

Lesson 3: The Economy of the Local Indians

Focus Question:

What were the elements of the economy of the local American Indians?

Activity #1 Build a Boat that Floats – A Simulation

Materials needed:– Assemble 5 realia bags. A *sample* list of realia for each bag includes:

<u>Bag # 1</u> Hard candy Pennies Math manipulatives Masking tape Yarn Marshmallows	<u>Bag # 2</u> Hard candy Pennies Math manipulatives Wood coffee stirrers Rocks	<u>Bag # 3</u> Hard candy Pennies Math manipulatives Wood coffee stirrers Toothpicks
<u>Bag # 4</u> Hard candy Pennies Math manipulatives Marshmallows Rubber bands Rocks	<u>Bag # 5</u> Hard candy Pennies Math manipulatives Tin foil Masking tape	

Note: If desired, word cards may be used instead of realia for doing the boat simulation. It isn't as much fun, but it saves the task of creating realia bags. Tribal groups receive a list of the items in their "bag." Students trade for the cards needed to build a boat. Instead of testing their boats in the tub of water, they must be able to tell why their boat would float. The other students vote either thumbs up if they think the boat would float or thumbs down if they don't think the boat would float.

Procedure:

Step 1: Have students form five *villages* (groups). Read the following passage in order to set the scene.

You are a Kumeyaay Indian. The sun is just rising. The cool breeze is balanced by the warmth of the sun. You are sitting on the shore of Lake Otay. Your job for today is to help your friends build a "boat that floats" using the materials before you. When the boat is finished, you will paddle across the lake to trade some items with Indians from other villages.

Step 2: Provide each village (group) with a bag containing some materials that may be used for building a boat, but not everything that is needed to successfully build a boat that will float. Students in each village open their group's bag and pour out the contents. They try to "build a boat" using only the materials in their bag. As groups construct the boats, they will discover that they do not have enough materials to complete the task.

NOTE: This activity is designed to demonstrate how the local Indians frequently traded with other Indians to get all of the materials they needed. **Do not use the word "trade" prior to the boat building activity.** Let students discover the concept as they build their boat.

Step 3: Ask "Why can't you build a boat? What did the Indians do to get the things they needed?" Let the students discover the idea to trade for the needed materials. Once they discover this concept, students trade with neighboring "villages" for the goods they need and try again to build the boat. Students test their boat's buoyancy in a tub or sink of water. Boats may be rebuilt if necessary.

Step 4: Ask students, "How do we get the things that we want or need?" (We make them or we buy them.) "How do we purchase or buy things?" "What steps do we take to purchase or buy something?" Make a list of all types of currency available, including coins, paper bills, checks, ATM cards and credit cards. Ask students questions such as: Have you ever traded one thing directly for something another person had? What did you trade? Stickers? Baseball cards? Pokeman cards? Food? How does it work? Why did you make the trade?

Explain that this is called one-for-one barter. The Kumeyaay Indians obtained many of the things they needed from their local environment. However, they did not have all the resources that people needed or wanted. To solve this problem, they traded resources they had for those they needed. They obtained a large variety of foods and different useful materials, as well as luxury goods, by bartering with the people from other villages. To **barter** is to trade without using money. The **economy** of the Kumeyaay Indians included trading (bartering), gift-giving, and sharing. Ask students, "What do you think the Kumeyaay Indians traded with one another and with other tribes?"

(This activity is based on a lesson designed by Susan Mastin.)

Activity # 2 Economy of the Kumeyaay Indians (If not completed in Lesson 1)

Review the information about the economy of the Kumeyaay Indians in the section of the unit titled, *Teacher Background: The Kumeyaay Indians*, and in the *Student Reader: The Kumeyaay Indians*. If not already completed during Lesson 1, have students record information about Kumeyaay economy on their copy of the two-column chart, *Culture of the Cahuilla Indians* (Handout # 1.2).

Explain to students that the exchange of prized foods and other items between local groups and between tribes was economically and socially important. For example, the Kumeyaay obtained obsidian from their neighbors. The Kumeyaay used to take lots of salt from the bay and trade it for mesquite beans and other things from the desert. They used to go a long way to trade for what they needed. There were no roads then, just trails. They walked and carried everything on their backs. Dried sea food, pumpkins, and dried greens were traded for gourds, acorns, agave, and honey.

Assessment

The focus question provides a framework for the evaluation of the lesson. The trading simulation is completed by groups of students.

- Trade materials to construct a boat that floats. (Activity #1)
- Record information about Kumeyaay economy on their copy of the chart, *Culture of the Kumeyaay Indians* (Handout # 1.2) begun in Lesson 1. (Activity #2)