

Grades: 6th - 8th Grade

Lesson: 3

Unit: 1: American Indian traditional land values

Subject: Geography

Additional Subject(s): History/Social Studies

Achievement Goal: Students will develop and acknowledge an understanding of traditional American Indian land-related values and special relationships to land that formed the foundation for Indian cultural identity and a sense of place on the earth.

Time: Two class periods

Lesson Description:

In this lesson, the students will learn one of the origin stories of the Eastern Dakota, the Bdewakantonwan or Mdewakantonwan who have lived in Minnesota. They will also look closely at the land ethics usually found within creation stories and how these beliefs relate to the identity of the tribe.

Teacher Background:

American Indian tribes, like many other peoples, have explanations for how they originated as a distinct, unique people. Many stories tell of powerful beings that created peoples' places in the world. The origin stories relate how the universe and the earth were created and how time and space were established. Inherent in the story is a reverence for the place or location where ancestors of the tribe were created. From these stories, tribes derived laws, values, traditions and ceremonies. Many origin stories stressed kindness, generosity, cooperation and respect for the earth. In these stories, the universe could not be created without these teachings.

Many tribal individuals consider their beliefs important, everyday elements that contribute to a rich tradition and cultural heritage. These stories are represented in ceremonies and teachings. They are passed on to each new generation. The beliefs and traditions connect people to the land, plant life, all living creatures and to the mysteries of birth, life, death and the spirit world. Many Native people closely compare these connections to the connections they have with family and relatives.

There are as many different origin stories as there are different cultures and peoples. In this lesson, the students will learn one origin story of the Eastern Dakota who lived in Minnesota. They will learn about the Dakota word, Bdote, which means "where two waters come together." They will also look closely at the land ethics usually found within creation stories and how these beliefs relate to the identity of the tribe.

Standards:

This lesson aligns with RH1, RH2, RH4.

6th Grade

RH1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

RH2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

RH4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

Teacher Preparation Resources:

- Preview the Creation Story found in the Lesson Resources section.
- Preview [The Bdote Memory Map](#) interactive website—a beginner's resource for giving Minnesotans a deeper understanding of where we live.
- Review additional resources on [Minnesota Humanities Center](#) web page on the Bdote.

- Arrange for internet access for displaying of website as well as student access for internet research.

Student Activity:

1. Review the Creation Story found in the Lesson Resources section.
2. Locate Bdote on a map.
3. Using the interactive website listed in the Lesson Resources section, watch one of the videos and view photos and stories.
4. List one of the land ethics you found within the creation story. Ask students whether this is still a value of today's society. Why or why not?
5. Research the area of Fort Snelling and write a paragraph to a page discussing the connection of Bdote to the Dakota people and Fort Snelling to Minnesotans today.

Evaluation:

1. Students should be able to identify Bdote on a map.
2. Evaluate each student's ability to research the subject and write toward the objective.
3. Assess participation in the discussion of how the Dakota origin story teaches traditional land ethics.

Lesson Resources:

- Excerpt from [What Does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland](#) by Waziyatawin, PhD.
- The [Bdote Memory Map](#) interactive website.
- Additional classroom resources on Bdote, [Minnesota Humanities Center](#).

Source URL: <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/lessons/dakota-creation-story>

Links:

- [1] http://www.lessonsofourland.org/sites/default/files/03%20A%20Dakota%20Creation%20Story_Resource%20Attachment_0.pdf
- [2] <http://bdotememorymap.org/>
- [3] <http://www.mnhum.org/bdoteresourcesclass>
- [4] <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/grade-level/6th-8th-grade>
- [5] http://www.lessonsofourland.org/flag/unflag/recently_viewed/455?destination=printpdf/455&token=VPpQotKdl22RcTO67C77f5KR7Yj757Ome4cPDDXjgbl
- [6] <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/flag/flag/lessons/455?destination=printpdf/455&token=VPpQotKdl22RcTO67C77f5KR7Yj757Ome4cPDDXjgbl>
- [7] <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/subjects/geography>
- [8] <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/subjects/historysocial-studies>
- [9] <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/states/dakota>
- [10] <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/units/1-american-indian-traditional-land-values>
- [11] <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/type/map>
- [12] <http://www.lessonsofourland.org/type/video>