

"THE FRONTIER MYTH"

Lesson Plan for "The Alaska Myth" Podcast, Episode 1

Grade Level: Adapt for
7th - 12th grade

Subject: Alaska Studies,
Social Studies, History

Topic: "The Frontier
Myth"

Objectives and Goals

Students will:

- Understand what we mean when we talk about Alaska as "The Last Frontier" and how that connects to settler colonialism & manifest destiny
- Explore new perspectives on "the frontier myth" shared by Alaska Native culture-bearers & scholars

Materials

Depending on timing, you can assign the following as homework OR listen in class.

The Alaska Myth podcast episode 1, "[The Problem with the Last Frontier](#)"

["Alaska's Untaught Histories" podcast](#)

Venn diagram handout (attached)

Activities

Note: you can do this in one class or spread it out over 2 - 3 classes.

Opener: Students brainstorm the places they've seen or heard of Alaska as "The Last Frontier" (e.g. license plates, reality TV, in conversation, etc.). Ask students to share what they think "The Last Frontier" means.

Play the first 20 minutes of "The Problem with the Last Frontier," and "Alaska's Untaught Histories" (8 minutes). Have students write down at least 5 moments from the podcasts that strike them as they are listening.

In pairs or groups of 3, students work on the Venn diagram. If they need to do internet research, that's okay.

Tape the Venn diagrams on the wall, and ask students to write their thoughts and ideas on sticky notes and post them on the Venn diagrams. Debrief as a group.

Have students write down their response to the following question: Why is the idea of "the Last Frontier" problematic according to the podcasts? Ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.

Close-out: What new catch-phrase might you use for Alaska after this lesson instead of "The Last Frontier?"

Assessments

-Collect student-created Venn-diagrams to see student understanding of these three intersecting concepts (settler colonialism, manifest destiny, & the last frontier)

-Collect student writing reflections on why the idea of "the Last Frontier" is problematic to assess their understanding of perspectives shared by Alaska Native culture bearers & scholars in the podcasts. Look for whether students have a grasp of the counter-narrative to "the Last Frontier" (e.g. people have been here for time immemorial, community vs. individualism, etc.)

-Listen to student comments during classroom dialogue to assess understanding & provide immediate feedback

"THE FRONTIER MYTH" VENN DIAGRAM

Work with a partner to fill out this Venn diagram based on what you heard in the podcasts. There's no right or wrong way to complete this, so long as you are thoughtful and curious.

