

Kaylen Baker, Sarah Henry, and Leslie Neely, 2009
Lesson overview

Subject:	Social Studies
Grade:	2 nd Grade
Topic:	Native Americans
Approx. duration of the contracts	5 days
Concept:	Native Americans' adaptation to their environment and use of natural resources.
Essential question:	How did the environment affect the lives of three Native American groups (Powhatan of the Eastern Woodlands, the Sioux of the Plains, and the Pueblo people of the Southwest)?

Objectives

✓ Students will know:

- The definitions of environment, regions, and natural resources
- The geographical regions that each of the three Native American tribes lived in
- Examples of natural resources in each region and how they were used

✓ Students will understand:

- Environmental factors affect the lives of all people because of the varying natural resources that all environments possess. These natural resources influence people's jobs, food, clothing, homes, and forms of transportation.

✓ Students will be able to do:

- Compare and contrast how the environment has affected each of the three Native American groups
- Explain how the environment affects our lives today
- Identify what aspects of the Native Americans' lives were affected by the environment

**Checking points.*

- Do the "Know" objectives cover the essential information to be learned?
- Are the "Understand" objectives big and transferable ideas of the discipline?
- Are the "Do" objectives are observable and measurable? Do they encompass essential skills?
- Do the KUDs "fit together"-in other words, will they come together coherently?

Range or description of learner needs in your class related to this topic

This learning contract is taking place at the end of the second-grade unit on Native Americans. In terms of **readiness**, the majority of the students are comfortable with the topic. Throughout the unit, they have shown growth in their knowledge and understanding of the three regions of Native Americans being studied. A small group of students is struggling with the unit information. Based on formative assessment data, the major aspects of each region and the Native Americans who lived there don't seem to be clear to these students. Finally, a small group of students is excelling with this unit. They have a strong grasp of the important information taught during the unit and are able to expand on this information and apply it in new ways. In terms of **interest**, the majority of the students seem very interested in the topic and motivated to learn about it. Some students in particular are very interested in Native American legends. Many of the students are interested in the different shelters of these three regions. There are a wide variety of **learning profiles** in the class as well, with some students enjoying more analytical work, some enjoying more creative work, and some enjoying more practical work.

Factors and elements you'll need to consider in developing the Contracts

(related to time, students, space, materials, etc.)

Time: Since this is the first time students will have used learning contracts, we must plan for time to introduce the concept of the contracts to the students and help them to understand what their choices are and what the expectations are for each choice and the learning contract as a whole. We will spend a class period of social studies talking to the students about the learning contracts, why we are using them, why they are set up like a menu, and what the options are on the contract. We will go over time management and due dates in general with the students, and then talk about the specific due dates and, since the students are in second grade, how to pace themselves to work towards these dates. **Space and materials:** These are both fairly specific to the tasks that the students choose. In general, the space that students use will be flexible, allowing for conferring with peers when needed and spreading out for more art-based projects if applicable.

Activities and materials already available to consider including the Contracts

Students have kept unit folders throughout the unit. These contain materials that will be helpful in comparing and contrasting the three Native American regions, such as pictures of clothing, student-created maps of each region and its' natural resources, and etc. Students will also be able to review the bulletin board-sized graphic organizer filled in after talking about each region and examples of the shelters they made for each region will be around the classroom. All of the books read during the unit, both non-fiction and legends, will be set out for easy access.

Pre-assessment plans:

Because this activity is done at the conclusion of the unit, work done by the students throughout the unit would be used to pre-assess and decide what should be included in the Learning Contract. We would decide this based on

- Interest on certain topics
- Areas where students, as a whole, struggled (Important topics on which students struggled will become “must-do” activities.)

In order to assess these things, we would look through students’ Unit Folders and make decisions based on the work they have done from beginning to end of the unit.

Specific task to be included in the contracts:

See learning contract.

1. Working guidelines for students:

- Working guidelines would be task-specific, but with classroom rules in mind (i.e., Students will respect one another by talking quietly even in group work).
- Students will be expected to be working for the entire period. There is a lot for them to get done in this Learning Contract, and while they are capable of doing it, it will require them to be disciplined and efficient.
- Although there will be scheduled conferences for each student with the teacher, students will also know that they can request conferences if they feel as though they need feedback, advice, or assistance.

2. Time line requirements and student planning:

Because this is likely the first time many of our second graders will be using a Learning Contract, time requirements and student planning must be thoroughly explained before the start of the activity. To do this, we will:

- Explain that some tasks take longer than others. This will lead into a conversation about time management and a basic time line for the Learning Contract.
- Provide them with a checklist at the end of each day so that they can both inform us of where they are and so that they can see for themselves what they have done and how much they have left to do.
- Explain how they should think about ordering the tasks as they complete the Learning Contract. For example, they should start with the Main Dish. This part of the Contract will probably take the longest and we will explain to them that it will likely take *about* x-amount of time. It might take a little longer for some people, and it might take a little shorter for others, but it should take them *about* x-amount of time to complete.

3. Assigning students to contracts:

Because our students are likely new to Learning Contracts, we have provided each of them with the same Learning Contract that contains choice *within* for all students.

4. Introducing the Learning Contracts to students:

For students this young and who are probably very new to this type of an assignment, it is important that we explain clearly and explicitly what we want them to do. Therefore, the entire first day of the lesson will be dedicated to discussion on *what* a Learning Contract is and *how* we use them.

Assessment plans :

1. How work will be graded

There will be two pieces to the grading process. (1) Both students and the teacher will evaluate how well each student worked each day. Students and the teacher will have a rubric that shows what types of behaviors make up good work (Some examples could include: did I do my best work today? Did I try to work the whole time? Did I ask for help when I needed help?). Students will fill out the rubric and the teacher will check to see if he/she agrees. (2) The teacher will grade two pieces of work from the learning contract. Students will be asked to pick what they feel is their best work for one grade, and the teacher will tell them that he/she will pick another piece at random to grade. The teacher will make sure to let the students know that this means that all of their work should show good effort. These pieces will be graded by rubrics that students have seen and that get at the overall understand objectives of each piece of work.

2. Monitoring student work and progress:

The teacher will be actively checking in with students through conferences. These will be teacher-scheduled, but the students will also have the option of signing up for a conference if they feel like they need one. The students will have small checklists glued to the front of their unit folders showing the options they have chosen from their learning contracts and a place for the teacher to check off when a piece of work has been finished. This way the teacher can have a quick reference of where students are. This could show him/her who is spending too long on one piece of work, who has sped through work too fast, and just where each student is in general.

3. Checking work for accuracy, understanding, and quality:

All students will be asked to fill out a quick checklist at the end of each work day to indicate where they are in their work. This will ensure that both the teacher and students are aware of the quantity of work done and the quantity of work remaining. The student filled-out rubrics will also give the students guidelines about the quality of work expected of them. The teacher student conferences will allow both the teacher and student to examine the work done and ensure that the student is understanding the tasks and is accurate in completing them.

4. Turning work in-when and how:

Students will keep a Learning Contract Folder in a bin at a central location in the room. All of their work will stay inside of the folder when they are not working on it. As students complete

their work, they will simply place it back in the folder and begin a new section. At the conclusion of the activity, each student will have a folder of completed work for the Learning Contract in the bin that will be ready for feedback and assessment by the teachers.

Learning Contracts

Menu:

Due: All items in the main dish and the specified number of side dishes must be complete by the due date. You may select among the side dishes and you make decide to do some of the dessert items, as well.

Main Dish (*you must complete both of these*)

1. Three-part Venn Diagram: Take a Venn Diagram worksheet and a bag of Native American facts back to your desk. Read each fact and decide if it is true for the Plains Indians, the Southwest Indians, or the Eastern Woodlands Indians. Think carefully! It could be true for two groups of Indians, or even for all three groups! Once you decide, glue the fact down using a glue stick. When you have decided where all of the facts from your bag go, write two or three more facts that you have learned to the Venn diagram. Below your Venn diagram, write why you chose to put your new facts in one spot and not another.

2. Natural Resources: We have talked a lot about how natural resources affected the lives of Native Americans. The natural resources affected Native Americans' clothes, food, shelter, transportation, and jobs. Think about your life today and how natural resources might affect it. Draw a picture showing either the food, clothing, shelter, transportation, or jobs of your world today. Then label any natural resources that are shown in your picture. On the back of your picture, write a few sentences explaining whether or not you think natural resources affect our lives today and how they do this.

Side Dish (*You must do at least 1 of these*)

1. Pick one of the Native American groups (Powhatan of the Eastern Woodlands, the Sioux of the Plains, or the Pueblo people of the Southwest). Pretend you are a member of that group and write a letter to someone outside of your group. In your letter, explain how the environment affects various parts of your life.

2. Pick six items from an artifact bag (canvas bag containing various objects representing natural resources found in the Native Americans' environments) and record three things about each artifact: (1) what natural resources the artifact is representing; (2) what region you would find this artifact in; and (3) how this artifact was used by Native Americans.

3. Create an advertisement for one of the three regions (Eastern Woodlands, the Plains, or the Southwest). At the very least, your advertisement must contain: (1) what Native American group lives in your region; (2) what the natural resources of that region are; and (3) how the Native Americans in your region used the natural resources. The three main elements of the advertisement may be represented in your advertisement with drawings and/or writing.

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Dessert (*You may do one or both of these*)

1. Instruction Booklet or Recipe Book. Choose ONE of the three tribes. Think about their *needs*- food, clothing, and shelter. Make a “How to” book (or a recipe book, if you choose food) for one of the items that they used in their daily lives. Choose ONE item from either food, clothing, OR shelter. You do not need to write about all three.

2. Poem or Song Writing. Choose a topic that is related to the environment and natural resources of one of our Native American tribes. Write a song or a poem about it and why it is important.

Analyzing your Learning Contracts

1. How are the sample contracts alike in intent and structure? How are they different in intent and structure?

We wanted our main course items to get at our major understand objective and essential question, and for all students to have practice working with these ideas. Although all of the students will be completing these tasks, some will need more scaffolding to complete them. In our side dish and dessert options, we tried to accommodate for student interest and learning profiles. For example, several students were very interested in the different Native American shelters and may be interested in working on dessert option #1 if they have time. Side dish option #3 would appeal to those of our students who are more creative thinkers.

2. What do you see as essential feature of or elements in making sure students are successful with leaning contracts?

For learning contracts to be effective, there need to be three essential features. The first feature should be very clear directions and expectations. The learning contract would be useless if the students don’t know how to properly complete it. For this reason, it is important to spend a bit of time explaining the different elements of the contract along with an explanation of the kind of work that will be expected. The second key feature would be that all parts of the contract be aligned with the KUD’s for the unit. The goal is to have all students working towards to the same essential understandings; they may just be completing different assignments to get there. The final key feature for an effective learning contract is that the contract should be planned based on information obtained from preassessments.

3. What is the link between preassessment and learning contracts?

By examining information from preassessments, the tasks given in the learning contract can support skills that students need extra practice with, encourage students' interests, and promote the use of preferred learning styles.

4. Think of several ways the teachers might have given direction for competing contracts successfully when not all students would complete the same task.

For second graders, I think that it would be important for teachers to give instruction and examples of each task. We would do this on the first day of instruction, which we have solely dedicated to the explanation and discussion of what a Learning Contract is. Although not ALL students will complete the same tasks, it is important that they know exactly what is expected of them and that they are clear on what each question is asking them so that they can make a choice for themselves about which questions they will answer. Especially with students this young, it is essential that direction be clear and precise and that it includes examples. It is also crucial that students know that they can ask for help from the teacher or request a conference if they are confused, stuck, or want some early feedback. Teachers will need to provide a supportive environment to foster confidence in this new task.

5. What questions do you have as a result of examining these contracts?

- Are learning contracts more effective for some age groups more than others?
- Are there an "ideal" number of task options that we should be aiming for giving our students? How can we tell if we have given the students too many/too few options?