

Summary Description

This is the first in a series of nine lessons that introduces the student to Iroquois Native American history.

Learning Objectives

To have the student learn a few key facts about Iroquois history and culture.

Approximate Time for Lesson

60 minutes

Suggested Maturity Level for Instruction

Student should be able to read simple words and perform simple addition and subtraction. Also, student should be able to sit still and engage in one-on-one conversation.

References:

Native Languages of the Americans, Laura Redish and Orrin Lewis - <http://www.native-languages.org/new.htm>

Exemplar of Liberty, Native America and the Evolution of Democracy, Donald A. Grinde, Jr., Bruce E. Johansen, 1990 - http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/6Nations/EoL/index.html#ToC

Materials Needed

1. Internet Access – Pull up the following:
 - a. United States Map of Native American Populations by Geographic Region (go to <http://portfolio.educ.kent.edu/mcclellandr/zackthezipper/nativeamericans.htm>)
 - b. Picture of exterior of longhouse (go to <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/IroquoisVillage/images/figure1longhouse1g.gif>)
 - c. Picture of interior of longhouse (go to <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/IroquoisVillage/images/figure3interior1g.gif>)
 - d. Picture of Iroquois clothes (go to <http://www.peace4turtleisland.org/pages/clothing.htm>)
 - e. Picture of lacrosse players (go to http://images.google.com/imgres?imgurl=http://www.lacrosse-player.com/images/lacrosse-players.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.lacrosse-player.com/&usq=__wxaBgXkV10FtniEwjHtD2HgAN1A=&h=291&w=300&sz=68&hl=en&start=1&um=1&tbnid=15Z7OhHhNcOjM:&tbnh=113&tbnw=116&prev)

Preparation

Make sure you have materials open, printed, and/or available prior to beginning the lesson.

Script

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Teacher: Do you ever wonder about who the first people were to live in the country of the United States? Who do you think the first Americans were? Do you think it was your grandmother or grandfather? [[Engage the Student in conversation](#)].
2. Teacher: Actually, there was a group of people who are considered the first Americans called the Native Americans – you know them best as the Indians, but we call them Native Americans because “native” means “original” or “first”, and because the Indians were the first people to live in the United States, we should know the Indians as Native Americans. The Native Americans are the ones in books or pictures that you see during Thanksgiving sharing food with the pilgrims. Do you remember seeing them? [[Get Student’s positive response](#)].
3. Teacher: Well, there are so many different Native American tribes that we can’t talk about all of them. So I’m going to talk about only a few and for today, we will learn about the Iroquois Indians. So are you ready to learn?! [[Get positive response from Student and begin lesson](#)].

Lesson (50 minutes)

1. Teacher: First of all, let’s learn how to pronounce “Iroquois”. It’s pronounced, “eer-uh-kwoy”. Can you say that? [[Have the Student practice several times](#)].
2. Teacher: Good. Now, it’s been said that the name “Iroquois” was actually given by their enemies and the word means “snakes”. Yikes. So, what kind of people do you think the Iroquois were like? [[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that the Iroquois were known for great warriors and fighting skills](#)].
3. Teacher: Actually, the Iroquois were made up of 6 tribes. A tribe is any group of people usually related and all living together. Anyway, the Iroquois lived in what is now known as the State of New York [[point to New York on the map](#)].
4. Teacher: The Iroquois fed themselves mostly by farming. They farmed corn, beans, squash and wild berries. Also, they hunted deer and fished in the rivers. Usually, the women were in charge of farming and the men were in charge of hunting and fishing.
5. Teacher: Because the weather was very cold in the winter and hot in the summer, the Iroquois made their houses out of wood, called “longhouses”. Here’s picture of a longhouse from the outside and inside. [[Show exterior and interior pictures of a longhouse to Student](#)].
6. Teacher: These longhouses were about 100 feet long and 60 people could live in one longhouse!
7. Teacher: As for clothes, most of their clothes were made from deer skin or other animal skin that they got from hunting. The men wore leather shirts and something that looked like pants, called “leggings” and the women wore long skirts. They also wore shoes called “moccasins”, which were also made from animal skin. Here’s a picture of Iroquois clothes. [[Show Student picture of Iroquois clothes](#)].

8. Teacher: Also, do you see those feathers that the Iroquois man is wearing on this head? That's called a "gustoweh", and each tribe had its own feather design. This was worn to let other Native Americans know what tribe you were from.
9. Teacher: So, what kind of weapons do you think the Iroquois used to fight and hunt? [[Engage the Student in conversation](#)].
10. Teacher: The Iroquois used bow and arrows and for fishing, they used spears. For fighting, they used bow and arrows, spears, tomahawks (light axes that can be thrown at your enemies), clubs and shields. These weapons were made from animals, wood, and stone.
11. Teacher: Also, I talked about this a little already, but the men were in charge of hunting, trading and war while the women were in charge of farming, family and the land. The women also choose the men who would decide on all trading and fighting matters. This group of men that made these decisions was called the Iroquois Great Council. The Council would make decisions by unanimous vote, which means that all members must agree before the Iroquois does something about war or trading.
12. Teacher: In fact, when the first Europeans came to America, the Iroquois greatest strength came from their fighting spirit and also their decision to work as one team of 6 tribes as the Iroquois Great Council, not as 6 separate tribes. Why do you think it's better to work as a team rather than as a separate tribe? [[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that working in cooperation with greater numbers results in more effective results than a separate one-off effort](#)].
13. Teacher: In fact, because of the way the Iroquois worked together as a team, combined with their fighting spirit, they might have taken over most or even all of the United States!
14. Teacher: Finally, the Iroquois gave the United States many things that we still use today. Some of the greatest things the Iroquois gave to the United States are ideas on how to make decisions in our country today. For example, we vote for people to talk for us and those people then get in a group and vote on decisions as a group...that's called a "Republic" (that's the same "Republic" that we say in the Pledge of Allegiance). When the first people who created this country, called the Founding Fathers, were thinking about the best way for this country to make decisions, they talked to the Iroquois to get ideas on how to make this happen because they liked the way the Iroquois made decisions (through the Great Council).
15. Teacher: Also, the Iroquois invented a very popular sport called "lacrosse". This is a sport where your team has to throw the ball using a stick with a net at the end of it into the other teams' goal. Lacrosse is played in schools today. Here is a picture of kids playing lacrosse. [[Show Student picture of lacrosse](#)].

16. Teacher: Of course, the Iroquois did not play lacrosse with helmets or pads back then. And even with helmets and pads, you can still get hurt playing lacrosse today. But it is very fun and in fact, one of the oldest sports invented in the United States.
17. Teacher: Sadly, and this is true for all the Native Americans that we will learn about, the lands that once belonged to the Iroquois were taken away by the Europeans once they started to come and live in the United States because as more Europeans came to this country, the more crowded it got. Now, although Iroquois can live anywhere they want, there are special places called "reservations" in New York that only Iroquois are allowed to live - because of the way the lands were taken away from them, these reservations are something that the Americans created for the Iroquois to let the Iroquois understand that the Americans (in this case, the first Europeans to live in the United States) did not treat the Iroquois in a fair way. What do you think about the way the Iroquois got treated by the Americans and how they set up reservations for the Iroquois? [Engage the Student in conversation].
18. Teacher: OK - time for review. Get in front of the class. [Have the Student stand in front of you (consider inviting other members of the family also to set the stage) and ask her the following:
- a. What does the word Iroquois mean? Snakes
 - b. What kinds of homes did the Iroquois live in? Longhouses
 - c. How did the Iroquois get their food? Farming, hunting and fishing (farming mostly)
 - d. How did the Iroquois make decisions on fighting and trading? Through the Iroquois Great Council
 - e. What is one thing that the Iroquois give to the United States? Any one of the following:
1) A way for a group to make decisions (i.e., a republic) or 2) the sport of lacrosse.

Teacher reviews any questions that the Student missed].

Wrap Up (5 minutes)

Teacher: [Clapping]: You did GREAT! Wonderful job! Are there any questions that you have regarding the Iroquois? [Engage in conversation with the Student and resolve further questions by researching the Internet].