

How About Some Recognition?

Competency Goals

Grade 8: Social Studies Goal 9
United States History Goals 11, 12

Objectives

Students will explore the issues surrounding how a tribe is recognized by the State of North Carolina and explore reasons why tribes seek recognition. The first part of the activity is a pre-reading strategy to be coupled with the reading of the *Tar Heel Junior Historian* article, "What Is the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs?" by Greg Richardson, in addition to its sidebar. After completing this activity students will understand a different perspective and appreciate the unique circumstances of being an American Indian in contemporary society.

Introduction

Wilma Mankiller, former chief of the Cherokee Nation, once said that people can deal with American Indians if they're in a museum, but not on a contemporary level. This activity deals with important contemporary issues of receiving tribal recognition.

Materials

Fall 2005 *Tar Heel Junior Historian* articles (available through Education Resources database), "What Is the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs?" and "North Carolina and Its Indian Tribes," by Gregory Richardson.

Computers with Internet access

Procedure

1. Students should work in pairs to come up with reasons why tribal groups might want to be officially recognized by the state. Allow them five to ten minutes to brainstorm.
2. Students then pair up with another group and compile one list of reasons for the group of four.
3. After sufficient time, groups should share their ideas with the class as the teacher records them on the board.
4. After reading the *THJH* article "What Is the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs?" students should compare their reasons on the board with the reasons mentioned in the articles.

Extension Activities

1. The teacher should divide the class into four groups. Three groups will represent fictitious tribal groups that desire state recognition and one group will represent the Commission of Indian Affairs. This will be the starting point for a mock meeting of the commission to consider petitions for receiving state recognition as a tribal group.
2. All students should log onto <http://www.doa.state.nc.us/cia/indian.htm> and click the link for "Legal Recognition of Indian Groups" to learn how a tribe receives state recognition.
3. Tribal members must come up with a list of compelling reasons for receiving state recognition.
4. Commission members must create a rubric from which they will judge the merits of each tribe's petition.
5. Conduct a mock commission meeting at which only one tribal group will receive recognition.

Note: The teacher may set his or her own expectations for participation. For example, teachers can require each tribal member to speak on behalf of their group and/or ask each commission member to elaborate on why one tribe was chosen for recognition and others were not.