



Sovereignty - The Foundations of a Nation

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Tribal Government
- Sovereignty

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will be able to explain the foundations of nation building as it relates to the Doctrine of Discovery.
- Students will be able to ability and knowledge to explain treaties negotiated by the United States Government and Native tribes.
- Students will be able to define tribal sovereignty and explain the rights associated with that status.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICES

- Higher level thinking: concept formation
- Higher level thinking: analyzing
- Preserving and honoring cultural history

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on the completion of their KWL: Sovereignty charts and their participation in classroom discussions.

Overview

Sovereignty is a complex concept used to define a nation's right to govern themselves. In this lesson, students will examine the Doctrine of Discovery and how it affects the establishment of treaties between tribes and the United States Federal Government.

MATERIALS

- [KWL: Sovereignty Chart](#)
- [Doctrine of Discovery Definition](#)
- [Colonization Definition](#)
- [Indigenous Title and The Doctrine of Discovery](#)
- [Tribal Governance - NCAI Document](#)
- Highlighters, Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencil, Colored Pens, etc.
- [CTGR Sovereignty Handout](#)
- Access to Technology

LOGISTICS

- Where does this activity take place?
Classroom
- How are the students organized?

Whole Class Teams: 3-5

Pairs **Individually**

TIME REQUIRED

2-4 days

STANDARDS

Oregon Social Science Academic Content Standards

Civics 6.1 Compare and contrast early forms of governance including the treatment of historically marginalized groups and individuals via the study of early major western and nonwestern civilizations.

Civics 6.3 Examine the origins, purposes, and impact of constitutions, laws, treaties, and international agreements.

Historical Knowledge 6.18 Evaluate the impact of systems of colonial cultures on the indigenous peoples, such as termination, sovereignty, and treaties.

Historical Knowledge 6.20 Identify and analyze the causes and effects of oppression and resistance in the living histories of historically marginalized groups in the Western Hemisphere.

Historical Knowledge 6.21 Identify the motivations, tools, and implications of power, authority, and governance as it relates to systems and tools of oppression (e.g., bias, injustice, discrimination, racism, antisemitism, and stereotypes) and its impact on ethnic and religious groups and other historically marginalized groups of the Western Hemisphere.

Background for Teachers

Links to Educational Documents:

- [Robert J.. Miller's "Indian Treaties as Contracts"](#)
- [Steve Newcomb's "Five Hundred Years of Injustice: The Legacy of Fifteenth Century Treaties, Termination, Restoration Background for Teachers.pdf"](#)
- [What is Tribal Sovereignty? \[Washington Tribes\]](#)
- [What is Tribal Sovereignty? \[Native Governance Center\]](#)
- [BESE Explains Tribal Sovereignty](#)
- [All My Relations Podcast - Lies Your Teacher Taught You: The Truth About Thanksgiving](#)
- [All My Relations Podcast - ThanksTaking or Thanksgiving?](#)

VOCABULARY

- **Doctrine of Discovery** - The discovery doctrine or doctrine of discovery is a legal term. It means that if a country was not under the control of a king who was from Europe and Christian, then any European Christian country could take control of the land. The Doctrine of Discovery established a spiritual, political, and legal justification for colonization and seizure of land not inhabited by Christians.
- **Colonization** - The action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area
- **Sovereignty** - the act of having independent power, political, social and economic, or being free

Opening

Present a copy of the KWL: Sovereignty chart to each student. Allow a few minutes for students to fill out to “Know” and “Want to Know” sections.

Activity

1. Have students read the definition of the Doctrine of Discovery (definition is also available in separate document for ease of distributing to each student).
 - a. “The discovery doctrine or doctrine of discovery is a legal term. It means that if a country was not under the control of a king who was from Europe and Christian, then any European Christian country could take control of the land. The Doctrine of Discovery established a spiritual, political, and legal justification for colonization and seizure of land not inhabited by Christians.”
2. Have students read the definition of colonization (definition is also available in separate document for ease of distributing to each student)
 - a. “the action or process of settling among and establishing control over the indigenous people of an area”
3. Respond to any questions or clarifications students may need.
4. Introduce the document, Indigenous Title and The Doctrine of Discovery. As students read through the document, have them highlight/underline:
 - a. Color One: Information they knew already
 - b. Color Two: Information they learned and understand
 - c. Color Three: Information or words that they do not understand
5. Have students add anything highlighted in Color One to their “Know” section of their chart and anything highlighted in Color Three to the “Want to Know” section of their KWL chart.
6. Introduce the document, Tribal Governance - NCAI. As students read through the document, have them highlight/underline:
 - a. Color One: Information they knew already
 - b. Color Two: Information they learned and understand
 - c. Color Three: Information or words that they do not understand
7. Have students add anything highlighted in Color One to their “Know” section of their chart and anything highlighted in Color Three to the “Want to Know” section of their KWL chart.
8. Distribute the CTGR Sovereignty handout to students. Allow students time to work through the handout using technology to access needed links and videos.

Closure

Discuss with students:

- What are the “central concepts” that explain the establishment of sovereignty?
 - Struggle for land control from European countries
 - Dismissal of Native people as civilized people
 - View of Native people as occupants of the land vs. land owners
- What are the limits to the sovereignty?
- What are the fundamental powers of Indian Tribes? (1) Power to establish a form of government (2) Power to determine membership (3) Police power (4) Power to administer justice (5) Power to regulate and manage natural resources (6) Power to define the parameters of business activity (7) Power to exclude persons from the reservation (8) Power to charter business organizations (9) Sovereign immunity

Summary Question: What can tribes do compared to other nations? What can't they do?

Allow students time to complete their KWL: Sovereignty chart to finish their investigation process.

Differentiation

- Teachers may choose to conduct this lesson as a whole group to answer students questions' as they read through the materials and to define any terms students may not understand.

Extension

- Teachers can partner this lesson with lessons/activities surrounding Thanksgiving and the voyages of Christopher Columbia.
- This lesson can be partnered with 6.SS.Ceded Lands & Treaties and 6.SS.3 Tribal Government to create a small unit.

Notes/Other

Jan Michael Looking Wolf's or Grand Ronde Canoe Family audio tracks can be played as background music while students are working. These audio tracks can be found on Spotify or Apple Music.

Jan Michael Looking Wolf: [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)

Grand Ronde Canoe Family: [Spotify](#) and [Apple Music](#)

Appendix

- KWL: Sovereignty Chart:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/19PtGCf-2XaOVdQ8SDN8HFoJnZHvbHYZW/view?usp=sharing>
- Doctrine of Discovery Definition:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qmeSnu4lAqRerwhlWFyile5uyqMC39tg/view?usp=sharing>
- Colonization Definition:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qmeSnu4lAqRerwhlWFyile5uyqMC39tg/view?usp=sharing>
- Indigenous Title and The Doctrine of Discovery:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Fef0dHsW58quZYxfXlmfU89n7NOfv16/view?usp=sharing>
- Tribal Governance - NCAI Document:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1I3yEqjYw_oc3RjI-qbwJhwDq1xmyA0ys/view?usp=sharing
- CTGR Sovereignty Handout:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Nj47PN4AQqTbbM1VD0Z_u2HoJu3DV1GT/view?usp=sharing