



LESSON PLAN

Lacrosse in Native American Culture Elementary

AIM

Students will understand the history of lacrosse and its role in Native American culture and examine the roles of sports in their own lives and communities.

GUIDING QUESTIONS/OBJECTIVES

Why did the game of lacrosse play such an important role in Native American communities?

Why was it called the “Medicine Game?”

How does playing sports benefit players and their communities?

Is there a tribal element to the groups of fans of professional and college sports teams?

Are there negative impacts of sports participation and fandom?

KEY VOCABULARY

Medicine Game—Indigenous term for lacrosse, highlighting its role in healing and unifying the community.

Community—A group of people living in the same area, usually sharing common interests.

Sportsmanship—The attitude and behavior expected in sports, including respect and fair play.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS AT END

ACTIVITY

Part 1

1. Show the 4 minute Native Ed video on the history of lacrosse and its cultural importance in Native American communities.
2. After watching the video, ask the following questions:
 - a. What did you learn about lacrosse from this video?
 - b. Why do Native Americans call it the “Medicine Game?”
 - c. How did playing this game help their community?

Part 2

1. Break the students up into small groups and have them brainstorm the benefits of playing sports, both for themselves (e.g. physical health, teamwork, benefits of practice and perseverance, resilience) and for their community (e.g. unity, social bonds)



- a. Some possible prompts: How does playing sports make you feel? In what ways can sports bring people together? Consider both those playing sports AND those who are spectators/fans of sports. How can a team help unite a community? You may wish to consider fans of professional and college sports or you can limit the discussion to students' communities.
2. Ask groups to share some of their ideas. Create 2 columns to write them in for all to see: Benefits for Me and Benefits for the Community.
3. Next, ask the groups to consider potential negatives of playing sports. These could include things such as injuries, stress, excessive time requirements, bad coaching, bullying, parental pressure.
4. Have groups share ideas.
5. Ask class as a whole for ideas on how we can best handle these challenges to gain the benefits of sports while avoiding these negative effects.
6. WRAP UP ACTIVITY (or Homework): Have students write a paragraph (or share with a partner) how they think playing their favorite sport benefits them and their community. For students who may not play a sport, they can focus on an activity that they participate in.

EXIT TICKET

After considering the positives and negatives of participating in sports, what is one thing you can do to try to make such an experience positive for you and others?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

1. History/Social Studies

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3-5.2**
Key Ideas and Details: Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
 - **Application:** After watching the Native Ed video, students will summarize the key points of the history of lacrosse and its significance in Native American culture, including why it is called the "Medicine Game."
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3-5.3**
Key Ideas and Details: Explain the relationships or interactions between two or



more individuals, events, ideas, or concepts in a historical text.

- **Application:** Students will analyze how lacrosse, as the "Medicine Game," played an important role in Native American communities, creating unity, healing, and strengthening social bonds.

2. Cultural Understanding

- **Standard 5: Culture**
How culture is expressed through games, rituals, and societal roles.
 - **Application:** This lesson provides students with an understanding of how the game of lacrosse was a cultural expression for Native Americans, with spiritual and community-building significance.

Common Core Literacy Standards for Speaking and Listening

1. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-5.1**
Speaking and Listening: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners on grade-level topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
 - **Application:** Students will engage in group discussions, brainstorming the benefits of playing sports and exploring both positive and negative impacts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own thoughts clearly.
2. **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3-5.4**
Speaking and Listening: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
 - **Application:** Students will share their ideas in small groups and report back to the class on the benefits of sports for both individuals and communities, supporting their points with examples.



Writing Standards

1. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3-5.2

Text Types and Purposes: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- **Application:** Students will write a paragraph or share with a partner how playing their favorite sport benefits them and their community, clearly explaining their thoughts.

2. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3-5.8

Research to Build and Present Knowledge: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

- **Application:** In the group activity, students will recall what they learned from the video and discussions to present ideas about the benefits and challenges of sports, both personally and communally.

Common Core Literacy Standards for Language

1. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3-5.4

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade-level reading and content.

- **Application:** Students will learn key vocabulary words like "Medicine Game," "community," and "sportsmanship," and use them in discussions and writing tasks.