

Summary Description

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

Learning Objectives

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

Approximate Time for Lesson

50 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>

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 teepee (go to <http://www.native-languages.org/houses.htm#tipi>)
 - c. Picture of headdress and war bonnet (go to <http://www.native-languages.org/headresses.htm#warbonnets>)

Preparation

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

Script

Introduction (5 minutes)

1. Teacher: Alright. Today, we're going to move away from the Eastern United States [[point to the eastern side of the map](#)] and focus on a nation of Native Americans that lived in the middle [[point to the middle of the United States map](#)] of the country. This "middle" part of the United States is known as the "Plains". Do you know what "Plains" are? [[Get Student response](#)].
2. Teacher: Plains are a part of the earth that is flat and doesn't have many trees. This is different from the Eastern United States, where there are many trees, forests, and mountains. I think you're going to see that where the different Native Americans live in this country really said everything about how they lived and you'll see that with the differences between the Eastern Native Americans like the Iroquois and Cherokee compared to the Cheyenne who lived in the Plains."

3. Teacher: OK - So are you ready to learn about the Cheyenne? [\[Get positive response from Student and begin lesson\]](#).

Lesson (40 minutes)

4. Teacher: Just like last time, let's learn how to pronounce "Cheyenne". It's pronounced, "shy-ann". Can you say that? [\[Have the Student practice several times\]](#).
5. Teacher: Good. Cheyenne means "relatives of the Cree". The Cree are another group of Native Americans that lived in North Dakota and Montana, also considered in the area of the Plains.
6. Teacher: The Cheyenne lived in this entire area [\[point to South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado and Kansas\]](#) within the Great Plains. It's called Great Plains because the area is huge! It would take days even if you drove all day and night to get to the bottom the Great Plains if you started at the top.
7. Teacher: The Great Plains isn't covered by forests like the Eastern part of the United States where the Iroquois and Cherokee lived. Well, if trees don't grow in the Plains, do you think it was easier or harder for the Cheyenne to farm food? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but come to the point that it was probably harder to farm in the Plains than in the Eastern United States\]](#).
8. Teacher: So even though long ago in the beginning the Cheyenne got food by farming and hunting, when horses came to the United States carried on ships by the Europeans (that's right, there were NO horses in this country until Europeans brought them here!), the Cheyenne got their food mostly by chasing around and hunting buffalo. Why do you think having horses make it easier to hunt buffalo? [\[Engage the Student in conversation\]](#).
9. Teacher: Buffalo are huge animals...a daddy buffalo can weigh over 2,000 pounds!. Buffalo move in groups called herds. And once they have eaten all the grass in the area, they move to other areas that have grass. Since the Cheyenne needed the buffalo for food, the Cheyenne would also follow the buffalo. And so, having a horse to ride on or to put your stuff on while following the buffalo made it much easier than just walking - so this is why horses made the Cheyenne turn to the buffalo as their main source of food.
10. Teacher: So, if you're moving around every time the buffalo move on, would you build houses that are simple and fast to make or hard and take long to make? [\[Engage the Student in conversation but make that the point that you would make houses that are simple and fast to make because it would take too much effort to rebuild your houses every time the buffalo moved on\]](#).
11. Teacher: That's right. And it was the same for the Cheyenne. The Cheyenne made and lived in teepees. Teepees were large cone-shaped houses made of wood and buffalo skin. Here's a picture of some teepees. [\[Show Student picture of teepee\]](#).

12. Teacher: The very tip of the teepee was about twice as high as the ceiling in your house and the good thing about it was that the teepee could be taken down very quickly, carried and rebuilt again. In fact, it would take an entire village of Cheyenne only one hour to take down all the teepees in the village. By the way, do you know what it's called when people live by moving around many times? It's called a "nomadic" life. The Cheyenne were known as "nomads" because they moved along with the buffalo.
13. Teacher: On the other hand, the Iroquois and the Cherokee built houses that were not meant to be taken down because they didn't have a reason to be moving around since their food did not move too far from where they lived.
14. Teacher: The Cheyenne's clothes were about the same as the Iroquois and Cherokee, although the Cheyenne started to wear European dresses and vests once they came to the United States. But one thing that the Cheyenne wore that was different from the Iroquois and Cherokee was that the Cheyenne leaders wore headdresses made out of feathers and later wore what is called a "war bonnet". Here're some pictures of headdresses and war bonnets, both made from feathers. [\[Show Student picture of headdresses and war bonnets\]](#).
15. Teacher: And the weapons of the Cheyenne were similar to the Iroquois and Cherokee, except that the Cheyenne used more powerful bow and arrows for shooting and killing buffalo (remember the Iroquois and Cherokee used their bow and arrows to hunt deer, which is much smaller than the buffalo).
16. Teacher: As for the men and women, the men were in charge of hunting, trading and war while the women were in charge of the family and the house. Since the houses (teepees) belonged to the women, the women were in charge of building, taking apart and carrying their teepees. Can you imagine having to carry all that stuff around with you every time you moved somewhere? [\[Engage the Student in conversation\]](#).
17. Teacher: Another thing interesting about the Cheyenne that was different from the Iroquois and the Cherokee was the way they (and this is true for all the Native Americans living in the Great Plains) treated war. You see, when the Iroquois and Cherokee fought in wars, they fought for their land (so they no one would take it away) and all their enemies would be killed. But the Cheyenne thought of war mostly as a test of their bravery, which made wars kind of like games to them.
18. Teacher: For example, during a battle, the Cheyenne would see who could strike the enemy the most without killing the enemy. That would take a lot of courage because the enemy could kill you if you were close to him! Or during a battle, the Cheyenne would see who in their group could steal the enemy's weapon or horse. Of course, I'm sure when the newly arrived Americans came to fight against the Cheyenne, they might have been a little confused at how the Cheyenne were fighting (like hitting the Americans and then running away without killing them).

19. Teacher: But the Cheyenne were fierce warriors. In fact, when the Americans set up reservations for the Cheyenne (sadly, they got their lands taken away from them in return for reservation lands to live on), the Cheyenne fought to live outside these lands. In a famous battle in which Americans tried to force Cheyenne to live in the reservations, the Cheyenne killed one of the largest numbers of American soldiers in one single battle against any Native American people – this battle was called the Battle of Little Bighorn.
20. Teacher: After the Battle of Little Bighorn, Americans really wanted to wipe out the Native Americans and continued to do so for years to come.
21. 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 “nomad” mean? It means a way of living in which you move a lot with no fixed home
 - b. What was the main food that the Cheyenne ate? Buffalo
 - c. What’s the name of the homes that the Cheyenne made that was easy to make and take apart? Teepee
 - d. What was different from the way the Cheyenne thought of war compared to the Iroquois and Cherokee? The Cheyenne thought of war as a way to show their bravery while the Iroquois and Cherokee thought of war mainly to secure their lands.
 - e. What is the name of the famous battle in which the Cheyenne defeated the Americans?” Battle of Little Bighorn.

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 Cheyenne? [Engage in conversation with the Student and resolve further questions by researching the Internet].