

Indigenous Societies of North America

Unit Throughlines

How do we know that first peoples flourished in North America?

EU 1. Understanding of how people first came to North America is shaped by multiple forms of evidence and diverse perspectives, including scientific theories and Indigenous oral traditions. Because evidence is limited and continues to emerge, historical knowledge evolves over time.

EU 2. Analyzing physical evidence helps us understand how complex societies organized themselves, adapted to their environments, and met their needs.

EU 3. Physical evidence from archaeological sites provides insights into how first peoples lived and flourished. Preserving these sites allows for continued learning and honors them as sacred places that hold ongoing cultural and spiritual significance.

Key Practice Standards

PS 3. Explain how and why primary and secondary sources are used to gather information.

Learning Progression

The Arrival of First Peoples in North America | 7 Lessons

What are the theories of how people first arrived in North America?

- L 1. Use prior knowledge and curiosity about first peoples of North America to generate questions and observations about a series of images.
- L 2. Ask questions about evidence showing possible migration patterns of early humans.
- L 3. Analyze evidence to determine which migration theory it more strongly supports.
- L 4. Evaluate competing theories of human migration using evidence from sources.
- L 5. Explain why oral histories are valuable primary sources for understanding human migration.
- L 6. Synthesize evidence from multiple sources to discuss how different migration theories explain how people first arrived in North America.
- L 7. Evaluate a migration theory using evidence and reasoning.

Evidence of Ancient Cultures | 5 Lessons

What can evidence tell us about how first peoples organized themselves into societies?

- L 8. Generate questions about how first peoples organized themselves into societies in North America using observations of fossilized footprints and other archaeological evidence.
- L 9. Make inferences about how first peoples organized themselves into societies in North America using observations of artifacts.
- L 10. Identify features of societies in North America using evidence from society cards.
- L 11. Synthesize evidence to explain how first peoples organized themselves into societies.
- L 12. Explain how organizing into societies helped first peoples adapt to their environment and meet their needs.

Preservation of Archaeological Sites | 7 Lessons

Why is it important to preserve archaeological sites of first peoples?

PS 5. Identify information about a given source, including the maker, date, source type, and/or place of origin, and examine its intended audience and purpose. Using identifiable information, determine a source's relevance to an inquiry question.

PS 6. Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a source.

Key Literacy Standards

RI.4.1. Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

SL.4.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

W.4.2b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

W.4.8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

L 13. Make connections and generate questions about why it is important to preserve archaeological sites of first peoples.

L 14. Identify evidence from photographs and an article about what archaeologists have learned about Teotihuacan and how the site is being preserved.

L 15. Synthesize information from timeline cards to create captions that tell the story of Cahokia.

L 16. Explain Indigenous connections to Mesa Verde and the importance of preserving this archaeological site.

L 17. Synthesize evidence from multiple sources to develop and discuss a claim about why it is important to preserve archaeological sites of first peoples.

L 18. Synthesize evidence from multiple sources to write an evidence-based explanation of why it is important to preserve archaeological sites of first peoples.

L 19. Use the Know and Wonder Chart and Inquiry Charts to identify important takeaway learnings from each cluster of the unit about first peoples of North America.

Summative Assessment | 2 Days

This Summative Assessment pulls together concepts from throughout the unit and asks students to create a poster to illustrate their response to the unit's Essential Question: *How do we know that first peoples flourished in ancient North America?* Students select three pieces of evidence from different regions and societies studied in the unit. For each piece of evidence, they identify key source information including the type of evidence (such as archaeological sites, artifacts, oral tradition, or fossils), the location, and the society or people it came from. Students mark the locations of their evidence on a map of North America and create evidence boxes that explain how each piece of evidence shows that first peoples flourished.