



Yale-New Haven
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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1998 Volume III: Art and Artifacts: the Cultural Meaning of Objects

The Environmental Adaptation of the Native American Indian

Guide for Curriculum Unit 98.03.08
by Victor Leger

This unit will teach the social studies standards of other cultures, namely the Native Americans. It will also teach how the environment was central to the Native Americans for all their needs and inspiration.

I chose four different groups that epitomized four distinctly different environments of North America. The four tribes are Inuit, Sioux, Iroquois, and Hopi. In the first half of the unit each tribe is presented with some background information for the students and then a detailed lesson plan of how to create artifacts that each tribe is known for, such as masks, wampum, winter counts on buffalo hides and kachinas.

The second half teaches about the distinct environments and how they influenced the particular type of architecture of each tribe. The unit concludes with lesson plans to create miniature replicas of igloos, tepees, longhouses and pueblos and placing them into village dioramas that the class can create as a whole.

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