

Teacher's Guide

Dynamic Cultures

Enduring Understandings

Cultures are dynamic, i.e., all cultures change in response to a changing world. The development of new technologies is a significant factor contributing to cultural change.

Estimated Time:

Three class periods

Materials needed:

Modern and Alaska Native? Yes
Shamanism: A Personal View

Lesson Plan:

View the Smithsonian “Crossroads of the Continents” exhibit for a brief introduction to Alaska Native cultures today. First “enter the Exhibit” and

then “Enter the Museum” where you will find yourself in the Hall of the People. The people of Alaska are found on the right side in the Hall of People. The Aleut, the Eskimos, the Athapaskans, and the Tlingit are represented. Information about these societies today is marked by a “today” button. After viewing this exhibit view the exhibit dedicated to the Alutiiq called, ‘Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq people.’”

Discuss: What are some cultural activities that Alaska Natives engage in today? What are some of the ties to the past? What are some current economic activities? What information is conveyed by the photographs in these exhibits? What are some of the challenges faced by Alaska Native cultures today?

Read Mr. Ongtooguk’s essay "Modern Alaska Natives – Deal with it". In this essay Mr. Ongtooguk argues that today’s Alaska Natives are no less ‘native’ just because they participate in modern life.

Discuss Mr. Ongtooguk’s essay. What is the main idea? Why did the teachers believe that one Alaska Native student was more ‘native’ than the other? What is a “museum quality” native? Do some people associate being Alaska Native with being a “museum quality” native? Why did the author draw a parallel between Alaska Native culture and Japanese culture? Do you agree or disagree with the author?

Read “Shamanism: A Personal View.” Discuss the essay on shamanism. What were the major ideas of this belief system? What was the view of the world? How do contemporary Alaska Natives view the world?

Discuss. What are some of the changes that have occurred in Alaska over the last 50 years? How have these changes impacted Alaska? How do you think these changes have impacted Alaska Native cultures? How would you describe Alaska Native cultures today? As students generate descriptive words and phrases, write the descriptions on a piece of chart paper. Save the chart paper.

Alaska Standards:

Culture: A, E

History: A, B, C

AK History: AH PPE 2, AH PPE 3, AH ICGP 10, AH CC 3

Assessment:

Exceeds

Meets

In Progress

Not Started

Content

Web links have all been read; essays have been read and reflected upon. Understanding of the concepts is clear from discussion comments and questions. Student is actively engaged in class discussion, listens to the comments of others, and exhibits good understanding of the readings. Makes significant contributions to the development of the charted information.

Student has read assigned material. Is involved in the class discussion and contributes to the development of the chart information.

Student has reviewed some of the web material. Has some involvement in class discussion and/or contributes to the development of chart information.

No information has been made to read the assigned essays or web site. Student doesn't participate in class discussion or in the development of the chart.

