

LESSON PLAN: 4th GRADE

California Native American Survival and Resilience During the Mission Period: A Source Investigation

SUBJECTS

- History
- Social Studies
- Language Arts

GRADE LEVELS

- 4

LESSON SUMMARY

Students will analyze primary and secondary sources to answer the following central question: *Native Americans of California during the mission period: How did Native people resist and persist in the face of extreme adversity?*

MATERIALS

- Introductory Slideshow
- Online access to lesson
- Student printouts of sources
- Copies of graphic organizer or access to Google Slides
- Highlighters and pens or pencils

Central Question

Native Americans of California during the mission period: How did Native people resist and persist in the face of extreme adversity?

Lesson Objectives

Skills:

- Draw evidence from primary and secondary sources to support research, analysis, and reflection
- Recall key details and relevant information to explain and draw inferences
- Support a point of view with reasons and information

Content:

- Understand the different ways in which California Native Americans resisted the mission system and Spanish colonization
- Understand the diverse ways California Native Americans maintained links to their Native cultures once they entered the mission system
- Evaluate how California Native Americans both resisted and culturally persisted through the mission period

Suggested Lesson Pacing

This cross-curricular source investigation provides an opportunity to combine instruction for both social studies and English language arts. We recommend seven fifty-minute class sessions to examine all five sources, including the introduction and conclusion. Optional extensions for further learning are also provided for students and teachers in the document titled Recommended Resources.

Teacher Tip: If it is difficult to explore **five** sources during the suggested time, consider the following options:

- Limit the number of sources by choosing **three** sources to analyze.
- Divide the sources among small groups for teacher-led close reading instruction and source analysis. Each group can share their source analysis with the class. A class chart can help them track the evidence of each source as they are presented.

Lesson Introduction

Background History

Common teaching about Spanish California missions has largely focused on a romanticized Eurocentric perspective of the missions and/or on the victimization of Native people living and working at the missions. History textbooks usually omit Native perspectives, resilience, and cultural persistence in the face of adversity. The introductory slideshow begins with an image analysis that highlights the traditional misconceptions and historical omissions of the mission period. It then provides background history on the mission period and the Spanish colonization of California. Finally, it asks students to think critically about what the words *resistance* and *persistence* mean, as well as what different forms of resistance and persistence look like.

- See the teacher notes included in the slideshow PDF for background historical content and ideas on how to engage with students while sharing the presentation.
- **Recommended Background Reading for Teachers:** Read the introductory essays written by archaeologist Dr. Tsim Schneider (Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Cultural Director Nakia Zavalla (Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians).
- **Recommended Background Viewing for Teachers:** For an excellent seven-minute video overview of mission history featuring different Native perspectives, we recommend this video from the California Indian Museum and Cultural Center: [California Native Perspectives](#) (7:12). **Please note:** Teachers should view the video in its entirety if they choose to share with students. For 4th-grade students, we recommend skipping the excerpt between 5:18 and 5:29.

Instruction and Student Practice

Session One:

Staging and Introducing the Central Question:

- As a class, discuss and define the terms: *resist*, *persist*, and *adversity*.
- Explain to students that they will be trying to answer an important question about California Native Americans and the Spanish mission period. Using the introductory slideshow, present the central question for the lesson: *Native Americans of California during the mission period: How did Native people resist and persist in the face of extreme adversity?*
- Discuss ideas about what resistance and persistence might look like for Native peoples in the mission system. Encourage students to consider what they have learned about California Native American cultures and the Spanish mission system so far.

Introducing the Inquiry Process:

- Pass out the first page of the source investigation graphic organizer or have students access it in Google Slides. Explain to students that they will analyze different sources to answer the central question.
- To begin the inquiry process, ask students to complete the first section of the graphic organizer by writing their predictions to the central question in the first box on the organizer.
 - Remind students that this is only a starting point based on what they currently know.
 - Students can also think about the class discussion to help guide their thinking. Their ideas may be similar to or different from those of their peers.
- Explain that they will test their predictions by investigating primary and secondary sources. Emphasize that students may end up coming to different conclusions at the end of the lesson.
- Conclude with setting the goal for the next session: “Next, we will look closely at a source to begin our investigation.”

Sessions Two to Six:

The Inquiry Process: Introduce students to the Source Explorer (project lesson website). Explain that the sources are the different pieces of evidence that they will use to answer the central question. After analyzing a source, students will decide if and how the source provides evidence for Native resistance and/or cultural persistence through the mission period. Students should consider whether the sources support their predictions to the central question.

- **Teacher Tip:** The first source analysis may take longer as students learn the process. Review all **five** sources ahead of time to gauge which will work best as an introduction for your class.
- Select and project the first source to analyze. Hand out printed copies of:
 - The primary/secondary source (student version)
 - The source investigation graphic organizer (page 2 or access in Google Slides)

Close-Read Source Analysis: Explain that each source contains an introduction that helps provide background information for the source. The introduction will be read first before examining the source. Modeling close-reading strategies, read aloud to the class and scaffold annotations one source at a time in two stages:

- **First Quick Read:**
 - Read aloud the introduction.
 - Read aloud/view the primary or secondary source.
 - Discuss your initial findings and determine any questions or wonderings. Students can turn and share with partners before sharing as a class.
- **Second Close Read:**
 - Direct students to their graphic organizers and call attention to the types of information they will be listening and looking for. Give examples as needed to ensure understanding:
 - Sourcing: *Type/What?, Who?, When?, Where?, Why?*
 - Evidence: Main events and details from the source, including information and key details that support Native resistance and/or persistence
 - Context: Additional information that helps to better understand the source.
 - Project the student version of the source to annotate. Conduct a close read/view of the introduction and primary or secondary source, pausing as needed and modeling annotation skills and techniques. Students can circle, highlight, underline, or take notes as they follow along.
 - **Source-Specific Analysis Tips:**
 - **Video Source:** *Art and the Ceiling at Mission Dolores*
 - Ask students to think about where they would find information about a film and guide attention to opening credits and captions.
 - Students should think about who made the film **and** who is featured in the film as an expert.
 - **Object Source:** *Basketry: Weaving Traditions*
 - Use the lesson website to view larger images of the basket.
- **Discuss your findings:**
 - Assess questions and understandings to determine if a reread is needed. As a class, fill out the sourcing and evidence sections of the graphic organizer to model the process and scaffold for students new to source analysis.
 - **Option:** After you model the first source, students may record annotations more independently or with a partner. Circulate and check for understandings.

Thinking Deeper about the Source:

- **Images and Objects:** Project the lesson website and model how to explore the supporting images, captions, and the museum's collection connection (when available) for the source featured. Ask students how these images add to their understanding about the source.

- **Teacher Tip:** After modeling the first source, you could make this a partner task. Circulate and check for understandings.
- **Source-Analysis Questions:** Use some or all the source-analysis questions to facilitate a class discussion and encourage deeper thinking about the source.
- **Summary:** Model how to synthesize the evidence to summarize what they have learned.
 - Ask students: “Based on this source analysis, does this support your predictions? Does this source change your thinking about Native resistance and/or persistence through the mission period?”
 - As a class, fill out the summary and final section of the graphic organizer to model the process and scaffold for students as needed.
 - **Option:** Students can write a short reflective response or an opinion paragraph on each source.

Session Seven: Lesson Conclusion and Assessment

Contemporary Connection: Navigate to the Contemporary Voices section of the lesson website. Show photos and play audio recordings of contemporary California Native Americans reflecting on the importance of accurate mission history and what resistance and persistence continues to look like today.

- **Teacher Tip:** Students can listen and take notes on common themes they hear in the recordings.

Class Discussion and Suggested Prompts: After listening to the audio recordings, begin a class discussion. Choose one question below to begin the conversation or, time permitting, discuss all of them. Teachers can divide the class into groups and assign a different question to each group. The groups can share concluding thoughts aloud with the class.

- **Teacher Tip:** Consider projecting the questions for visual learners.
 1. What can we learn from these modern-day reflections about what missions represent to Native Americans in California today?
 2. Why is it important to include the perspectives of Native peoples when learning about the Spanish mission period?
 3. What piece of evidence do you feel most strongly supports the fact that Native people resisted and persisted through the mission period?
 4. Did this source investigation change the way you think about what it means to resist and persist? Do you think California Native Americans are still resisting and/or persisting today? Why?

Assessment:

Once students have analyzed all the sources and completed the graphic organizers, ask them to choose a summative assessment.

- **Teacher Tip:** If you had students writing short reflective or opinion responses after each source analysis, they can use them to help build a multi-paragraph essay.
 1. **Opinion Writing:** Write an opinion paragraph that uses the evidence from the graphic organizer to answer the central question: *Native Americans of California during the mission period: How did Native people resist and persist in the face of extreme adversity?*
 - Include evidence from two sources that you feel best supports your opinion.
 - **Option:** If students were composing short response paragraphs after each source analysis, they can revise their short responses to compose their paragraph or a longer opinion piece.
 2. **Reflective Writing:** Write a reflective paragraph that describes how your thinking changed as you investigated the central question: *Native Americans of California during the mission period: How did Native people resist and persist in the face of extreme adversity?*
 - Choose two sources and describe why they changed your thinking about Native resistance and/or persistence during the Spanish mission period.

- **Option:** If students were composing short response paragraphs after each source analysis, they can revise their short responses to compose their paragraph or a longer reflective piece.
- 3. Concept Map:** Draw or use printed images from the lesson to create a concept map that illustrates either Native resistance and/or Native persistence through the Spanish mission period. For more information on concept maps, see: [Concept Maps from ReadingRockets.org](https://www.readingrockets.org/concept-maps)
 - Use evidence from the source investigation to caption each illustration or image.
 - 4. Slide Presentation:** Choose two or more sources to create a slide presentation that answers the central question: *Native Americans of California during the mission period: How did Native people resist and persist in the face of extreme adversity?*
 - Use selected images from the lesson and evidence from your graphic organizers to narrate the presentation.

Extension: Research and Taking Informed Action

Additional Recommended Resources:

For a deeper dive or to enrich your unit, consider the recommended resources for both students and teachers. Student resources are provided for each source topic to encourage further research independently, with a partner, in groups, or as a class. Teacher resources include a list of suggested classroom literature, additional lesson resources, and reference materials.

Taking Informed Action:

After examining the agency of Native peoples in this inquiry, help students understand their own agency in a larger context. How can they transform their new knowledge into positive change or informed action? Facilitate a class discussion on what informed action might look like. Give students the option to work through the [Informed Action Plan](#). Consider the following ideas to explore:

- **Teacher Tip:** This can be completed in pairs, in groups, or as a class, depending on time constraints.
- 1. Mission Field Trip Critique:** If your class visited a nearby mission, compare the experience with your source investigation. Write letters to the mission to share what you have learned and/or to request a change in their field trip presentation.
 - 2. Textbook Comparison:** Compare your source investigation with the textbook. Write a letter to the publisher to share what you have learned and/or request recommended revisions.
 - 3. Community Presentation:** Create a class presentation to share with your classroom parents/guardians, principal, school board, local Chamber of Commerce, or community center.
 - 4. Native-Community Outreach:** If you live within the ancestral homelands of a California Native tribe affected by the missions, write a letter to the tribe to share what you have learned. Invite them to visit your classroom to share about their history, culture, or community. Consider asking for ways to give back by supporting projects and programs they are working on.