

Student Research Projects

Following is the list of the seven tribes that you will be researching throughout the remainder of this unit. With each tribe is a brief description of the contemporary issue that students must research.

Makah - The international whaling controversy

Navajo - Uranium mining on reservation lands

Nez Perce - The return of traditional tribal lands

Mashantucket Pequot - The impact of a casino on the reservation

Powhatan - The Pocohontas myth

Oglala Lakota (Sioux) - The 1973 incident at Pine Ridge Reservation

Yurok - The G-O Road

Each student will be responsible for one of the following topics related to their particular tribe.

1. Past History

- Where were the tribe's original ancestral lands? How have they changed over the last several centuries?
- How did tribal members end up on the reservation?
- Does this tribe have a treaty with the US government? When was it signed? What did it say?
- What was the original language of the tribe?
- How does the tribe explain its origin in North America? (Does it have an origin story?)
- How would you describe the tribe's historical interaction with whites? Were tribal members engaged in any war(s) with the US Army or with civilians?
- Did you learn about any famous tribal members? If so, who were they and for what were they well known?

2. Recent History/Existence

- Is the original language still spoken by tribal members?
- What are the current reservation boundaries? Please include a map and a description of the reservation.
- What is the current number of tribal members? Do most tribal members live off or on the reservation?
- How is tribal membership determined?
- What type of employment is available on the reservation? Do most people work on or off the reservation?
- Does the tribe have a casino? A museum? Describe the effects of the casino and/or museum upon the tribe.

3. Culture

- What types of housing did tribal members live in before the 20th Century?
- What traditional types of foods were and still are consumed within this tribe?
- What are the tribe's traditional religious beliefs and practices? How have they changed over the years?
- What special celebrations or holidays are observed by the tribe?
- What types of traditional clothing did tribal members wear before the 20th Century?
- What myths are most popular among tribal members?

4. Government and Current Issues

- How is the tribal government organized? Who are the leaders? How are leaders selected?
- How are laws made and enforced on the reservation?
- If you have access to your tribe's constitution, please explain its basic structure and contents.
- What sovereign rights are exercised by the tribe? Are there any special sovereignty issues within this tribe?
- What current benefits do tribal members receive from the US government?
- What is the background of the current issue faced by your tribe, or which your tribe is currently facing?