

THE ANCIENT WORLD (1000 BC - AD 1000)

PREHISTORIC
PASSAIC



LESSON PLAN

The background of the page is a faded architectural site plan of an industrial facility. A prominent light blue canal, labeled 'Canal' and 'Dundee', runs diagonally from the top center towards the bottom left. To the right of the canal, a river is labeled 'River'. The plan shows various buildings, including several large rectangular structures labeled 'Factory Bldg.' and 'MILL NO. 1'. A street labeled 'MATTIMORE STREET' is visible at the bottom left. The overall layout is a grid-like industrial site with various structures and pathways.

PREHISTORIC PASSAIC

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LESSON PLAN

**Developed for the Passaic High School Department of History
by Christine Hilferty, URS, Inc., in association with the New Jersey
Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration.**

Subject: World History, American History, New Jersey History

Grade Level: 9 – 12 **Date:** April 2002

Historic Periods:

The Ancient World (1000 BC – AD 1000)

Goal:

The purpose of this lesson is multifaceted. It is intended to give students an enhanced awareness and greater appreciation of Passaic's ancient past. The following activities are designed to explore the lives and settlement patterns of Native-American groups occupying the region from approximately 1000 BC – AD 1000. Students will develop a greater understanding of how archaeologists use material cultural remains to help them reconstruct the ancient past, as well as the limitations archaeologists face in doing so. This lesson should encourage students to consider local, ancient cultures, and compare them to ancient cultures in other parts of the world; it gives teachers the tools to relate the study of other cultures and technologies to those in the local area. In addition, students are expected to increase their ability to think empathetically through the study of cultural change over time as related to the experiences of New Jersey Native Americans prior to European Contact.

Prerequisites:

Students are expected to possess a general knowledge of New Jersey's prehistoric past and a general idea of how archaeologists use artifacts and technology to interpret the past.

Instructional Objectives:

Students should:

1. Gain a better understanding of the characteristics of different cultural periods, as well as become familiar with the prehistoric groups that lived in each period.
2. Begin to recognize changes in settlement patterns throughout time (i.e., nomadic hunting and gathering, seasonal camps, full-time settlements, etc.), and the reasons prehistoric people chose to settle in Passaic, New Jersey.

3. Become more familiar with how archaeologists reconstruct the past.
4. Be able to answer questions at the end of the chapters in the unit created by URS.
5. Sharpen their ability to think empathetically.

Instructional Procedures:

1. Using the poster and unit created by URS on the prehistoric people of Passaic, lead the class in a discussion of the prehistoric past. Some questions to explore include: Who were the first people to live in Passaic, New Jersey? How long ago? What brought them to this area? What did they eat? How do archaeologists reconstruct the past? In what ways do prehistoric Native-American lifestyles differ over 2,000 years? How are these lifestyles similar? How do they compare to the lifestyles of contemporaneous cultures in other parts of the world? Break the class into small groups and have them discuss the topics presented in the unit, and then ask the groups to give a brief presentation of the topics they found most interesting. Ask students to create a timeline describing the cultural groups discussed in the unit.
2. Compile a series of common daily items that “go together” (bowl and spoon; hair brush, shampoo bottle, and hand mirror; blank sheet of paper and a pen, etc.) and a set of individual items (pot holder, cloth napkin, one chopstick, a napkin ring with no napkin in it, a broken plate, toaster cover, etc.) Bring the items to class and first set out the common items on a table in front of the group. Lead the class in a discussion of the items, particularly what they imply when you see them in a house (someone about to eat breakfast, wash their hair, etc.). What information if any can we deduce about the owner of the items? What can we say about the same items if they were found scattered in the woods?
Next, set up the individual items, and hold the same discussion. This one will be somewhat more difficult, and likely more imaginative. Pose the same questions to the class and have them note the differences in the two scenarios. Does it help to know where the items belong? Why? Discuss the limitations archaeologists face when unraveling the secrets of the past. Relate the idea of forensics to the discussion. What clues do detectives use to solve mysteries? How is archaeology similar to solving crimes? Have students inventory their bedroom and write an imaginative paper, “What My Bedroom Says About Me,” on what archaeologists would be able to say about the person who lived there if they excavated the bedroom in the year AD 3000. Encourage students to explore the possible results of the contents being found outside of a home setting, and to incorporate the methods they learned in *Beneath the Modern Urban Landscape*.
3. Have the students read an excerpt from Peter Nabokov’s book, *Native-American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present*

1492 – 1992. Ask each student to write a 1-page reaction paper to the excerpt, focusing on how it compares to ethnohistoric accounts used in *Beneath the Modern Urban Landscape*. Nabokov's book includes stories told from the perspective of Native Americans from several different groups at different periods in history, and would likely fit elsewhere in the curriculum, as well.

4. Take a class trip to the New Jersey State Museum to tour the exhibits on archaeology and New Jersey's Native American History. Afterwards, assign a short essay so students can report what they have learned. The museum has many different exhibits that are relevant to this discussion as well as other topics in the social studies curriculum, so students should be able to write rather diverse papers.

Materials:

1. Unit, *Beneath the Modern Urban Landscape*, and poster, *Conceptualizing Everyday Life in Northern New Jersey's Distant Past*, created by URS.
2. Prehistoric background text on Passaic, NJ from the archaeological technical report, *The Dundee Site (Native-American Occupation in Northern New Jersey from 1000 BC)*.
3. Collection of household items including (but not limited to): shampoo bottle, hair brush, bowl, spoon, cloth napkin, chopstick, broken plate, napkin ring, toaster cover, and potholder.
4. Book, *Native-American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to Present 1492 – 1992*, edited by Peter Nabokov. This book may be available at the local library or bookstore, or online at amazon.com, bn.com, or any other online bookseller. A newer (2000) edition of the book is also available.

Assessment/Evaluation:

Assessment is based on student participation during in-class discussions, performance on short essays, timeline, reaction papers, and/or oral presentations. Some information may be incorporated into quizzes or tests for assessment purposes.

Connections:

This plan allows students to gain a better understanding of the Passaic area in prehistoric times. These activities will engage students and provide preliminary information on the prehistory of their hometown. Because archaeology is a broad, well-rounded subject that includes elements of history, science, and even language arts, the plan can fit into the curriculum at various times and may be modified to work in the lower grades. The following is a list of the New Jersey Department of Education Social

Studies Standards that can be fulfilled by the above activities. This is not an exhaustive list; the plan may be adapted to fulfill other Standards and Indicators.

- Standard 6.3; Indicator 2. Analyze varying viewpoints of individuals and groups at turning points in history.
 - Indicator 8. Understand issues, standards, and conflicts related to universal human rights.
 - Indicator 12. Understand the views of people of other times and places regarding the issues they have faced.
- Standard 6.5; Indicator 4. Describe the influence of technology in daily life.
 - Indicator 5. Understand material artifacts of a culture.
 - Indicator 10. Analyze the political, social, economic, and technological factors which cause cultural change.
 - Indicator 15. Interpret how various cultures have adapted to their environment.
 - Indicator 16. Analyze how beliefs and principles are transmitted in a culture.

Students will be exposed to firsthand accounts of Native-American hardships, helping them to realize the difficulties and discrimination that natives faced and opening class discussions of human rights and social inequality (Social Studies Standard 6.3, Indicators 2, 8, and 12; Standard 6.5, Indicator 14). These themes can be applied to further study in the area, as well as to several lessons in Standard 6.4: Social History. The text supplied by URS will discuss various elements of archaeology, including prehistoric technology, artifacts, and settlement patterns. These topics would help to fulfill Social Studies Standard 6.5, Indicators 4 and 5, and also Standard 6.8, Indicator 7, and will emphasize the use of environmental resources and prehistoric cultural change over time (Standard 6.5, Indicators 10 and 15).

Resources

- Nabokov, Peter (editor)
1992 Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492 – 1992. Penguin Books, New York.
- Tull, Stephen W.
2002 *Beneath the Modern Urban Landscape*. URS, Inc.
- Tull, Stephen W. and Bernard W. Slaughter
2001 *The Dundee Site (Native-American Occupation in Northern New Jersey from 1000 BC): Technical Report*. Prepared for Howard Needles Tammen & Bergendoff, Fairfield, New Jersey and Bureau of Environmental Analysis, New Jersey Department of Transportation by URS Corporation, Florence, New Jersey.

Contacts

Libraries

- Reid Memorial Library, Kathleen Molica (973) 777-6044
Passaic Public Library, Dir. Dave Robertson (973) 779-0474
Clifton Public Library, Librarian Pat Ferro (973) 772-5500

Historic Repositories

- New Jersey State Museum (for educational tours) (609) 292-6347
Powhatan Renape Nation's American Indian Heritage Museum (609) 261-4747
Passaic County Historical Society Museum Director, Andrew Shick (973) 881-2761
Julius Forstman Public Research Librarian, Mimi Horn (973) 779-0474

Schools

- Passaic Public High School Librarian, Anne Immedidto (973) 470-5605
Clifton Superintendent of Schools, William Leiss (973) 470-2260

Web Sites

- www.500nations.com
www.state.nj.us/state/museum
www.ramapoughmountainindians.com

The format used to create the previous lesson plan developed for the Passaic High School History Department was based on information obtained from the *New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Social Studies*. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) website, as well as other helpful links can be accessed online at:

www.state.nj.us/education

New Jersey Department of Education Social Studies Curriculum
Frameworks:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/frameworks/socialstudies/>