

Indigenous & Settler Economics

Lesson Plan for "The Alaska Myth" Podcast, Episode 3

Grade Level: Adapt for
6th - 12th grades

Subject: Social Studies /
Alaska Studies / History

Topic: Gold Rush

Objectives & Goals:

Students will:

- Explain the purpose and goals of both Indigenous economies and capitalism
- Compare and contrast Indigenous and settler economies during the Klondike Gold Rush

Materials

- Video clip: "[One with Nature](#)" ~2 min.
- Video clip: [Winonna LaDuke](#) ~ 5 min.
- [The Alaska Myth Podcast episode 3](#), ~ 8 min.
- Vocabulary definitions, attached
- Graphic Organizer
- Video transcripts
- [color](#) | [symbol](#) | [image](#) from previous lesson
- Colored pencils or markers

Activities (1 - 2 class periods)

Opener:

Students anonymously describe wealth and how one becomes wealthy. Have students share their ideas in a parking lot activity. (5-10 minutes)

Review & discuss vocabulary terms. Word bank, word find, four square activities are recommended. (10-15 minutes)

Main Lesson:

Introduce Indigenous perspectives: worldviews, values, beliefs, and key concepts of Indigenous economies.

Watch 2 minute video clip "[One with Nature](#)" and see what Indigenous people from Saskatchewan Canada have to say. (0:30-1:28 and 6:45-7:55. ~2 min total)

Discuss with a neighbor or record on notes:
-What types of goals, needs, wants were expressed in the video?
-What thoughts and ideas are you experiencing?

Activities (continued)

This next video discusses some ideas and terms that might be new or unfamiliar. We will hear about: economics of happiness, Indigenous Restorative Economics, we are all related, cyclical worldview, land-based economy, nouns are animate, seven generations. A transcript of the segments used is available in case that is more feasible due to time or connectivity issues.

[Winona LaDuke, "Restoring..."](#) (4:46-7:00; 7:28-10:16, watching about 5 minutes total)

Provide time for discussion/reflection. Review and complete graphic organizer/notes.

Now that a foundation of Indigenous economics has been established, introduce [Alaska Myth Podcast: Episode 3 Sourdough's Dreams](#). This podcast discusses the goals and perspectives of gold miners during Klondike Gold Rush in the late 1800s.

Students: take notes on the Settler and Indigenous Economies Graphic Organizer to compare/contrast what you've learned about Indigenous economics.

Play 2:50-11:00, listen to ~8 minutes.

Provide time for discussion/reflection. Review and complete graphic organizer/notes.

Assessments

Continue the Color, Symbol, Image assessment started in the Background lesson.

Now that we have compared Indigenous and Settler economies, create a SYMBOL that represents "wealth." Explain how your symbol represents your ideas.

Vocabulary Definitions

Definitions from Merriam Webster or Britannica unless otherwise noted

economy	conditions of economic life in a country, area, or period
economics	a social science concerned chiefly with description and analysis of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. "Economics is not just about money. It is about weighing different choices or alternatives. Some of those important choices involve money, but most do not" (econlib.org).
natural resources	industrial materials and capacities (such as mineral deposits and waterpower) supplied by nature
capitalism	widely adopted economic system in which there is private ownership of the means of production.
Indigenous economics	Everything is connected and interrelated. Reciprocity, respect, and relationality promotes environmental stewardship, cultural preservation, and social justice (OECD).
reciprocity	Paying attention to close relationships with the environment, humans, animals, plants, rivers, forest, oceans, and all beings (OECD).
relationality	"Walking gently on the earth" lands and resources are integral parts of identity, spirituality, and life. Interconnectedness between humans and nature forms the foundation that connects all of us, not just Indigenous Peoples (OECD).
depression	a period of time in which there is little economic activity and many people do not have jobs
industrialization	to build and operate factories and businesses in a city, region, country, etc
opportunity costs	the added cost of using resources. Example: example, you spend time and money going to a movie, you can't spend the money on something else (econlib.org)

Graphic Organizer for Video/ Podcast Notes

Economic Perspectives

Needs/ Wants	Goals/ Perspectives	
	SETTLER	INDIGENOUS
Water		
Land		
Food		
Housing		
Education		
Healthcare		
Community Responsibilities		

Transcript
**“One with Nature:
Indigenous Organic Agriculture Documentary”**

0:30-1:28

William Ermine, Saskatchewan Elder: What we have to do, we have to study nature. Nature is the greatest teacher. If you take time and listen, nature lives in harmony with itself. Each looks out for the other. Each protects the other. There is no warring, no gossip. There is nothing. They live in harmony and side by side. They’re not fighting over the piece of land that they grow from. That is organic, as designed by our creator.

6:45-7:55

Joe Munroe, Muskoday Organic Worker Co-op: People mostly get their food now from the supermarkets. They believe they are getting good food and that it will always be there. The future doesn’t bode well for that. Not at a low price anyway. Food is going to be out of reach for most people. So, we see value in people learning how to grow their own food.

We would be farming all of Muskoday of ourselves in small sustainable farms organically at some point. Feeding ourselves and feeding people locally, you know 100-mile diet.

William Ermine, Saskatchewan Elder: We need to be the caretakers of that because that’s who we are. The caretakers of the land. Not to destroy it, not to pollute it, but to live in harmony with us. Because this is where our strength, our knowledge, our wisdom, our voice, our way of life comes from.

Transcript

Winona LaDuke: Restoring Indigenous Communities and the Ecological Balance

4:46-7:00;

In my community we have a phrase which I think is pretty much the economics of happiness phrase, I'm not sure, [Ojibwe phrase], which is what one wishes to attain. The good life. Probably in Buddhist teaching, Hindu teaching, and pretty every set of teaching at some level, has nothing to do with material accumulation, has nothing to do with stature and status. In fact, generosity is far more valuable than hoarding. We'll go with that. It has nothing to do with a lot of the things that we are taught in this American or industrial education that is of value.

In fact, when I asked one of my elders what an economy is, which is a funny conversation to have with a first language speaker who lives in the bush. What is an economy and he's like, this is our grandpa guy, and he says, 'how we live.' And then he distinguished the White man economy very clearly as two different things.

And so, I think a lot about that. Because we have to be clear on what it is we are doing, and where it is we are going and also very much, where we are. So, when I think about the work that I do in my community. It is not so much the economics of happiness but maybe something that is like Indigenous Restorative Economics.

How we as the people who are here now have this privilege of being the ones who have a shot at doing great things. The ones that have a shot at keeping them from blowing off the top of a mountain or genetically engineering everything in the world. Right? Or combusting us into oblivion with climate change fossil fuels. We have a shot at doing something great. A spiritual opportunity. A part that we are doing is restoring a relationship. The depth of our relationship, the spiritual and the way we live relationship we our earth, our Mother Earth. Because we all only have one mother in that. We don't have another planet to go to, do we...

7:28-10:16

What we say in our community is there are basically five really important elements

- 1) The first is the Creator's law. It is the highest law, higher than the laws made by nation states and in our communities and one would do well to live in accordance with the Creator's Law.
- 2) The second is the teaching of [Ojibwe phrase] which means, we are all related. Whether we have wings or fins or roots or paws or hands. We are all related. We as humans are pretty much the last to arrive. The rest of those guys can live without us, but we are all entirely dependent on them. But some of them do need us like corn and itself could not be created without the love and the hands of humans. But many things live without us quite well.
- 3) A third basic precept that I think is very important is that of a cyclical worldview. In an Indigenous or land-based economy, which could be on any continent but is certainly generally not in a settler economy. The reality is the natural world is cyclical. The tides, the moons, seasons. Our lives are cyclical and in that, that is how one needs to figure out how to have an economy that reflects that.
- 4) A fourth precept which I think that all those who are here would agree, is the idea that in our language [Ojibwe phrase] that nouns are animate, even the word [Anishinaabe Ojibwe term] for stone, a stone is an animate noun. So, what does that do to your worldview? If the world is full of animate things? They are alive they standing, they have spirit unto themselves? That is entirely different of course than what happens in the English language where we change things and turn them into -natural resources and agricultural products for instance, as opposed to live spiritual beings, yeah?
- 5) And then there is the idea that in each deliberation considering the impact upon the seventh generation from now. That set of teachings we find to be absolutely essential in where we are going. It makes us responsible to those who have not yet arrived.

Video Notes

Winona LaDuke: Restoring Indigenous Communities and the Ecological Balance

Economics of happiness: The _____ life. _____ is far more valuable than hoarding.

When I asked one of my elders what an economy is, he says, 'how we _____.'

Indigenous Restorative Economics: We have a _____ at doing something _____.

Five really important elements:

1) The first is the Creator's _____. It is the highest law, higher than the _____ made by nation states and in our communities.

2) The second is the teaching of [Ojibwe phrase] which means, we are all related. Whether we have wings or fins or roots or paws or hands. We are all related. We as humans are pretty much the last to arrive. The rest of those guys can live without us, but we are all entirely _____ on them. But some of them do need us like _____ and itself could not be created without the _____ and the _____ of humans.

3) A third basic precept that I think is very important is that of a cyclical worldview. In an Indigenous or land-based economy. The natural world is _____. The tides, the moons, seasons. Our lives are _____.

4) A fourth precept is the idea that in our language [Ojibwe phrase] that nouns are animate. The _____ is full of animate things. They are _____.

5) Consider the impact upon the seventh generation from now. That set of teachings is absolutely essential. It makes us _____ to those who have not yet arrived.

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

adapted from Harvard Graduate School of Education Project Zero

Color

Symbol

Image
