



SOCIAL SCIENCES

Precious Canoes

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- **Since time immemorial**
- **Identity**
- **Lifeways**

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the importance of canoes for Tribal cultural preservation.
- Explain why canoes are important to the history of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.
- Think critically about how the design of canoes relates to their use in different bodies of water.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- Why are canoes important to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians?

LOGISTICS

- Where does the activity take place?
Classroom (virtual or in-person)
- How are the students organized?
 - ☑ Whole class ☑ Teams: 2 – 4
 - ☑ Pairs ☑ Individually

TIME REQUIRED

Between 55 and 70 minutes of class time

Overview

This lesson provides students with the opportunity to learn about the importance of canoes to the ancestors and contemporary Tribal members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Through discussion and related activities students will learn about the types and purposes of traditional canoes and their importance to Siletz people. Students will be exposed to the concept of “tradition” and will think critically about the importance of traditions in their own lives.

Background for teachers

Key ideas

- The peoples who make up the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians have lived in Western Oregon, Northern California, and Southwest Washington since time immemorial.
- Siletz people have remained committed to preserving their heritage despite the long history of colonization, violence, and oppression, including federal laws and policies that criminalized and discouraged Native people from practicing their traditions and accessing their traditional homelands.



- Canoes are an important part of Siletz Tribal culture: Understanding how canoes are (and were) made, used, and maintained is an important part of cultural vitality.

Background on canoes

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians is composed of dozens of bands and Tribes from across Western Oregon and parts of Northern California and Southwest Washington—each with a unique cultural and linguistic background. One commonality among these diverse peoples is the traditional use of canoes for transportation. Before colonization, the various Tribes who were eventually removed to the Coast (Siletz) Reservation designed and used many different styles of canoes for different purposes. For example, Native people used different types of canoes to navigate the ocean, river rapids, bays, and calm rivers. After removal to the reservation, canoes remained an important way for Siletz people to transport people and goods around their isolated reservation. Despite the environmental impacts of logging and pressure from the government to assimilate, the connection to canoes and canoe culture remains sacred to many Siletz Tribal members to this day.

To prepare for this lesson teachers should:

- Review all materials for this lesson, including the presentation slides and directions for the activities.

² Oregon is in the process of revising its social sciences standards. This document references the draft 2018 standards for grade 2.

STANDARDS

Oregon social sciences standards¹

2.16 - Identify the history and narratives of traditionally included and excluded individuals, groups, and circumstances that impact the local community including individuals who are American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Americans of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent; individuals from all religious backgrounds; and individuals from traditionally marginalized groups.

Oregon speaking and listening standards

2.SL.1 - Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

MATERIALS

Unless otherwise indicated, the following materials are provided as appendices or attachments to this lesson.

- **Slides** (PowerPoint slide deck)
- **Classroom audiovisual technology and internet access to display PowerPoint slides, video, and websites** (not provided)
- **Canoe Travel Worksheet**
- **Travel Worksheet**



References

Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (n.d.) *Our heritage*. [Online]. Retrieved July 30, 2022, from <http://www.ctsi.nsn.us/introduction/>

Resources

Tribal history

Tribal website: <https://www.ctsi.nsn.us/>

Video: Standing Strong the Tribal Nations of Western Oregon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-43tfBzWfDE>

Tip: Information about the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians begins at 9:47 and ends at 16:54

Considerations for teachers

Assessment

Students will engage in a substantial amount of discussion with partners and the whole class. The teacher should actively monitor student discussion for correct understanding and should intervene when there are misconceptions or biases.

Practices

Teachers must be prepared to activate engagement strategies such as think-pair-share and group discussion.

VOCABULARY

Confederated Tribe - A federally recognized Indian Tribe that includes multiple individual Tribes and bands.

Since time immemorial - Tribal memories and history were shared via oral storytelling that goes back thousands of years, rather than in printed texts. This phrase indicates that the Tribe's history goes back even farther than the oral histories themselves.

Stewardship - The job of taking care of something, such as the land.

Elder - An older person, such as a grandparent, who holds cultural wisdom and assumes responsibility for teaching and leading the community.

Ancestor - Family member who has come before.

Canoe - A lightweight boat often carved from the trunk of a tree.

Paddle - A long piece of carved wood that is used to propel a canoe.

Cultural preservation - Keeping the traditions and artifacts of a community intact despite efforts to change or get rid of them.

Reservation - Lands set aside by agreement between the U.S. government and Indigenous people as a permanent homeland, sometimes a part of ancestral homeland, sometimes a place to which people were forcibly removed by the government.

Learning targets

Students will be able to say, think, or feel ...

- I understand the importance of canoes for Tribal cultural preservation.
- I can explain why canoes are important to the history of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.
- I can think critically about the way the design of canoes relates to their use in different bodies of water.

Reflection/closure

Sum up the lesson by asking students the following questions:

1. Why are canoes important to Siletz people?
2. What are the different types of canoes traditionally used by the Siletz people?
3. Why do the Siletz people travel and how is this like your life?

Appendix

Materials included in the electronic folder that support this lesson are:

- Canoe Travel Worksheet
- Travel Worksheet
- Slides_Siletz Lifeways_Precious Canoes

ADAPTIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING



Activity 1

Step 1. Conduct the history presentation virtually.

Step 2. Pause every five or six minutes to ask students to share questions in the chat.

Activity 2

Step 1. Invite students to complete the assignment independently.

Step 2. Gather the whole class and ask for volunteers to share their completed Travel Canoe Worksheet. The teacher should be the first to present to provide an example.

Step 3 (optional). Place students in breakout groups of two or three and ask them to present their completed Travel Canoe Worksheet to one another.

Activity 3

Step 1. Ask students to work independently.

Step 2. Gather the whole class virtually, facilitate the activity, and ask students to share their ideas either as a whole group discussion or using the chat feature.

Activity 1

History presentation

Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Overview

This opening presentation introduces students to the cultural significance of canoes for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and includes a think-pair-share activity in which students examine photos to identify and compare differences in the types of canoes.

Step 1

Share slideshow and key talking points provided below (slides 1–20).

Slide 1 - Precious Canoes

Say:

Today, we're going to learn about how the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians have traveled, traded goods, and stayed connected to their rivers, the Pacific Ocean, and people living in other parts of Oregon.

Slide 2 - Confederated Tribe

Vocabulary: *Confederated Tribe; Since Time Immemorial; Reservation*

Say:

*The Tribes of Siletz make up what is called a “**confederated Tribe**,” meaning a single government that is made up of multiple Tribes and bands from across Western Oregon as well as parts of Northern California and Southwest Washington.*

About 160 years ago, soldiers from the U.S. government and settlers forced all these groups to leave their homelands and live together on a reservation on the central Oregon coast with headquarters at Siletz. A reservation is a much smaller piece of land set aside for Indigenous people as a permanent homeland.

Activity 1 (Continued)

Today, the children and grandchildren of those people make up the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

Slide 3 - Aboriginal land

Vocabulary: Stewardship

Say:

What does this map show? [Pause and allow students to answer.] Oregon! Every mountain, river, lake, and valley in the gray-shaded area represents the original lands where the peoples who make up the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians once lived. The red part of the map shows the Coast (Siletz) Reservation where these groups were forced to move after the U.S. government made them leave most of their homelands in exchange for a new permanent home on the reservation. Some relatives from the same Tribes were also sent to live on the nearby Grand Ronde Reservation. Before this time, the Siletz peoples lived all throughout this area as separate groups or Tribes all connected through family ties, trade, and stewardship of the surrounding land.

*Does anyone know what **stewardship** means? [Pause and allow time for students to answer.] Stewardship is the job of taking care of something, such as the land.*

As you can see, before the Tribes were forcibly moved to the reservation, they lived up and down the Pacific Coast and inland along rivers and streams. In those days, people did not use cars or airplanes to visit their friends and families. Instead, they used these waterways to get from one place to another.

Activity 1 (Continued)

Slide 4 - Water map

Say:

Look at this map. Imagine if you and your family lived here at Tuu-tuu-dvn village on the Rogue River and you wanted to visit your cousin who had just had a baby, but they lived 175 miles away up the Oregon Coast at Miit-tsuul-stik village, where Newport is now. Remember, there are no cars. How would you travel to see the new member of your family and be able to bring lots of gifts along with you?

[Ask students to turn to a classmate next to them and discuss their ideas. Invite students to share with the whole class.]

Say:

Great ideas!

Say:

One way would be to travel by [Click 1] canoe. Canoes can be carried on land and can float in lakes, rivers, and oceans. Canoes are especially important to the Native people of Oregon. Before cars, trains, and planes, the lakes, rivers, and ocean were the original highways for the Tribes. Look again at this map: See how all the rivers and the ocean make it easy for people to travel long distances with canoes?

Slide 5 - Many types of cars

Say:

Today, we use many types of cars for many different purposes. We might travel in an RV to visit family members who live far away; drive a truck when we are carrying a heavy load; ride in a school bus with our friends and classmates on our way to school; or drive in a small car to pick up groceries down the road.

Activity 1 (Continued)

Slide 6 - Many types of canoes

Say:

Just like we have different cars for different purposes, Siletz people use diverse types of canoes for different purposes. Canoes help them gather and hunt for food, get good exercise, visit friends and family, and trade goods with one another.

Slide 7 - Small canoes for bays

Say:

Some canoes are small, won't tip over easily, and can be operated by just one or two people. For instance, Hanis People from Coos Bay (pictured here) make small canoes to navigate the calm waters, fish, search for clams, and visit friends nearby. These canoes are good for calm waters but would not be safe in the open ocean.

Slide 8 - Big, ocean-going canoes

Say:

That is why there are also big canoes. Ocean-going canoes can fit more than 12 people and can safely travel far into the open ocean. This type of canoe is used for fishing salmon and halibut, gathering seagull eggs on faraway rocks, whaling, hunting sea lions, or visiting far-off friends and relatives.

Say:

The Alsea and Chinook people from the Northern Oregon coast are famous for making this type of canoe. A long time ago they traded these canoes all up and down the coast to help other people who wanted to safely navigate the ocean.

Slide 9 - Shovel-nosed canoes for rapids

Say:

There are many rivers in Oregon that are full of roaring rapids. Shovel-nosed canoes like the one illustrated here are great for this body of water because they are easy to turn. The Dee-ni (Athabaskan) people from Southern Oregon are known for

Activity 1 (Continued)

making this type of canoe, which is good for fishing with nets or short trips up and down the river.

Slide 10 - Spot the differences

Say:

Let's look at the canoes side by side. What do you notice about the shapes of the canoes? How are they similar? How are they different? Turn to a partner and discuss.

Slide 11 - Slow-moving river canoes

Vocabulary: Ancestor

Say:

*There are also many slow, easy-going rivers in Oregon. Some canoes are perfectly made for these. They carry people down river and are also used for hunting. This is a picture of a Siletz ancestor, Coquelle "Tommy" Thompson Jr., in a river-style canoe. An **ancestor** is a family member who has come before. All our relatives, going back to great-great grandparents and beyond, are our ancestors.*

Slide 12 - Traveling by canoe takes knowledge!

Say:

Your parents and grandparents need to be aware of the conditions outside when they drive. They need to know how to drive slowly if it's snowing or raining. They need to pack the right clothes, so they don't get too hot or cold. This is the same for traveling by canoe!

To safely travel by canoe in the ocean, you need to understand the different kinds of waves, recognize if the weather might be changing, and understand the pattern of the changing tides.

Activity 1 (Continued)

Slide 13 - Traveling by canoe takes knowledge!

Say:

To safely paddle a canoe on a river you need to understand how to “read a river” or know how the water moves, how to steer in rapids, avoid dangerous places in the river, have the strength to paddle against the river, and have the wisdom to know when to carry the canoe when obstacles are too big. In some places, children started practicing young by trying to balance in a small canoe in the surf.

Slide 14 - Building canoes takes knowledge!

Say:

Not only do people need to know how to travel by canoe, but they also need to know how to properly carve and care for canoes. Siletz people are careful to carve the right angles, use the right type of wood, and not cut down too many trees so others can build canoes, too.

Slide 15 - Reservation

Vocabulary: Reservation

Say:

Rather than learn to share the land with the Native people, newly arrived settlers were focused on the rich natural resources they could sell, like animal furs, gold, and then land, without respect for the rights of the people who already lived there. Settlers attacked Native people and forced them to leave their homes.

Say:

*Remember this map from earlier? The gray-shaded area shows where many Tribes and bands of Native people who became the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians once lived throughout Western Oregon. After settlers came, they were forced to move to a much smaller territory called a **reservation**. You can see the reservation here in red.*



Activity 1 (Continued)

Slide 16 - A tradition attacked

Say:

When settlers took Native people's land, they also took their canoes! They didn't want Native people to be able to travel around anymore. Settlers stole, burned, and sank many canoes. For more than 150 years it was illegal for the Siletz people to practice their culture or pass down the canoe-making tradition to their children. Sadly, many of the big logs used to make the canoes have also been cut down and turned into lumber.

Slide 17 - Can you imagine?

Say:

Students, I want you to think about what it must be like to not be able to practice your traditions—the things that make you, you! Take a moment to think about the ways your family learns from each other, celebrates big occasions, gets old and young people together, or connects with what your ancestors have always done—your traditions.

Facilitate a whole class discussion.

Slide 18 - Let's review! Just as there are many types of cars for different purposes, there are many types of canoes ...

Say:

Wow, we've learned so much today! We now know that, just like there are many types of cars for different purposes, there are many types of canoes. There are special canoes made for oceans, bays, rapids, and calm rivers.

Activity 1 *(Continued)*

Slide 19 - Let's review! The Tribes of Siletz need to know ...

Say:

To safely travel by canoe, the Siletz people need to know how to navigate the surrounding waters, the type of canoe they need, and how to build and care for a canoe so it lasts a long time.

Slide 20 - Let's review! Canoes are important for the Tribes of Siletz because ...

Say:

Canoes are important to Siletz people because rivers, oceans, bays, and rapids used to be the "original highways" of Oregon. Canoes helped people visit their friends and families, hunt for food, and trade with each other. Paddling in canoes is also great exercise! Nowadays we have roads and cars for traveling, but canoes remain an important tradition for the Tribes of Siletz.

Activity 2

Canoe travel

Time: 30 minutes

Overview

This activity asks students to imagine journeying via canoe from one part of Oregon to another. Teachers may consider providing students with exact options for this journey using a map or allowing students to use their imagination. The intent is for students to differentiate whether they need an ocean-going canoe, a canoe for navigating rapids, a canoe for traveling in bays, or a canoe for traveling down a calm river. Teachers should remind students of the types and purposes of each canoe. It may be helpful to write this information on a common surface, such as a whiteboard, for student reference. Students are expected to understand the types of canoes, the purpose of each canoe, and the knowledge they need to safely travel in the canoe.

Step 1

Distribute one copy of the “Canoe Travel Worksheet” to each student.

Step 2

Invite students to fill in the information on the worksheet. An example of this is highlighted below.

Step 3

Ask students to draw the body of water they must navigate around the canoe outline on the worksheet. Students are welcome to draw themselves, friends, and family into the canoe as well as supplies, if they choose.

Activity 2 (Continued)

Note that teachers may suggest students research a route in Oregon. To do so, they will need access to a computer or map. If this is not an option, students may use their imagination in determining the bodies of water they will need to “navigate” for this activity.

Name: Jack

I am starting my journey: In Grants Pass.

I am travelling to: The Coast.

The type of canoe I need for this journey is: For rapids.

This canoe is useful for my journey because: I am going to travel on the Rogue River and need a canoe that is safe for rapids.

To navigate this journey, I need to know: How to paddle in fast water, what supplies to bring, and where there are big obstacles.

Step 4 (Optional)

If administering the assignment in person, teachers might consider highlighting the students’ work by hanging their responses on a wall in the classroom or hallway. Ask students to walk the room silently and view each other’s canoe travels.

Step 5

Share slide 21 (Water map).

Key question: What are the types and purposes of canoes traditionally used by the peoples who make up the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians?



Activity 2 (Continued)

Say:

Remember this map from earlier? The Siletz people have used canoes to navigate this exact route—from Cape Foulweather along the ocean to the Rogue River. What type of canoe do they need to safely navigate this trip? [Answer: Big ocean-going canoe that can carry lots of people and stay upright in the ocean.]

Step 6

Facilitate a whole-class discussion.

Say:

Let us imagine you are going on a journey through Oregon and are planning to travel by canoe. Think about where you want to travel, who you might want to visit, what type of canoe you need to navigate the different types of waterways, and what supplies/skills you need to have for your journey.

Step 7

Facilitate a whole class discussion.

Activity 3

My travels

Time: 10 - 20 minutes

Overview

The purpose of this activity is to help students understand the importance of travel to the Siletz people as well as in their own lives. Students are asked to consider the times in which they have traveled with their families. Where did they go? How did they get there (by car, plane, or train)? Why did they travel? Was their mode of transportation the best fit for their journey? Why or why not? Teachers should encourage students to consider shorter trips in addition to vacations, such as trips to the grocery store or to pick up a sibling from school. An example response to the activity is shown below.

Name: Jack

Somewhere I have traveled is: Florida.

I went with: My mom and my sister.

I went here to: Visit my grandma and grandpa.

I traveled by: Airplane.

Step 1

Share slide 22: Today

Say:

Native people from all over the Pacific Northwest want to see more canoes in the water. Canoes remind the Siletz people to stay connected with one another and remember their traditions.

We have talked today about how Native people travel in canoes and a little bit about why canoes are so important. Before settlers came, Native people traveled

Activity 3 (Continued)

in canoes to visit family, trade with neighbors, go to celebrations, arrange weddings, fish, hunt, and whale. Today, Siletz people use cars to get around most of the time or use other kinds of boats to get food from rivers and oceans or just for fun.

Many families still like to travel by canoe. Canoes remind Siletz people of their connection to the rivers, ocean, and shores of their homelands, and they help them build and maintain relationships with each other and other Native people. Plus, canoeing is good exercise! And it's better for the environment—gas engines can leak oil and gas into the water, but paddling doesn't. Boats are difficult to steer on to shallow beaches ... but not canoes! Canoes are still an important part of Siletz culture.

Now we're going to talk about your own travel experiences. Where have you traveled? How did you get there? Why did you travel?

Step 2

Distribute one copy of the "Travel Worksheet" to each student. Then invite students to draw a picture of their journey on the worksheet.

Key questions: Where do you travel with your family? What traditions do you have that may require travel? How do you get there?

[Examples: We go to visit my grandparents in Arizona every year, and we fly. We went to my uncle's wedding in Seattle once, and we took the train. Our family reunion switches every time, so sometimes we drive and sometimes we fly.]

Activity 3 (Continued)

Step 3

(Wrap-up)

Say:

Traveling to get together with friends and family is an important part of many people's lives and helps us keep our traditions close when various parts of our family live far away. For Native people in Western Oregon, especially before reservation times, canoes were one of the most important tools for staying connected with each other. Keeping the traditions of canoes alive continues to connect Tribal people from all across Oregon and Washington to this day.