

LESSON PLAN

Indigenous Perseverance – Wampanoag Survival 400 Years After the Mayflower

Social Studies, Grades 6-8

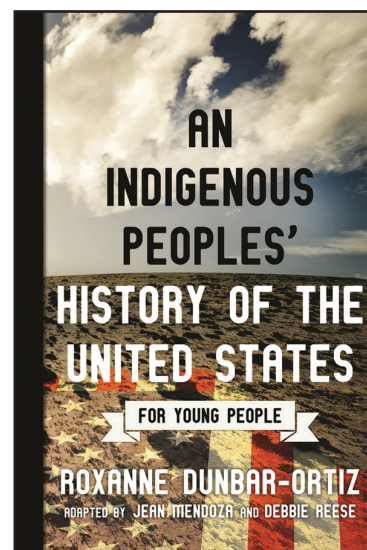
Duration: 2–3 hours

An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz

Adapted by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese

Lesson Plan by Natalie Martinez, PhD



Summary

This lesson plan supports the major concepts of Indigenous resistance and survival discussed in *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People* by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, adapted by Jean Mendoza and Debbie Reese; it expands on these concepts as presented in the following chapters: introduction, 2, 7, and conclusion. In this lesson, students will learn about the contemporary existence of the People of the First Light—the Wampanoag, who continue to live, work, and learn on the land where the Mayflower landed in 1620, despite 400 years of enduring the effects of settler colonialism.

Learning Targets

- Students will develop a geo-spatial understanding of the Wampanoag homelands in historical and contemporary contexts.
- Students will analyze Wampanoag-Pilgrim relationships from first contact to contemporary land claims.
- Students will explain historical and contemporary aspects of resistance, resilience, and survival exhibited by Wampanoag people.

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Essential Question

How does the strength of identity and culture survive through time and space?

Corresponding CCSS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Vocabulary

Terminal narrative

American exceptionalism

Resilience

American myth

Resistance

Prior Knowledge

- Students should be familiar with American stories of the Mayflower landing in 1620 as a point of reference (see chapter 3 also).

Resources and Materials

- Projector
- 3"x5" index cards
- Blank maps of the US Atlantic Coast – one per student
- Atlas of United States or US map of Atlantic seaboard – available as student reference
- National Geographic map showing US circa 1620 (<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/photo/wampanoag-territory/>)
- Speech by Wamsutta (Frank James) - introduction and text of the speech by Frank James on the 350th anniversary of the Mayflower's landing (from the United American Indians of New England website), http://www.uaine.org/suppressed_speech.htm
- News coverage and clips of the film *We Still Live Here*
 - PBS NewsHour - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUEj8QrCXzA> (this clip is similar to the clips used on the Independent Lens website)
 - PBS Independent Lens website with clips – <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/videos/songs-from-the-end-of-the-island/>, <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/videos/a-language-is-not-just-words/>
- PRI News article: "This Lost Native Language of Massachusetts Is Waking Up Again" (<https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-12-29/lost-native-language-massachusetts-waking-up-again>)

LEARNING PLAN

Introduction – Situating the Historical Wampanoag (10 minutes)

Building spatial background knowledge:

Mapping exercise

- Display a contemporary map of the US Atlantic seaboard.
 - Ask students to point out various New England states and landmarks/waterways; direct attention to the area of Massachusetts.
- Display the historical map of “Territory of the Wampanoag c. 1620” from National Geographic.
 - Invite students to observe the differences in the two maps and comment on what they see or do not see; focus students on names of Wampanoag territorial boundaries, including villages, political borders, roadways, cities and townships, etc.
 - Ask students to comment on reasons why they think the two maps are different; focus students on progressive settler colonialism causing shifting Wampanoag territorial boundaries, place-names added or changed, etc.
- Ask students to refer to the map graphics in *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States for Young People* on page 11; you may also use the interactive map found at http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_vault/2014/06/17/interactive_map_loss_of_indian_land.html to demonstrate land-holdings shifts post-1776.
 - Invite students to comment on the trends they notice regarding land holdings both in Massachusetts and across the United States.
 - Ask students to talk with an elbow partner about how they connect the land-holdings maps with the concept of settler colonialism as described on pages 11-13.

Learning Activities – Understanding Relationships Post-Mayflower (60-90 minutes)

Understanding the Mayflower Landing

Mapping – (continue to project the National Geographic c. 1620 map)

- Share one blank US Atlantic seaboard outline map with students.
- Ask students to use the projected map and reference an atlas to complete the following:
 - Label on the blank map the current locations of Taunton, Mashpee, Plymouth, MA, Mayflower landing point.
 - Shade in the original Wampanoag territory.
- Review with students chapter 3 of *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States for Young People* regarding the Mayflower landing (pages 50-52) and the significance of land (pages 60-61).
- Invite students to theorize about the issues resulting from claiming of land by the Pilgrims and how settler colonialism might have affected the relationships between Pilgrims and Nations of first contact such as the Wampanoag. Focus students on issues related to shifts in power, misunderstandings about meanings, language barriers, and political strategizing.

Shifting Relationships and Whose Story Gets Retold

- Ask students to think about the problems discussed above and then connect with the concept of creating an American myth about the landing of the Mayflower. Invite students to share what they know about the May-

flower story. Ask students to then question what about the story might seem true and what might seem false. Invite students to write their thoughts.

- Pose these questions to students:
 - Why would the United States wish to create a sense of cooperation, friendship, and exceptionalism in the American myth of the Mayflower landing?
 - How does the termination narrative support the American myth?
 - How does the American Mayflower myth get retold and who controls the story?
- Invite students to read the speech by Wamsutta/Frank James on the 350th anniversary of the Mayflower landing (http://www.uaine.org/suppressed_speech.htm)
 - Ask students to comment on what story Mr. James tells and how it is different from the American myth of the Mayflower.
 - Ask students why Mr. James did not give his speech.
 - Review the 400th-anniversary website timeline from the Wampanoag perspective with students (<https://www.plymouth400inc.org/our-story-exhibit-wampanoag-history/>).
 - Invite students to compare and contrast what they know about the 350th and 400th anniversary celebrations; ask them to comment about why they think the 400th anniversary might be more inclusive of Indigenous perspectives than the 350th was.

Focus on Survival through Resistance and Resilience

- Ask students to read aloud, individually or in pairs, pages 45-46; refer to the graphic on page 45 of *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States for Young People*; and write down the words that come to mind after reading.
 - Assist students to create a concept map as a class that includes the words from their lists above with these two words at the center: “resistance” and “survival.”
 - Project the following paragraph from page 46:
“Those Indigenous peoples and their descendants resisted invasion of their homelands and centuries of destruction and exploitation by the colonizers. Today they speak back, as individuals and as sovereign nations, against ongoing trauma and the consequences of conquest and terminal narratives.”
 - Ask students to brainstorm what resistance might look like for Indigenous people and how Indigenous peoples’ continued existence across the United States is an example of resistance and survival; help students focus on other examples such as keeping language and cultural traditions alive, living in modern-day towns and cities, earning college degrees, and working in various types of jobs, as well as speaking up for their rights as Mr. James did.
- Invite students to listen and read the article “This Lost Native Language of Massachusetts Is Waking Up Again” (<https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-12-29/lost-native-language-massachusetts-waking-up-again>) and then ask students to comment on how the following quote is an example of settler colonialism, as well as resistance through language survival: “The Native tongue disappeared soon after English settlers arrived in the area in the 17th century. There was a very brief period where Wampanoag and English coexisted, but unfortunately the great migration happened. Tens of thousands of English immigrants poured into New England and largely began to displace Wampanoag people from their homelands,” said Jennifer Weston, immersion school developer for the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project. Wôpanâak is how the tribe spells the name of their language; Wampanoag is the spelling that’s used in English. “The language, it persisted for a while, but it really did start to fall off by the mid-1700s. There was a very long period of time where the language really only existed as a written record,” she added.
- “Our” Story: 400 Years of Wampanoag History, Plimoth-400 Commemoration (<https://www.plymouth-400inc.org/our-story-exhibit-wampanoag-history/>)

Lesson Summary/Formative Assessment (15 minutes)

- In a class discussion, invite students to describe how the Wampanoag Language Immersion Project is an example of resistance and survival for the Indigenous people who first encountered the European people from the Mayflower.
- Explain how the example of Frank James in 1970 and the quote below from Jessie Little Doe Baird from the news article “Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Lands in Dispute” demonstrate the concept of “Indigenous resistance in the twentieth century” as discussed in the conclusion chapter of *An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States for Young People*:

“We’re the last surviving of those tribes on the mainland, this is the 400th anniversary of the landing of the Mayflower, and the tribe now finds ourselves on the opposite end of the spectrum, asking the white government to make sure we have land under our feet,” she said.
- Create a class word cloud about the Wampanoag survival and resilience that counters the American myth of “terminal narratives” using the examples from the discussions and lists above. Display the word cloud in the classroom.

ASSESSMENT (15 minutes)

Resilient Stars Trading Cards – make a 3”x5” trading card depicting a contemporary Wampanoag person (or ally currently working with Wampanoag people) and describe his/her role in resistance and survival over the past 400 years. Include an image of the person, the person’s name, and a decorative border for the card. Students must present their individual cards to the class. Students can use people from the videos and news stories, or they can research contemporary and historic Wampanoag people; wherever possible, there should not be duplication of people, in order to get a broad set of cards. Completed cards can be displayed in the school.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Wampanoag Language Immersion Project School website: <http://www.wlrp.org/home.html>
- Wampanoag language in high schools news article - <https://www.capeandislands.org/post/mashpee-high-school-offers-first-ever-native-american-language-course#stream/0>
- Reference to the celebration site that contains Wampanoag counter-narratives and timeline of settler colonial experience - <https://www.plymouth400inc.org/our-story-exhibit-wampanoag-history/>
- Frank James’s speech from the edited webpage “History Is a Weapon” – <https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/wamsuttaplymouth.html>

Note on links provided: if a link stops working, the Wayback Machine - Internet Archive (<https://archive.org>) is often useful in pulling up the old webpage.