

Theme: The Grand Coulee Dam

Context:

This lesson plan was made to best fit an 8th grade English course that meets for 90 minutes. Students will discuss the effects the Grand Coulee Dam had on the Spokane Tribe, who depended on the river to support their lifestyle over thousands of years. As a class we will understand and learn about the damage the Dam had on the Tribe's ancestral and traditional ways as well as the various ways the river was vital to the Spokane Tribe.

Objectives:

Students will:

- Gain background knowledge of the Grand Coulee Dam
- Understand tribal ways of life
- Learn about the various ways tribes interact with their surroundings
- Learn about the effects the Grand Coulee Dam had on Native Tribal life
- Learn about the tools the Spokane people used to catch fish

Methods:

- Guided classroom discussion
- Powerpoint showing various before and after pictures of the effects of the Dam on nearby land
- Letter activity
- 'Carol Evans: Water is Sacred' video
- Small group discussions

Materials:

- Paper/pencils
- Powerpoint slide
- Carol Evans: Water is Sacred video (4:01)

Outline:

Introduction: (7-10 minutes)

Class discussion will begin with the question, "Who has ever seen or heard of the Grand Coulee dam?" Students who know of or have ever seen the Dam will be asked to share their knowledge with the class. Teachers should ask students if they think all dams are necessary or useful and why we build them. Students will share with the class why they said either yes or no and explain their reasoning.

PowerPoint slides 1-4: (10-15 minutes)

After the class shares what they already know about the Dam, the PowerPoint slide (attached below) will be projected showing various pictures of the dam. Teacher can begin by

explaining the purpose of the Dam and the history behind its architecture and structure (e.g. ask students if they know what a hydroelectric dam is, if they think the building of this dam was beneficial, etc.) . Slide 4 will show the land surrounding the Dam and the river it was constructed on and how it looked before.

Video Slide 5: (4 minutes)

Following the discussion the class will watch ‘Carol Evan’s: Water is Sacred’ video

Class Discussion: (5 minutes)

Before showing students the effects the dam had on the Spokane Tribe themselves, the class will share thoughts on what they think the Dam did to the Spokane Tribe’s way of living. Based off the context in the video, how do they think the Spokane people’s life drastically changed after the construction of the Dam? How do they believe the Dam specifically changed their lifestyles?

PowerPoint slides 6-8: (10 Minutes)

After the class has discussed the various ways that the Spokane were affected by the Dam, they will be shown the before and after pictures of the surrounding land the river ran through and the river itself. (Teachers can ask: What are some changes that they see? How do you think these land and river changes affected the tribe’s lifestyle?) The class will then be shown some of the tools the Spokane used when hunting and fishing and how they much they depended on the river for their way of life.

Letter Activity: (10-15 minutes)

After the presentation the class will be asked their overall thoughts on the dam and its relation to the Spokane Tribe. Students will share their thoughts with the class and then will be asked to position themselves as a person asking *not* to build the dam. They will be asked to write in their point of view how a Spokane person at the time might feel about the dam if they knew the effects it would have on them and their tribe (see <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/convince-developing-persuasive-writing-56.html> for resources on teaching persuasive writing).

Sharing in groups: (8-10 minutes)

After everyone is done writing their letter, they will share amongst a group of 4-5. When everyone is done sharing, the group must pick the most moving or convincing letter to represent their group to share with the class.

Sharing with the class: (10-13 minutes)

One member from each group will read their letter aloud to the classroom. When finished the class will share their thoughts on their peers letters, what makes them effective, and what they liked.