

FIRST PEOPLES TOUR – TEACHER GUIDE



DESCRIPTION

The American West is the ancestral home to many First American nations. The arrival of immigrants introduced new trade items and materials for daily use, however it also brought about the loss of land and lifeways. Explore these defining challenges and the perseverance of Native people and culture.

THEMATIC CONCEPTS

First Peoples exchanged and incorporated new ideas while preserving their traditional culture and lifestyle.

- Immigration to North America changed Native lifeways forever.
- Native communities integrated horses into their culture to expand mobility, hunting, and trade.
- The environment and its resources impact the way which people live.

OK ACADEMIC STANDARDS (2025-2026)

Language Arts

- 3.1 Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations. (3.1.L.1; 3.1.L.2)
- 3.3 Apply critical thinking skills to reading and writing. (3.3.R.5)

Social Studies

- 3.1.2 Describe how American Indian Tribal governments are also based upon written constitutions and exercise the right to govern themselves (sovereignty) by making laws for Tribal lands and citizens, providing for schools and healthcare, and preserving Native culture and traditions.
- 3.1.3 A. Describe the significance of symbols represented on the State Seal and Oklahoma Flag, explaining how the name of Oklahoma is derived from the Choctaw language and reflects the state's American Indian heritage.
- 3.2.3 A. Explain that people both adapt to and modify their environment in order to meet their basic needs and wants.
- 3.2.3 C. Identify the ways in which physical geography influenced early American Indian cultures of the region (e.g., bison hunting, fur trading, farming).
- 3.2.3 D. Describe how early settlers to the region adapted to and modified their environment (e.g., sod houses, windmills, irrigation of cash crops).
- 3.3.1 A. Explain that today Oklahoma is the home to thirty-nine American Indian Nations with unique traditions and ways of life, comparing Tribal cultures.
- 3.3.1 C. Describe how prior to European exploration of the region, American Indian cultures (e.g., Wichita, Caddo) traded goods using well-developed systems of intertribal trade routes.
- 3.3.1 D. Examine reasons for early European and American explorations into present-day Oklahoma and summarize observations regarding the land, people, and resources.
- 3.3.1 E. Describe the experiences of forced removals and relocation of American Indians to Indian Territory, explaining significant changes to American Indian cultures and ways of life.

KEY WORDS AND TERMS

Adapt – A change in behavior so that it is easier to exist in a place or situation.

Agriculture – The practice of cultivating soil, growing crops, and raising livestock for food, fiber, and other products essential to human survival.

Borders – The defined boundaries between counties, states or countries.

Columbian Exchange – The process by which plants, animals, diseases, people and ideas were traded between Europe, Asia and Africa and the Americas.

Culture – The beliefs, values, customs, language, material artifacts and assumptions about life that guide behavior and are shared by a group of people in a place or time.

Heritage – A person’s identity that includes the qualities, traditions or features of life there that have been passed on from one generation.

Indian Territory – A area of land in Oklahoma where First Americans were forced to move.

Immigrants – A group of people who come to live and stay in a foreign country.

Natural Resources – Materials or substances that occur in nature and can be used for economic gain, such as minerals, forests, water and fertile land.

Point of View – A particular attitude or way of thinking that is shaped by a person’s background and experiences.

Population – The number of people living in a particular area or region.

Relocation – The action of moving to a new place to live.

Region – An area or division with defining characteristics but not always fixed boundaries.

Relative Location – A description of where something is by comparing it to other places.

Symbol – A mark or character that represents something else like an object or a process.

Thematic Map – A drawing or mode that shows the location of something specific within a given geographic area, such as population size, climate or economic activities.

Trail of Tears – The devastating experience suffered by South and Southeastern Nations due to forced relocation from the 1830 Indian Removal Act.

Trait – A special quality that makes someone or something unique.

Travois – An A-frame structure used to drag supplies over land.

Wants and Needs – Wants are desires for goods, services or experiences that are not necessary for survival, while needs are essential for a person to live and survive.

MUSEUM GALLERIES

Native American Gallery

Atherton Gallery

Liichokoshkomo’ [Outdoor Playscape]

Charles Marion Russell Gallery [Alternate Stop for Inclement Weather]

Tour may be modified to accommodate group size, time constraints, and/or gallery availability.
