

Achievement Goal:
Learn about the challenges tribal leaders face in making decisions about land use in the reservation.

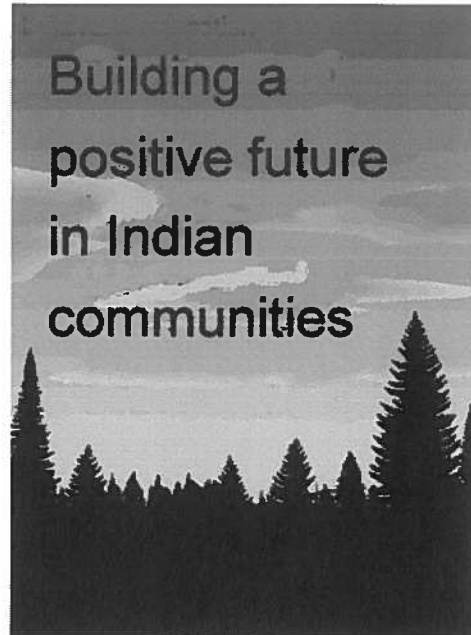
Time:
One class period

Core:
Economics



For Grades 4-5

Standard Four – Lesson Four



Background:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful concerned citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead

As students prepare themselves to become responsible adults who contribute to the well-being of their people and community, they must gain knowledge of indigenous cultural values and the wisdom of the past. At the same time, they will also need skills that will allow them to face and overcome the challenges that will undoubtedly be a part of the future.

Governance within the community requires knowledge of the issues that affect tribal people and lands. Students can learn strong community-building skills and integrate more technical knowledge with indigenous wisdom to create the best possible future for their people and their homelands. Information about land management and community building are especially important for young people to learn, particularly because their minds and hearts are open to all possibilities for their futures. To help them recognize that American Indian life is dynamic but requires sound decision-making about land and the ability to resolve disagreements between people, this lesson will introduce the students to the concepts of land use and land planning. After participating in a role play activity in which they are tribal leaders making decision about land, students will be able to:

- Describe different types of land use,
- Identify which land uses fit the community and which do not,
- Discuss the right balance between various land uses.
- Learn how to communicate and discuss problems while still showing respect for other people.

Preparation:

- Make a map that roughly represents the reservation on a large poster board. Divide it into sections, some smaller than others. When dividing the sections, give thought to the local reservation and the allocation of lands for different land uses. Try, if possible, to proportionally divide the sections based on actual land use. Draw in major geographical features and sites of natural resources.
- Draw and cut out symbols representing the following land uses: (laminates them if possible to allow them to easily be moved around on the poster)
 - Residential
 - Agricultural (use the shape of a locally grown food source or livestock)
 - Public (use the shape of the school or a health care facility)
 - Natural Land (use the shape of an animal or plant)
 - Commercial (use the shape of a gas station, grocery store or bank)
 - Open Tribal Land (use the shape of the Tribal seal or logo)
 - Recreation (use the shape of a picnic table or basketball hoop)
 - Industry (use the shape of a factory)
- Have fine-point magic markers available
- For an alternative activity, review the Michigan State University Extension Service lesson plans “Landopoly: A Decision-Making Game” and “Land-Uses – There are so many!” at <http://web4.msue.msu.edu/msuewc/kent/yourland/>.

Student Activity:

- Ask the students to list the types of land use they are familiar with. Ask them to describe the types of land uses they list. Encourage them to discuss the land uses above.
- Next ask the students to list different activities for each land use. For public lands use, this might include schools, hospitals, and tribal offices. Commercial land might be used for gas stations, stores and restaurants. For residential, describe various types of dwellings.
- Discuss with the students how land use is similar to a puzzle. Some land uses do not fit well together. Like a puzzle, the parts work best when they are designed to go together. Use examples to further illustrate this concept for the students. For instance, the middle of an alfalfa field far away from where the students live would not be the best place for a school. When you have each piece in the right place, your community should be a good place to live. This is called “Land Use Planning”.
- Have the students pretend they are tribal leaders and assign a land use to parts of the reservation. Each time a student names a land use, have him/her put that symbol in one of the sections on the reservation poster.
- When all land uses have been added to the poster, discuss with the students if each is in the best possible place for that land use. Help them understand that commercial use is best next to residential, as is public use land. However, agricultural and natural land may fit best together. Also discuss with them the sizes of land required for the various uses.
- Remind the students that tribal leaders work with land issues every day. Their responsibilities include finding ways to make sure the puzzle pieces of land use fit together. Add that tribal leaders face the additional challenge that comes with the fact that there are many different types of landowners on the reservation and different types of land status.
- Ask the students what new ideas they learned in these discussions. On a sheet of paper have each student write a description of a land use they just learned about. They may also draw a map on the back of their paper illustrating the various land uses.

Evaluation:

- Look for participation from each student and evaluate his or her cooperation in contributing to the poster project.
- Review their written descriptions for clues of their understanding about various land uses and how they fit together.

Resources:

“Landopoly: A Decision-Making Game”, Michigan State University Extension,
<http://web4.msue.msu.edu/msuewc/kent/yourland/docs/landopoly.pdf>