

California: Our Past, Our Present, Similarities and Differences.

by Hannah Logan

Fourth Grade

Investigating California's Native People and Early Explorers and Their Influence

Description	Students investigate the daily life, culture, legends, and beliefs of Native people and early explorers of California. Then, based on what they can infer from their investigations, they create their own interpretations of what living in that world and time might have been like using tableaux (freezing their bodies into shapes to create scenes), as well as creating dialogue if they wish. They analyze what they discover then compare their own daily lives, culture, legends, and beliefs to those of the Native people and explorers, and assess the similarities and differences between the lives of Californians that lived long ago and their own lives today, and evaluate the positive and negative effects of the choices made by their ancestors and how they influence their lives today.
Materials	history book and/or access to internet, paper, pencil, any sort of costume pieces, imagination, household art supplies (whatever is available), markers, tape
Goals	<p>Understand how the present is connected to the past, identify both similarities and differences between the two, and how some things change over time and some things stay the same.</p> <p>Identify and interpret the multiple causes and effects of historical events.</p> <p>Gain a better understanding of the daily life, culture, legends, and beliefs of the major nations of California Indians and the early explorers to better draw conclusions about how prior generations impact our own lives, as well as to understand better the similarities and differences of different cultures in our own state.</p>
Driving Questions	What was the typical day like for a Chumash, Yuma, Kumeyaay, or another person native to California? What belief or legend in their culture was similar to yours? What did the early explorers do that still influences your life today? (Here are a few of them: Francis Drake, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Father Junipero Serra, Gaspar de Portola).
Step 1	Investigate the day in the life of a Native people of California, or a day in the life of someone on one of the early explorer's expeditions. You can use history books you have available or search for videos or articles on the internet with the help of an adult, if that is available to you.

- Step 2 Write a description of the beginning, middle, and end of a typical day. Make observations about how their day was similar or different from yours. If you find some pictures you really like that show an activity of the person you are investigating, take a photo if you are able or just sketch it on some paper, so you can remember it for your next step in the process. Also investigate the religious beliefs and legends of Natives and explorers. You might find some stories that are really interesting.
- Step 3 Evaluate the sketches or writing you have from the research you did and decide of all the information you collected which story you would like to tell. Is there something particularly interesting in the daily life of a Native people in California you would like to share? Decide what interests you most and pay particular attention to those things you learned that might influence the way we live today.
- Step 4 Write down a simple sentence that tells the story you want to tell. (Example: I want to tell the story of how Abraham Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address.)
- Step 5 Create three or four tableaux (frozen pictures with your body) that show the story being acted out. Ask some people in your home to join you. You can also be the director and “shape” someone else’s body into a tableau for the scene (be sure to ask permission first), and then NARRATE* what is happening once they are frozen in each scene. You may not have a SCRIPT* yet, but that’s okay, you can IMPROVISE*.
- Step 6 Create a script for the story you have decided to tell. You can ask family members to join you and give out parts, if you wish. Your script doesn’t need to be long, but be sure your tableau scenes are in the order that they actually happen, with a beginning, middle, and end tableau, so we can follow your story. Be creative. Use your imagination to INFER* what the people in your story would be thinking and feeling doing the activities they are doing. Note: You can have the people in your frozen tableaux talk and also assign a narrator to guide us through the story.
- For example...
- If you were telling the story of Abraham Lincoln giving the Gettysburg Address, your first tableau might be a family member frozen in a tableau as President Lincoln sitting at a desk writing. You might choose to be the narrator and say, “On November 2, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln was asked to speak at the Gettysburg Cemetery dedication.” Your family member might say, “So many men have died. I must say something inspiring and let everyone know it was not in vain.”
- Step 7 Once you have decided on your scenes and final script, you can add PROPS* and COSTUMES*. Use whatever clothing you have around your house to dress up like the

characters in your story or add more realistic elements by designing and creating your own! Make Kumeyaay canoes out of boxes or a California conquistador helmet out of paper plates and tin foil!

- Step 8 Practice your tableau story, then act it out. You can also take photos or take a video of it and share it with your teacher and friends.
- Reflection/Connection How were the Native people of California like you? How were they different? How do the lives and choices of the Native people and explorers affect how you live today? How many similarities can you find between you and those you investigated who seem extremely different? Did this make you think differently about where you live and people that don't seem similar to you?
- Vocabulary Referenced NARRATE* – to give a spoken or written account of; a NARRATOR is the person who guides us through a story.
SCRIPT* – the written text of a play that also indicates the words a person speaks when performing the play
IMPROVISE* – to create and perform (music, drama, or verse) spontaneously or without preparation
INFER* – to conclude something from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements
*PROPS – items carried on stage by an actor; small items on the set used by the actors
*COSTUMES – any clothing worn by an actor on stage during a performance, in particular clothing worn by the actors to look more like the character they are performing