

**Title:**

The Fur Trade and Native American History

**Grade Level:**

Grades 4-5

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**Abstract:**

This lesson centers on this essential question: How did the fur trade with Europeans transform Native American life? While American Indian tribes had extensive trade networks throughout North America in the Pre-Columbian era, the appearance and development of the European trade network in the Old Northwest brought about drastic transformations in the daily lives of American Indian men and women. This lesson compares and contrasts American Indian needs and wants during the pre-European and post-European trade market eras. It further examines those changes in respect to four categories: weapons, food preparation products and utensils, general tools, and lifestyle patterns relating to the fur trade. Students have the opportunity to participate in a trade simulation to gain a better understanding of needs and wants as well as supply and demand in the trade market. Students also have the opportunity to research and comparatively analyze a sector of American Indian life using primary documents, historical resources, and visual arts.

**State Standards:**

B8.8—Identify major scientific discoveries and technological innovations and describe their social and economic effects on society

B8.10—Analyze examples of conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, or nations

**Essential Historical Question:**

How did the fur trade with Europeans transform Native American life?

**Learning Targets:**Knowledge

Trading practices before European contact

Importance of beaver fur to Europeans

Trading practices with Europeans

Native American way of life before European contact

Changes in Native American way of life during European contact including role changes of men and women

### Skills and Processes

Compare/contrast

Cause/effect

Making inferences

Research skills

Using primary and secondary sources

Cooperative group work

### Reasoning and Creative Thinking

Students will interpret cultural differences of Native Americans before and after European contact.

Students will explore the choices and consequences of trade with the Europeans.

Students will interpret and analyze historical documents.

### Dispositions and Attitudes

Students will seek to understand how and why cultures change over time.

Students will develop a respect for diversity and Native American culture.

Students will learn to compare and contrast cultural changes.

### **Instruction:**

#### Preliminary Activities:

Students will participate in the one-day simulation.

Students will share strategies, accomplishments, and frustrations while participating in the simulation.

Students will do a KWL about Native American way of life.

Students will review research methods and work with primary and secondary sources.

#### New Learning Activities:

The teacher will lead a class discussion on the origins of the fur trade in North America and briefly discuss the impact of this trade on the Native Americans.

The teacher will divide the class into four groups. Each group will research one of the following questions:

1. How did European weapons affect Native American way of life?
2. How did European metal utensils affect Native American way of life?

3. How did the trapping of beaver furs affect Native American way of life?
4. How did European metal tools affect the Native American way of life?

After the research is completed, each group will choose a way to present their information. This may include a group or individual presentation to be chosen from the following:

#### Group Projects

- role playing/plays
- skits
- interviews

#### Individual Projects

- posters
- storyboards
- dioramas
- journals
- essays
- PowerPoint presentations
- documentaries

#### Post-Learning Activities:

Students will complete a KWL with whole class and present group or individual projects.

#### **Assessment:**

##### Generalization/Question Connection:

Using a simulation, research, and discussion, students will learn that trade is socially and economically important to cultural development.

##### Goal of Performance or Product:

Students will gain an understanding of how trade affects cultures.

Students will use research skills to gather and analyze information.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the fur trade on Native American culture.

##### Role of Student:

Students will participate in a group simulation.

Students will use Internet, primary and secondary sources, and reference books.

Students will choose a method to demonstrate their understanding of how and why fur trade impacted Native American culture.

Audience of Performance or Product:

Teachers and student peers will be the audience.

Situation:

Students will participate in a one class period trade simulation.

Students will share information with the whole class.

Students will create and share their finished project.

**Resources:**

*Archival:*

The Area Research Center has several collections that relate to the fur trade in Wisconsin.

*Print:*

Bieder, Robert E. *Native American Communities in Wisconsin 1600-1960* (1995).

Dorchester, Guy Carleton. *Condition of the Indian trade in North America, 1767* (1972).

Edmunds, R. David. "Shells That Ring for Shadows on Her Face: Potawatomi Commerce in the Old Northwest." *Wisconsin Magazine of History* (Spring 1993): 163-179.

Hatt, Christine. *The American West* (2004).

Roop, Peter. *Buffalo Jump* (1999).

Saum, Lewis O. *The Fur Trader and the Indian* (1965).

Woodward, Arthur. *The Denominators of the Fur Trade: An Anthology of Writings on the Material Culture of the Fur Trade* (1970).