

Teacher's Guide

Alaska Lands Sequence and Connections

Enduring Understandings

Understanding Alaska land ownership is vital to appreciating the role land has played in the history of the place that became the State of Alaska. Much of Alaska is owned by the federal government and is protected by some sort of environmental legislation, reflecting the view of most Americans that Alaska is America's last wilderness. Integral to understanding the land history is the story of the rights of Alaska Natives and the governmental structures of Alaska. The intertwining of the stories of the indigenous peoples of Alaska, its land, and its government is its history.

By completing this lesson, students will have a framework to reference when discussing major events in Alaska's history.

Estimated Time:

Three to four class sessions.

Materials Needed:

Alaska Lands Sequence student handout
Alaska Lands Sequence teacher notes
Alaska History and Cultural Studies course web site, specifically the Governing Alaska and Modern Alaska sections.
Maps of federal lands in Alaska, state lands in Alaska, Native lands in Alaska, and private lands in Alaska from the Alaska Geography Toolkit, Alaska In Maps, or online sources.
Alaska Lands Status maps.
Alaska In Maps atlas (print, CD-ROM, or online)

Lesson Plan:

Introducing the Lesson:

Show maps of federal, state, Native, and private lands in Alaska. (Maps can be found in the Alaska Geography Toolkit at the Alaska Geographic Alliance web site online at <http://www.ngsednet.org/alaska>.) Or, use Map 38 in Alaska In Maps. A third alternative is to use the online Alaska Lands Status Map from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources Website (see the references section for the website.) Whichever map or maps you choose will depend on the sophistication of your students. Ask students how each map came to be or what is the history behind this map? What is the story that you need to know in order to understand each map?

Developing the Lesson:

Pass out the graphic organizer. Discuss its format in both the general sense of how it is organized and in the specific sense as to how to use it as a tool to understand how the maps already discussed came to be. In the general sense, ask students what the time frames refer to in terms of Alaska's history and have them label or notate the sections.

What does time immemorial refer to and how is the term used here?

When was the Russian period in Alaska? How early can you say it began and is it over?

What do the years 1867-1912 refer to? 1912-1959? 1959 to the present?

As an example for the specifics of how the graphic organizer is designed, provide students with background on the Treaty of Cession. How did the Treaty of Cession deal with Alaska lands? (Background on the Treaty of Cession can be found at Alaska History and Cultural Studies website <http://www.akhistorycourse.org/articles/article.php?artID=133> as well as at the Meeting of Frontiers website <http://frontiers.loc.gov/intldl/mtfhtml/mfak/mfaksale.html>.)

Divide students into partnerships to read the background needed to fill in the other categories in the graphic organizer. Refer them to these sections of the Alaska History and Cultural Studies web site (or to other resources available to

them in your classroom or school library):

Governing Alaska:

The First Civilian Government
The Territory of Alaska
Native Citizenship and Land Issues

Modern Alaska:

Statehood
Alaska Native Claims
Oil Discovery and Development
Subsistence

Have students research the essence of each of the time periods or landmark legislation and determine the most important "sound bites" that together outline the importance of this time period or legislation for Alaska. Each partnership should then share their "sound bites" with the class as the class completes the graphic organizer together.

Concluding the Lesson:

Once the graphic organizer is complete, conduct a class discussion using questions such as the following:

How did the Treaty of Cession authorizing the purchase of Alaska by the U.S. from Russia change the status of Alaska Natives' rights and access to the land? What important acknowledgement of Alaska Native rights to the land was made in the Organic Act of 1884 and why did it 87 years for ANCSA to be passed? In other words, why was ANCSA needed if the Organic Act of 1884 acknowledged Alaska Native land rights?

What were the impacts of the Homestead and Allotment acts? What concept of land ownership did they emphasize? What did Alaska Natives have to give up if they participated in the Allotment Act?

Did anything change when Alaska becomes a territory? If so, what?

Why was 1912 such a pivotal year in Alaska history?

Why was the Tlingit-Haida Jurisdictional Act of 1935 considered precedent setting?

Alaska's Constitution is said to be a model constitution. How can this claim be made if it does not recognize Alaska Native rights to land or other rights?
What is important about the disclaimer clause of the Alaska Statehood Act?
How did the State's right to its 104 million acres as part of the Statehood Act come into conflict with Alaska Native land rights?
What was the most important catalyst for the passage of ANCSA? What forces came together in the 1960's that ensured the passage of ANCSA?
How did Alaska Native individuals and groups actively propose and promote federal legislation and policies that are contained in this graphic organizer?
What nationwide forces have impacted the amount of federal lands in Alaska? At what times and through what presidents did the conservation movement extend to Alaska?
What are the connections among the Statehood Act, ANCSA, and ANILCA?
How does the history of Alaska lands impact Alaska today? What issues were set in motion by each of the items listed on the graphic organizer?
How did ANCSA and ANILCA impact our local community or our region of Alaska?
What is the specific history of the activity of Alaska Native organizations and leaders in our local community or region of Alaska?

Alaska Standards:

AK History: AH. CC 5, AH. CC 6, AH. ICGP 3, AH. ICGP 8, AH. ICGP 10, AH. ICGP 12

Assessment:

For an informal assessment, return to the original maps. Give students hard copies and have them explain the story behind how they came to be.

4Explanation contains specific details from the four time periods of the graphic organizer, of specific events within the timeline, and their specific interrelationships

3Explanation contains general details from the four time periods of the graphic organizer, of events within the timeline, and their general interrelationships

2Explanation is limited in its scope of time periods and events; interrelationships may be hinted at or missing

1Explanation is only begun

Extensions:

Extension lessons on the embedded topics should follow this lesson. Refer back to the Alaska History and Cultural Studies course Teacher's Guide for ideas on providing learning opportunities and lesson plans on these topics.

The Constitutional Convention and Statehood
ANCSA
ANILCA
The controversy over oil drilling in ANWR

Classroom learning opportunities may also focus on current issues, for example, see the Pebble Mine Debate lesson plan in the Teacher's Guide.