



Pueblo Indian History for Kids Lesson Plan

A blended-learning lesson integrating online research, classroom discussion, and independent or small-group extension projects.

Overview

The Crow Canyon Archaeological Center's [*Pueblo Indian History for Kids*](#) is an interactive, online timeline that traces the history of the Pueblo Indian people in the American Southwest. The timeline covers more than 15,000 years of history.

In this lesson, students will explore the timeline using a worksheet to focus their research. During classroom discussion, students will review and extend the concepts presented. Independent or small-group extension projects will enable students to work with selected concepts to create meaningful interpretations of Pueblo history.

Key Concepts

People, place, and the environment; migration; natural resource use; archaeology; cultural continuity and change; cause and effect; unity and diversity

Grade levels

4–8

Guiding Questions

How does culture change over time? How do humans interact with the environment?

Length of Time

Online research: 1–2 hours (modification for less time described below—see “Procedure”)

Classroom discussion: 30–60 minutes

Independent and small-group extension projects: 2–6 hours (or more, depending on grade level, individual classroom requirements, presentation formats, etc.)

Learning Objectives

Students will

- use the *Pueblo Indian History for Kids* online timeline to research Pueblo history in the Southwest;
- analyze relationships between humans and their environment by examining natural resource use, human migration patterns, and cultural change;
- make comparisons between their own lives and those of the Pueblo people;
- study the impact of human migration on the environment and on people already living in the destination regions; and
- create multimedia projects that explore various dimensions of Pueblo history and culture.

Materials

- Student Worksheets (choose the worksheet[s] that best fits your students’ needs and your classroom):
 - Open-ended exploration: geared toward lower grade levels (4–6), visual learners, classes with limited time
 - Grades 4–6: requires careful reading and interpretation of the concepts
 - Grades 6–8: requires careful reading, interpretation, and analysis of concepts
- Extensions and Additional Resources handout
- Internet access for each student

Procedure

1. Provide students with the *Pueblo History for Kids* worksheet appropriate to their needs. Help students complete the worksheet, as needed, using the online resource. Students who finish early can begin working on activities from the Extensions and Additional Resources handout.

Modification for less time or lower grade levels: Divide the worksheet into sections and have small groups of students research only one or two time periods. Before the large-group discussion, students present what they’ve learned about their time periods to their peers.

2. Review the completed worksheet with students. As you review, record important information about each time period on the board, and keep a running list of questions students have for further research.
3. Use the discussion questions below to further explore ideas and concepts presented in the online resource. Discuss ideas in a large group, in small groups that present back to the class, or individually as independent reflection questions.
4. Challenge students to take on one of the extension projects (or create their own) to further examine the history and culture of the Pueblo people.
5. Wrap up by having students discuss or reflect on final reflection questions (see “Reflection and Assessment”).

Discussion Topics and Questions

1. What is culture?
2. What is your culture? Are you a member of more than one culture?
3. How would you describe the housing, food, and artifacts that are part of your culture (or cultures) today?
4. What evidence of your culture (or cultures) might archaeologists find a thousand years from now? How would they interpret your culture (or cultures) from that evidence?
5. Why did Pueblo people in the Mesa Verde region move at different times in the past? Why do people around the world move today?
6. How did the environment affect Pueblo culture?
7. How does the environment affect cultures today? What happens to contemporary cultures when the environment changes?
8. Where are the Pueblo people today?
9. How does archaeology help us construct a timeline like this? What information does archaeology provide? What information doesn’t it provide?

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10. How might the oral history of Pueblo people help us better understand their history?
11. What has happened to the Pueblo people's homes, villages, kivas, and farm fields in the Mesa Verde region? Who is responsible for these places?
12. Why should we learn about the history of the Pueblo people?

Reflection and Assessment

Have students respond to the following questions by discussing in small groups or by writing their responses:

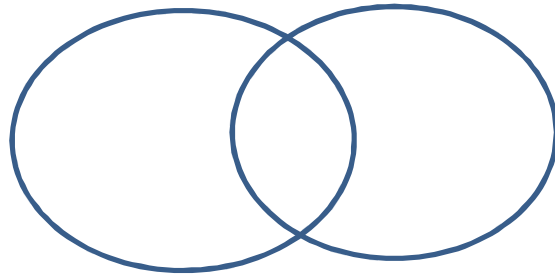
1. How did Pueblo culture change over the centuries? How did it stay the same? How do you think it will change in the future?
2. How did the environment affect Pueblo culture? How did Pueblo people affect their environment?
3. How does the environment today affect your culture? How do we affect the environment?

Extensions and Additional Resources

Extensions

Students can work independently or in small groups on projects that explore one of the following topics related to the history of the Pueblo people. Students may also come up with their own topics.

1. **Mesa Verde region timeline:** Create a comprehensive timeline of cultural change in the Mesa Verde region over the past 15,000 years. Organize information into categories (for example, cultural group, migration, housing and structures, food, artifacts) to track and describe changes through time.
2. **Pueblo culture:** Explore this map of the modern pueblos in New Mexico: www.indianpueblo.org/19pueblos/pueblomap.html. Follow links to some of the Pueblo tribes' websites. Use your research to create a Venn diagram that compares Pueblo life today with Pueblo life before A.D. 1300. What is similar? What is different?



3. **Migration timeline:** Use overlying maps to create a timeline that highlights the migration of people in and around the Mesa Verde region over time. First, create 8½-x-11" transparencies of a map of the Mesa Verde region and surrounding area, all the way to the northern Rio Grande in New Mexico; set one aside as the "master." On the remaining transparencies, illustrate the territories and migration patterns of people during each time period. Next, lay the transparencies over the master map and compare migration and settlement patterns through time. Write explanations to accompany your maps. Be sure to explain the evidence for the migrations and why they might have occurred.
4. **Location studies:** Research important Pueblo places in and near the Mesa Verde region, such as Mesa Verde National Park, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, and Hovenweep National Monument. Research reports can include maps of the areas and descriptions of the places. What was life like? Explain the importance of these places in understanding the history of the Mesa Verde region.
5. **Art and artifacts:** Research and replicate artifacts from each time period. Describe and analyze the replication process: What makes the manufacture of a particular artifact difficult? Easy? How did the way you made the artifact compare with the way people in the past made the artifact (did they use the same tools and materials)? How does the artifact work? Is the replica effective (at holding water, hitting a target, digging and planting, protecting the body, etc.)? Accompanying reports should describe the materials used to make the artifacts, as well as the uses and cultural significance of art and artifacts to various groups (for example, Paleoindian, Archaic, Pueblo) in the Mesa Verde region.

Use the Artifacts Gallery (www.crowcanyon.org/artifactsgallery) on Crow Canyon’s website to more closely study artifacts from the Mesa Verde region.

6. **Food and culture:** Compare foods during the different time periods. Cook specific foods, write historical “cookbooks,” create illustrated histories of food preparation, or use nutritional analyses to compare ancient diets with your own modern diet. Importantly, describe how the environment affected food diversity, availability, and preparation. Use Crow Canyon’s online database *Plant Use by Native Peoples of the American Southwest* (www.crowcanyon.org/plantuses) to research the uses of common plants found in the Mesa Verde region.
7. **Around the world:** Compare the cultural practices of the Pueblo people in ancient times with those of other groups who lived at the same time. What was life like in ancient Egypt, Greece, China, Central America, South America, or the eastern United States? How did cultures use the environment to survive and thrive? What similarities existed between the Pueblo people and other cultural groups? Explore connections between different groups of people in the past by researching trade networks—for example, what does the presence of macaw feathers and ocean shells at an ancient Pueblo site tell us about trade?
8. **Pueblo people today:** Use the Internet to research the Pueblo people living in the Southwest today. How does their history in the Mesa Verde region continue to influence their modern culture and lifestyle? How is the Mesa Verde region’s landscape and culture still shaped by the contributions and legacies of the Pueblo people?

Additional Resources

Crow Canyon Archaeological Center and Website (www.crowcanyon.org)

Our website has a wealth of resources, including videos, photo galleries, online and classroom lessons, information about current archaeological research, information about education programs, and links to many additional resources. For a more detailed history of the Mesa Verde region, including Pueblo, Ute, Navajo, and other groups, see *Peoples of the Mesa Verde Region*, another interactive timeline (www.crowcanyon.org/peoplesmesaverde).

Anasazi Heritage Center Museum and Website (www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/ahc.html)

This museum, located in Dolores, Colorado (just a short drive from the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center), offers interactive exhibits and lots of information about the history of the Mesa Verde region. It is also the starting point and information center for Canyons of the Ancients National Monument.

Mesa Verde National Park and Website (www.nps.gov/meve/index.htm)

This incredible national park (also just a short drive from the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center) is home to more than 5,000 archaeological sites, including 600 cliff dwellings once inhabited by Pueblo people.

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center Website (www.indianpueblo.org)

This website has abundant information about Pueblo Indian culture, past and present. A map of pueblos in New Mexico and links to individual pueblo websites help students access information about the lives and culture of Pueblo people today.

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Time Team America Television Show Website (PBS) (www.pbs.org/time-team/home)

In 2012, the Crow Canyon Archaeological Center collaborated with *Time Team America* on a field school. Their website (go to home page, link to “Experience Archaeology”) describes the way archaeologists applied the scientific method to answer questions about “The Lost Pueblo Village.” A number of videos and links explore how archaeology is used to learn about Pueblo history.

www.crowcanyon.org

School group programs: www.crowcanyon.org/schools

Classroom resources: www.crowcanyon.org/teachers

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