salmon.

Lesson Objectives:

Students will relate the importance of first foods to community health. Students will;

- *Define First Foods and sovereignty*
- *Discuss why hunting, fishing and gathering rights are important to tribal health (including environmental/ecosystem health)*
- *Research and share a fact about contemporary tribal efforts to restore First Foods*

PROCEDURES:**Activate Prior Knowledge**

Ask:

- *Is it important to eat healthy foods? Why? Allow for student responses.*
- *What foods are important to you and your family? Allow for student responses and generate a visual list of responses on the board.*
- *What are some of the foods that the Walla Walla, Cayuse and Umatilla people hunted, fished or gathered from this land traditionally (before recent times and grocery stores)? Generate a visual list of responses on the board that can be added to throughout the lesson. If students can only think of a couple, that is fine.*

Introduction/ Background Knowledge

Visit and read together: (Print if necessary)

“First Foods: Lesson in Legacy.” *East Oregonian*, 14 Aug. 2010,

www.eastoregonian.com/news/local/first-foods-lessons-in-legacy/article_c6188d56-9f3d-55cd-9aed-eb8bb9583eb7.html.

Procedures

Preview the definitions of sovereignty, reciprocity and stewardship on the Student Definitions Handout.

Share with students:

Traditional diets of the Walla Walla, Cayuse and Umatilla peoples included hundreds of local foods that come from the landscape. Native ways, beliefs and cultural practices are centered on those gifts of foods and medicines provided by the local landscape. Rules, spirituality & ceremonies, language and culture have centered on these foods for over 12,000 years. Traditional diets have provided the nutrients and medicines that have kept the Native

communities of this region healthy since the beginning of time. In return, the people have always taken care of their lands and ecosystems, respecting plants and animals as **sovereign** nations with their own needs, rights and gifts. This give and take relationship is called **reciprocity**. Helping the plants and animals is a way to give back for what you take to eat.

Check for understanding.

Ask:

What is sovereignty?

Have students read their definition of sovereignty on the Student Definitions Handout and put it in their own words or give examples. Ex: The United States is a sovereign nation. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation is a sovereign nation that votes for their leaders, makes their own laws and governs themselves.

Ask:

Do you think seeing plants and animals as sovereign nations could be helpful to the environment? (Answers will vary. Students may respond that they would be given more respect when they are seen as their own nations with rights and needs)

Share:

The importance of these traditional foods or “first foods” is seen in the practices of food gathering, hunting, fishing, preparation and eating. Strict teachings about taking only what you need and not wasting are ways to show respect to the plant and animal people who sacrifice themselves for the lives and health of the people. First Foods include aquatic animals from the waters, game from the land, and plant foods and medicines such as roots, bulbs, celeries, fruits and more. The Walla Walla, Cayuse and Umatilla people traveled through the seasons to get these foods while taking care of these plants and animals so that there would always be more in the future. This is called **stewardship**.

Share the First Foods Table for Students with the class.

These are just a few of the many different foods that were and still are eaten in the traditional diet. These foods and medicines are considered gifts and teachers by Native communities. Stewardship, or great care, was and is still taken to respect and care for these foods so they can survive.

Ask:

How many of the First Foods were we able to name? (Referring to list generated on the board/visual)

If these are the foods that have always grown in our region, why were we able to name so few?

How are these foods accessed? (Through moving with the foods and seasons, hunting, gathering, fishing and other time-consuming practices that come with a great deal of physical effort.)

Are these foods easy to access today? Why or why not? Allow for student responses.

Share with Students:

Many of these foods are accessed seasonally, which means they are only available during certain times of the year and in certain types of ecosystems (lowland forests, prairies, wetlands, etc.) Traditionally, the Walla Walla, Cayuse and Umatilla people lived according to the seasons, often traveling and trading for these foods and medicines. When the Walla Walla, Umatilla and Cayuse people were forced to live on small pieces of lands called reservations, they could no longer travel and care for these plants and animals as well. Today, these foods have decreased or almost disappeared because of individual land ownership (private property), pollution, ranching/farming practices and lack of stewardship and care.

Share with Students:

Present on a smartboard/projector or print out “First Foods & Life Cycles” from the CTUIR website: <https://ctuir.org/history-culture/first-foods>

Read together. Have students re-read in partners/small groups.

Ask/Discuss:

Do you think plants and animals should have rights like humans do? Did Young Chief recognize this sovereignty of the plants, animals, water and land? Allow for student responses.

Ask/Discuss:

Why did the diets of Native people change so rapidly? Allow for student responses

Answers may include: Colonization. Farming/ranching on the landscape. Dams. Loss of land and access to land following treaty times when tribes/bands were removed from their land and had limited access to their usual and accustomed hunting/fishing/gathering sites.

Pollution. Decreasing healthy plant and animal populations after European settlement.

(Record visually on the board.)

Ask/Discuss:

How would you feel if you suddenly couldn’t eat most of the foods you are familiar with and accustomed to eating today? What if you weren’t allowed to practice your food traditions (such as gardening, praying before eating, buying food at the store, eating with your family...?)

Ask/Discuss: How does a rapid diet change impact our bodies?

Share: Since colonization and removal of the tribal people to reservations, diets were rapidly changed to exclude many of these First Foods. They suddenly included many unfamiliar and unhealthy foods such as flour, sugar and meats with Omega 6 fats (chicken, beef, pork) rather than the Omega 3 fats provided by traditional meats such as salmon, elk and deer. This rapid

diet change created new health problems such as heart diseases, obesity and diabetes. Today tribal people are working to bring back more First Foods to help fight health problems like diabetes.

Ask:

Has the land's health suffered since the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Cayuse people were removed to reservation lands? How so? *Allow for student discussion, responses. Answers may include; polluted water, dams and declining salmon runs, declining deer and elk herds, plants that are inedible because they are near pollution and toxins, plant and medicine declines due to industry and private property.*

Part 2:

Tell students they will research the following question:

How are the tribes working to restore traditional First Foods to help the community health and culture?

Have students partner/team up. Have each group research the above question utilizing one of the following websites:

<https://www.critfc.org/fish-and-watersheds/> [Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission website]

<https://ctuir.org/fisherieshabitat> [CTUIR website]

<https://plan.critfc.org/> [Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission website]

<https://www.critfc.org/fish-and-watersheds/fishery-science/hagerman-genetics-laboratory/> [Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission website]

<https://www.critfc.org/fish-and-watersheds/climate/> [Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission website]

Have each group share out a fact they learned about First Food/ecosystem restoration on the part of the tribe.

Conclusion:

After sharing out a fact about the local tribal effort to restore First Foods, ask students to discuss in small groups or partners the following questions;

1. Why are the Confederated Tribe of the Umatilla Indian Reservation [CTUIR] trying to restore First Foods?

2. Do you think improving the health of salmon and other First Foods will help all local people in the community, Native and non-Native peoples? If so, how?
3. Do you think improving and protecting salmon and other First Foods will improve the health of the environment and ecosystems such as rivers, meadows and forests?
4. Do you think the salmon should be recognized as a sovereign nation of beings with their own rights, as do the Umatilla, Walla Walla and Cayuse people?

Extensions:

1. Visit Tamastslikt Cultural Institute. Ask students to think about how gathering first foods today connects people with their ancestors and landscape.
2. Invite a tribal elder to come and speak about the continuing importance of her/his community's gathering traditions, the role of the treaty of in protecting access and rights to First Foods, a traditional story, work being done to restore or protect First Foods.

References:

Hunn, E.S., Morning Owl, T., Cash Cash, P.E., Engum, J.K., (2015). "Panaykuksa Animay They Are Gathering for Winter." Hunn, E.S. Caw Pawa Laakni They Are Not Forgotten Sahaptian Place Names Atlas of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla. (pgs35-47)

Definitions for Students:

First Foods: traditional foods; foods that have grown in this region naturally for thousands of years; plant and animal foods that Native Americans harvested, hunted and fished since the beginning of time or creation

Reciprocity: having mutual or shared dependence and exchange, an equal give and take relationship

Sovereignty: the right to self-govern, freedom from external control, having supreme power, having autonomy and power over self

Stewardship: having care and responsible management

First Foods Table for Students:

salmon	steelhead	bull trout	rainbow trout	lamprey
freshwater mussels	mule deer	elk	jackrabbit	cottontail rabbit
pronghorn	Canada goose	mallard duck	sage grouse	shar-tailed grouse
kingfisher	Indian celery	salmonflower biscuitroot	cow parsnip	bitterroot
desert parsley	cous	Indian carrot	Indian potato	camas
golden currant	serviceberry	chokecherry	huckleberry	grouseberry
nettles	horsetail	hazelnut	Indian consumption plant	prickly-pear cactus

Reference:

Hunn, E.S., Morning Owl, T., Cash Cash, P.E., Engum, J.K., (2015). "Panayuksa Animay They Are Gathering for Winter." Hunn, E.S. Caw Pawa Laakni They Are Not Forgotten Sahaptian Place Names Atlas of the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla. (pgs35-47)