

UNIT 4: MIDDLE SCHOOL – UNITED STATES HISTORY

US DEVELOPMENT AND STRUGGLES IN THE WEST: DAWES ACT

Level 2

Instructional Support Materials

Stories from [The Indian Reading Series: Stories and Legends of the Northwest](#):

[“Old Man Napi”](#)

[“The Beginning of the Earth”](#)

[“Raven Helps the Indians”](#)

[“The Great Flood”](#)

[The Dawes Act of 1887 Article](#)

[The Dawes Act of 1887 Article \(Spanish Language Version\)](#)

[The Dawes Act Group Worksheet](#)

[The Dawes Act Group Worksheet \(Spanish language Version\)](#)

Red Pencil or Markers

(Optional) [National Archives Written Document Analysis Worksheet](#)

(Optional) [National Archives Written Document Analysis Worksheet \(Spanish Language Version\)](#)

(Optional) [Full Text of Dawes Act](#)

(Optional) [Full Text of Dawes Act \(Spanish Language Version\)](#)

*“The Bitterroot” (from *Keepers of Life* by Caduto and Bruchac)

*“How Fox Brought the Forests From the Sky” (from *Keepers of Life* written by Michael Caduto and Bruchac)

*These are additional “origin” stories you may wish to use for this lesson from “*Keepers of Life: Discovering Plants Through Native American Stories and Earth Activities for Children*” by Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac (ISBN 1-55591-387-3); April, 1998; Fulcrum Publishing (www.fulcrum-books.com)

Learning Goals

Students will be able to:

- Read and discuss Native American stories, connecting them to tribal members’ sense of kinship and responsibility to the lands and natural world.
- Understand that creating general allotments runs counter to the cultural and spiritual traditions of the Pacific Northwest and other Native people.
- Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the Dawes Act.

Time: Approximately 2 class periods

Essential Question:

4. What are the ways in which Tribes respond to the threats and outside pressure to extinguish their cultures and independence?
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Teacher Preparation

Day 1:

1. Review the Level 1 lesson with your students.
2. Review Teacher Background (adapted from The Lessons of Tribal Origin Stories (<http://www.lessonsofourland.org/lessons/lessons-tribal-origin-stories>))

American Indian Tribes, like many other peoples, have explanations for how they originated as a distinct, unique people. Many stories tell of powerful beings that created peoples' place in the world. The origin stories relate how the universe and the earth were created and how time and space were established. Inherent in the story is a reverence of place or location in which ancestors of the tribe were created. From these stories, tribes derived laws, values, traditions, and ceremonies. Many origin stories stressed kindness, generosity, cooperation, and respect for the earth. In these stories, the universe could not be created without these teachings.

Many tribal individuals consider their beliefs important everyday elements that contribute to rich tradition and cultural heritage. These stories are represented in ceremonies and teachings. They are passed onto each new generation. The beliefs and traditions connect people to the land, plant life, all living creatures, and to the mysteries of birth, life, death, and the spirit world. Many Native people closely compare these connections to the connections they have with family and relatives.

In this lesson, students will look closely at the land ethics found within these stories and how these beliefs relate to the identity of the tribe. This lesson will use stories from [“The Indian Reading Series: Stories and Legends of the Northwest”](#):

- [“Old Man Napi”](#)
- [“The Beginning of the Earth”](#)
- [“Raven Helps the Indians”](#)
- [“The Great Flood”](#)

You may also wish to use *“The Bitterroot”* or *“How Fox Brought the Forests From the Sky”* from Michael Caduto and Joseph Bruchac’s *Keepers* series of books that were created for use in the classroom—*Keepers of Life* is the most suitable for this lesson. In preparation, you will need to borrow or acquire the *Keepers of Life* book.

3. **(Optional)** Invite an elder, storyteller or cultural leader with the tribe(s) closest to your school to share a story that teaches about the tribe's connection to the land, plant life, and all living creatures.
4. Select a story(s) for your students to read.
NOTE: This lesson provides opportunity for cross-discipline learning. You may wish to collaborate with your school's science teachers to deepen students' learning and connections. The *Keepers of Life* resource provides science-based curriculum connected to the stories.
5. Print copies of the story for students to read in class on their own, in pairs, or in groups.

Day 2:

1. Print copies of *The Dawes Act of 1887 Article* for each student.
 2. Make copies of *The Dawes Act Group Worksheet* for each group of students (3-5 students per group).
 3. Have a red pencil or marker for each group.
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Learning Activities

Day 1:

1. Introduce the importance of storytelling for tribal people. Explain that stories teach and help us learn who we are and how we are to be in the world. The story that students will read helps explain the importance of Indian people's relationship to the land. Among many American Indian groups, land is the basis of spiritual practices, beliefs, or worship. The land can be a keeper of memories, a portal to the spirit world, or a place to go for guidance and strength. Furthermore, the land supports activities central to the culture of tribes such as hunting, fishing, gathering, and farming.
NOTE: Two stories are provided; however, this would be an ideal time to invite a local tribal elder to tell students about their tribes' relationship with the land you live upon.
2. Have students read the story(s) on their own, in pairs, or in groups.
(Option: You may choose to read the story aloud to your class.)
3. Ask students to verbally compare and contrast showing the difference between the relationship Native people held with the land and the viewpoint of the U.S. Government about land ownership and use. Record students' responses using a "T" chart.
4. Talk with students about the historical relationship of their tribe with the land on which your community is built, including its plant and animal species, hunting and fishing grounds, etc.

