



CALIFORNIA INDIANS: THE FIRST PEOPLE

ORAL HISTORY ACTIVITY: PEOPLE

A free [Online Learning](#) activity aligned with
Common Core & State Content standards for 3rd-8th grades

OVERVIEW:

In this activity, learners will hear from California Indians from around the state by analyzing photos, art and watching four different oral history videos.

APPROPRIATE FOR:

3rd-8th grade

OBJECTIVES:

In this activity, learners will:

- Differentiate between stereotypical images of Native Americans and the lived experiences and stories of California Indians.
- Use Visual Thinking Strategies to analyze primary documents and works of art.
- Explore the lives of California Indians across the state.
- Observe the geographic features across the state in relation to the people who live there.
- Compare and contrast experiences of California Indians across the state.

DIRECTIONS:

View and analyze the photograph and painting, then select at least three different videos focused on individual stories from the Museum's [California Indians Oral History](#) series.

TIME:

1 hour

MATERIALS:

- Photograph of protest shown on page 4
- Portrait of Simon Moya-Smith, by Brittain Peck, shown on page 5
- Oral history videos of Melissa Leal and three others of your choice in the Museum's [California Indians Oral History series](#).

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

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3-5 | 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*

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 3-5 | Students judge the significance of the relative location of a place |
| 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. |

Research, Evidence, and Point of View

- 3-5 Students distinguish fact from opinion in historical narratives and stories.
- 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).

Grade Level Content Area Connections

- 3.1 Students describe the physical and human geography and use maps, tables, graphs, photographs, and charts to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.
- 3.2 Students describe the American Indian nations in their local region long ago and in the recent past.
- 4.1 Students demonstrate an understanding of the physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California.
- 4.2.1 Discuss the major nations of California Indians, including their geographic distribution, economic activities, legends, and religious beliefs; and describe how they depended on, adapted to, and modified the physical environment by cultivation of land and use of sea resources.
- 5.1.1 Describe how geography and climate influenced the way various nations lived and adjusted to the natural environment, including locations of villages, the distinct structures that they built, and how they obtained food, clothing, tools, and utensils.

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.

PART 1: ARTIFACT ANALYSIS

DIRECTIONS:

View this photo of a 2014 protest against the Washington DC football team's use of a Native American as a mascot and a racial slur as the team name, and respond to the questions below.



Protest against Washington football team, November 2, 2014. Photo by [Fibonacci Blue](#).
Used under Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

Questions:

1. What is going on in this picture?
2. What do you see that makes you say that?

3. What more can you find?

4. Are there any other sports teams that use Native Americans as their mascot? How are the images of Indigenous peoples portrayed in sports and the media?

5. What are the protestors saying about the Washington D.C. mascot?

DIRECTIONS

View the painting “Portrait of Simon Moya-Smith” by Brittain Peck and respond to the questions below.



1. What is going on in this picture?
2. What do you see that makes you say that?
3. What more can you find?

4. The person sitting next to Simon Moya-Smith is wearing a Washington DC football jacket. This is the same team people were protesting in the first photo. Why do you think the artist included this in his painting?

Learn more about the painting and answer the question below.

Portrait of Simon Moya-Smith
Brittain Peck, 2017

Lakota journalist Simon Moya-Smith brings attention to the hurtful use of Native American images as mascots and logos. Similarly, artist Brittain Peck recognizes the irony of this appropriation in his website and through his paintings.

"Courtesy of the Web, we are no longer out of sight. We are no longer canceled out of the American conversation. Also, more Native Americans live in urban settings than ever before. More than 70% of us work, live and thrive in big cities. Native Americans on reservations have smartphones and laptops, so geographic isolation is slowly becoming a thing of the past as well. And we use these new technologies to speak out against the macro- and micro-aggressions directed at Native Americans."

- Simon Moya-Smith, "Native Americans: We are not your mascots," CNN, 5/19/2014

"Simon's work as a journalist embodies his own words above.... This is why I chose to portray him in this painting, seating him firmly within our nation's capital. He is seated on a train, enabling him to be both stationary and moving in the image. He looks up from his mobile phone with his gaze to the left, passing through the statue of Freedom on top of the Capitol's dome and continuing off of the image's left edge, where a person sits wearing a burgundy and gold jacket, reference to a specific professional sports franchise."

- Brittain Peck, artist

5. How does this description of the painting match what you saw?

PART 2: VIDEO ANALYSIS

DIRECTIONS:

View the [video of Melissa Leal](#) and answer the questions below.



QUESTIONS:

1. Melissa Leal talks about assumptions about what Native Americans are supposed to look like. How does Melissa define what it means to be Native?
2. How is what Melissa Leal talks about similar to the painting of Simon Moya-Smith? What do you think the main points of these two pieces are?

PART 3: EXPLORE MORE STORIES

DIRECTIONS:

Select at least three different videos focused on individual stories from the [California Indians Oral History](#) series. Take notes using the table below and answer the following questions.

Name and tribal identity of person in the video			
What scenery do you see in the video?			
What are some of the stories this person shared about their family and community?			
What is something new you learned from this video?			

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some similarities in people's experiences and stories?
2. Why is it important to learn about individual experiences in addition to broad community experiences?