



## CALIFORNIA INDIANS: THE FIRST PEOPLE

### ORAL HISTORY ACTIVITY: FEDERAL RECOGNITION

A free [Online Learning](#) activity aligned with  
Common Core & State Content standards for 5th-12th grades

**OVERVIEW:**

In this activity, learners will watch Rose Ann Abrahamson, Donna Cossette, and Vincent Medina discuss what it means for a tribe to have federal recognition.

**APPROPRIATE FOR:**

5<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade

**OBJECTIVES:**

In this activity, learners will:

- Describe what federal recognition means in the context of tribal nations in the United States
- Explain examples of rights guaranteed to federally recognized tribes
- Explore implications if tribes are not federally recognized
- Learn about a tribe that lost and fought to regain federal recognition
- Explore the role of treaties in federal recognition and engage with primary documents related to treaties.

**DIRECTIONS:**

Watch the video and answer the related questions.

**TIME:**

1 hour

**MATERIALS:**

- [Video](#) from the Museum's California Indians oral history series

**STANDARDS:*****Common Core******Reading - Key Ideas and Details***

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|-----|---|
| 5   | Refer to details and examples in a source when explaining what the source says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the source |
| 6-8 | Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary documents   |

***California History Social Science Content Standards******Chronological and Spatial Thinking***

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 6-8  | Students use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries and to explain the historical migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and the growth of economic systems. |
| 9-12 | Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.   |

***Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View***

- 6-8 Students detect the different historical points of view on historical events and determine the context in which the historical statements were made (the questions asked, sources used, author's perspectives).
- 9-12 Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

*Historical Interpretation*

- 6-8 Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.  
Students recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered.

*Grade Level Content Area Connections*

- 5.3 Students describe the cooperation and conflict that existed among the American Indians and between the Indian nations and the new settlers.

Thank you for downloading this Online Learning resource! We hope you and your students enjoy using it. For additional downloadable resources in our free program, visit the [Online Learning](#) page on our website. For help or questions, contact the education department at [reservations@californiamuseum.org](mailto:reservations@californiamuseum.org).

## PART 1: VIDEO ANALYSIS

### DIRECTIONS:

View the [video](#) on federal recognition and answer the questions below.



### QUESTIONS:

1. What is a treaty?
2. What does it mean to be a *sovereign nation*?
3. What are some examples of the rights guaranteed to federally recognized tribes?

4. Do all tribes have federal recognition?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What does it mean if a tribe is not federally recognized?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Why did the Muwekma need to fight for their recognition to be reinstated?

## PART 2: FURTHER EXPLORATION

### DIRECTIONS:

If you would like to know more about this topic, explore the resources listed below.

- Read more about the Muwekma people's quest for tribal recognition here on their [official website](#).
- View historical written treaties from the [National Museum of the American Indian](#).
- Listen to [this radio program](#) about blood quantum and how they came to be.