

Introduction to American History Overview: U.S. History, 7th Grade

Driving Concept 1: Indigenous Nations and Early European Colonization: Political, Social, and Economic Structures of the Americas in the 15th and 16th Century

Through this driving concept, students will analyze the scientific and cultural innovations of diverse, Indigenous societies across the Americas, with particular attention to the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries. Using historical evidence, students will interrogate the origins of the idea that the Americas were a lightly populated wilderness prior to European contact by studying the complex and highly organized societies of Indigenous communities and nations of the Eastern Coast of North America along with the chiefdoms of the Southeast. Students will review primary and secondary sources — including both Indigenous and European accounts — to analyze the geographical, political and social impact of early interactions, with themes of both conquest and resilience.

Essential Question

Why is it important to study the past?

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Standards	
7.2	Analyze the collection and use of anthropological and archeological evidence, including an analysis of the tension between Western anthropological or archeological practices and Indigenous scientific knowledge, to draw conclusions about Indigenous societies in the Americas.
7.14	Assess the ways Indigenous Nations have been portrayed in American history and popular culture and the limitations of such portrayals in understanding the diverse communities that comprise the "Native American" identity.



Historical Significance: Unit Focus Skill

Thinking historically means identifying and exploring the reasons why historical people, places, events, or ideas are worth remembering; that is, their historical significance.

Introduction to American History: Unit Overview

	<u>LESSON 1 (120 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 2 (60 MINS)</u>	<u>LESSON 3 (60 MINS)</u>
SUPPORTING QUESTION	Why do historians differ in their interpretations of the past and how can an authentic narrative be created?	How can myths and facts be distinguished when interpreting historical events and what impact do myths have on understanding history?	In what ways have historical narratives about Indigenous peoples before European exploration continued or changed over time?
STANDARD(S)	7.2	7.14	7.14
FOCUS SKILL(S)	Historical Significance Evaluating Evidence	Evaluating Evidence	Continuity and Change Over Time Historical Significance
DO FIRST	Frayer: Introduction Give One, Get One	Frayer: Myth Give One, Get One	Frayer: Historiography Prediction
ACTIVITY 1 - LAUNCH	First Day Practices "The Wallet" Situation	"How Do We Decide What We Believe?" Introduction to Claims Testing	Introduction to Historiography Jigsaw: Individual Textbook Source Analysis
ACTIVITY 2- PRACTICE	Class Discussion History v. The Past Video	Terminology Introduction American Indian Claims Testing	Introduction to Continuity and Change Over Time Jigsaw: Group Textbook Analysis and CCOT work
CONCLUSION	Exit Ticket- "What's in Your Wallet?"	Exit Ticket- Write and Draw	Exit Ticket- Triangle, Square, Circle



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Suggested Readings and Helpful Resources:

For information on:

- James M. Banner, Jr., ["All History is Revisionist History: Ever Since Thucydides Dismissed Herodotus, Historians Have Differed About the Past,"](#) National Endowment for the Humanities.
- Myths about Indigenous Peoples, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz and Dina Gilio-Whitaker, *"All the Real Indians Died Off" and 20 Other Myths about Native Americans*, 2016.
- "The Impact of Words and and Tips for Using Appropriate Terminology: Am I Using the Right Word?," [National Museum of the American Indian](#).
- "Historiography: Definition, History, Branches, & Methodology," [Britannica](#).

Unit Pedagogical Resources:

Best Practices Repository- Appendix [X]

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Unit Commentary:

The start of a school year is filled with an abundance of excitement, anxiety, and overwhelm for both teachers and students. This Unit 0 has been designed to support you as you demonstrate to your students that they won't just be learning about history but rather, that they will be doing the work of historians.

This all begins with Lesson 1. Often teachers begin a history class by telling students why it is important to study history. However, in lesson 1, students will implicitly understand this by investigating the contents of a hypothetical "lost wallet." Students will draw conclusions about the owner based on what has been left behind which will lead into a discussion about how historical narrative has been constructed and its reliability.

In Lesson 2, students will continue to engage with the idea of reliability by considering how to discern myths from facts. Beginning with non-historical statements and then moving to statements about Indigenous Americans, students will practice testing claims with four tools. This activity will be repeated with different information in Unit 1.

To conclude this introductory unit, students will participate in a historiography investigation. By looking at several textbook accounts that were written in 1835, 1919, 1961, and 2019, students will see how the historical narrative has changed over time. This will reinforce the importance of evaluating evidence (the major focus of Unit 1) and critically exploring how the past has been turned into the historical narrative.

Many of the skills and tools utilized in Unit 0 will be repeated throughout the school year. Make sure to take an adequate amount of time for students to understand the goal and significance of each learning task. However, if gaps in understanding remain, students will have ample practice throughout the school year.

The pacing of lessons and activities should provide you with opportunities to teach classroom routines and to get to know your students. However, if you need more time to reinforce classroom expectations, please feel free to extend the unit beyond the time allotted. Ensuring that your students understand the classroom dynamics will pay dividends throughout the year.